

What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsurrendered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number One – 1 Samuel 9:1-27

Why do men end up in a mess like Saul? The key thought is that Saul is a man who never learned to repent. He was a man who could never admit that he was wrong. He was a man who never became broken.

Why do men become men on the scrap heap today? Well one of the four M's probably:

MARRIAGE,

MONEY,

MORALS, or

MANAGEMENT.

Life is very complicated and God designed life to be impossible without Him. Until we learn that, we are going to be frustrated.

Saul is a man who can be charged with the responsibilities of

taking care of a kingdom, but he's a man who can't even take care of himself or take care of his own house.

Whenever doing a Bible character we have to set the stage as to where he fits and then after doing that, then we have to put a temperament trait on him. It's good to get a guy figured out as to how he fits temperamentally so that we can begin to identify with him.

As the scene of the scripture opens in the book of Genesis, God is the One who is creating the heavens and the earth. And when it's all done, He's lonely and desires a relationship. Of course, Adam and Eve come on the scene.

As a result of the problem that took place in the garden, because of their disobedience, God has a broken relationship. In Genesis 3 we read:

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between you and your offspring and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel.

In other words, God is going to send someone to bring about a restored relationship.

Genesis 12 focused on Abram, as God has an unconditional covenant with him, that he is going to indeed be the one through whom all the families of the earth will be blessed.

And this is what we read about him:

Genesis 12:2, 3

I will make of you a great nation. I'll bless you. I'll make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And whoever curses you, I will curse. And all the peoples on the earth will be blessed through you.

Out of this unconditional covenant He goes from Abram in the hands of Isaac and from Isaac into the hands of Jacob. And out of Jacob come the twelve tribes of the nation Israel.

Now the covenant had this stipulation, that Israel would be in a land that was not theirs for 430 years. Joseph, the next youngest of kin, the only one of two children born to Rachel, his much-loved wife, was sold into the land of Egypt. And out of that, through traumatic circumstances in the next twenty-five years, Jacob and the whole family are in the land of Egypt. And they remain there for over 400 years and then God, through the miraculous intervention of Moses coming down to the land, leads the people out in the exodus.

They come to Kadesh-Barnea and they're unwilling to go into the land. So for forty years they wander in the wilderness. Finally coming back up to the land, Moses has disqualified himself with a fit of temper in striking the rock instead of speaking to it like the Lord had said. Joshua's the man who has the privilege of taking them into the land.

Joshua's a book of tremendous victory. God blesses them abundantly under the leadership of Joshua in the possession of the land.

But at the end of the book of Joshua the people make a commitment. And their commitment is basically this, "We're going to be faithful and we're going to do everything that the Lord wants us to do." In the book of Judges we find immediately they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Seven times in the book of Judges we have this cycle:

SIN,

SLAVERY,

SUPPLICATION (or crying to the Lord),

SALVATION, then

a period of SILENCE.

It's just kind of like they go through the cycle seven times. They did evil again in the sight of the Lord. Then for doing evil again in the sight of the Lord they're put into slavery for 30-40 years. Then say, "Oh God get us out of this mess and we'll never do it again." So God sends a judge, they're liberated and then there's a period of silence. They rock along and then "BAM" they do evil again in the sight of the Lord.

When we get to the end of the book of Judges it's the biggest mess because everybody's doing that which is right in their own eyes. And at the end of the book of Judges the three things that are dominant are:

IDOLATRY,

IMMORALITY, and

ANARCHY.

Now that's a sad, sad picture.

Samuel comes on the scene. Samuel is the last judge. But he's also the first prophet.

And as he comes on the scene, he is successful as a judge in liberating the nation Israel from the Philistines. But listen to what we read in 1 Samuel:

1 Samuel 7:12

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer saying, "Thus far has the Lord helped us." So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite territory again.

1 Samuel 7:15

Samuel continued as judge over Israel all the days of his life.

And then chapter 8 opens, which is the chapter just before what we're getting ready to study. And as this chapter opens this is what we read:

1 Samuel 8:3-9

When Samuel grew old he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. His sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king to lead us such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel, so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him, "Listen to all that the people are saying to you. It is not you they have rejected as their king, but me. As they have done from the day I brought them out of Egypt unto this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them, but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

And so in the rest of the chapter Samuel's telling them what it's going to be like to have a king rule over them. And when we get down to verse 19, which is just prior to our study, this is what we read:

1 Samuel 8:19

But the people refused to listen to Samuel; No, they said, We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations with a king to lead us and to go out before us and to fight our battles.

The tragedy of life is wanting to be like everybody else. God never designed the life of a believer to be in the majority. God never meant for us to be like everybody else. Actually God is repulsed by conformity. He is more proud of conviction.

In the Bible we see so many illustrations of conviction as the opposite. We read

1 John 2:15

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

Romans 12:1

Be not confirmed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

So instead of conformity, it's conviction that God blesses and delights in.

But many times God gives us what we want and in the process sends leanness into our souls when we beg and plead and desire it.

Hosea chapter 13 verse 11 says:

Hosea 13:11

I gave you a king in my anger and I took him away in your wrath.

They're going to have their king alright. Just like the children of Israel felt like they couldn't do without meat in the wilderness and God gave them meat.

It is difficult to believe that someone could respect themselves when they would make the following statement:

I do this not because I think it's right, not even because I deem it for my own interest, but simply because it's done by most of the people. I take this course, not because I see it as well-pleasing in Your sight, but because if I do otherwise men will laugh at me and despise me.

(source unknown)

What an opposite thing to the purpose of conformity or conviction.

“Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's meat.” (ref. Daniel 1:8)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, rather than bow before the golden altar, would go through the fiery furnace and the Lord would go with them through it.

Joseph had convictions in the house of Potiphar and therefore chose not to involve himself.

When the general voice says stay, perhaps it's time to go. And here Saul is a conformist and we're going to watch him in this situation.

Now that brings us as kind of a general sweep of scripture, up to the man who is going to become the first king of the land. They've never had a king except God. These are His people. They've been ruled by one God, and now they want to become a land that is ruled by a king.

What a guy. We just can't go through this first study without realizing he had everything going for him.

Really if there's a person who could really do it, this is the guy. It epitomizes him. He just had everything. But it's a tragedy of a man with an unsurrendered will. He never was really willing to open up and give it all to God.

Somebody said, "If you were to analyze the life of King Saul, you find him in phase number one trying to buy God, in phase number two you see him be buddy with God, in phase number three you see him trying to be God, and phase number four he's trying to bury God."

(source unknown)

Trying to BUY, BUDDY, BE and BURY are the four phases in a man's life.

What's he trying to do in the first phase by trying to **BUY** God? "Well God, I'll do this for You if You do this for me. You scratch my back, I scratch Your back." That's trying to buy God by "what I do for You, You do for me."

"If I do this for You, I expect You to do this for me." And that's the early phases of his life in what we see.

And then we see him kind of being a **BUDDY** with God. And we're always a buddy with God when we're self-righteous. When we are really walking with God we're aware of sin in our life and we know that God can't be our buddy apart from a relationship to Christ. And he's very self-righteous. Very ego-centered.

And in the third phase he's actually trying to **BE** God by running the show.

And in the last phase he wants to **BURY** God himself in the end of it.

And so this is a picture of much of what we're going to see. When we get down to the end of this guy's life we're going to come to that very tragic passage where he actually goes to the mediums and tries to get some help from the witch at Endor.

So now it is time to begin with the verse-by-verse exposition.

v. 1 There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose

name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.

“There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.”

Alright, as we move to chapter 9, in the book of Samuel the biography moves from Samuel to Saul to the rest of the book. And at this point we’re introduced to this guy. First of all, we’re introduced to his dad. His dad’s name is “Kish” and he is of the tribe of Benjamin. Those other names are just family names.

The tribe of Benjamin is the tribe of the youngest son born to Rachel. It was the last born child. Benjamin, son of pain and God says, “No, Benjamin son of my right hand.” And he is of this tribe.

Sometimes in the Bible we can make studies by contrast.

Who’s another Saul in the Bible? When we turn over to the New Testament we have Saul of Tarsus in the book of Acts. He’s of the tribe of Benjamin.

In contrast, look at Saul of the Old Testament and study his life and then look at Saul of Tarsus in the New Testament and study his life. What’s the difference between those two guys? Saul of Tarsus in the New Testament had an experience on the Damascus Road that caused him to never be the same. He

made a decision in Philippians 3 not to be content with his own righteousness, but to have a righteousness which came through Jesus Christ. He counted everything but loss to the excellence of the knowledge of Christ. He admitted he didn't have it. He admitted he had a need and he opened up his life to Christ and spent the rest of his life wanting to know Him.

And that's the difference. Saul in the Old Testament we're going to see him going along impersonally in his relationship to God even though he has all these great opportunities. But he never makes it personal. He never really gets his act together. Both of them are of the tribe of Benjamin.

Now it says several things about the dad here. It says he is "a man of standing." Well, that means he's rich. He's a man with power and substance. He's bold. He has an estate that is very, very rich and lucrative.

Saul is the son of a rich man. He had riding lessons, played polo, went to private school, had tennis lessons, basketball camp, owned his own horses, and had his own chariot. He's just a cool guy.

We often find that when we're around wealthy people and we see their offspring. Invariably wealthy people are concerned about three areas of their children:

1. Their MENTAL—that they get good training.

They go to the best schools.

2. Their SOCIAL—they have to learn to dance and they have to learn to go to the clubs, to parties and how to be good friends.
3. The PHYSICAL—they have to eat right, to play right, and be well-adjusted.

In the three areas—mental, social and physical—invariably the common denominator is to leave the spiritual alone. And because of that we have some spoiled rotten rich kids who have never learned to relate to God in a personal way.

And that is going to lead to the downfall of that individual. And that's exactly what happens to Saul. He has had countless opportunities but he has never been challenged spiritually. And he never, ever in his whole life is ever going to say, "my God." He'll always say, "your God" but never "my Lord."

And so he's the kind of guy, outwardly he's cool. He is going to be something else. And oftentimes we find when people make choices, they take a person by the way he looks. And what he can say rather than by how he acts.

And naturally he's candidate number one for this. He's good looking, he's handsome, he's tall, he's got the latest clothes and everything else.

Saul appears to be a melancholy choleric.

What is a melancholy choleric? If someone is a melancholy choleric, they have these combinations:

On the melancholy side they're sensitive, a perfectionist, a faithful friend. They're analytical, self-sacrificing, and idealistic. But they're always loyal.

On the negative side of the melancholy trait, they have a tendency to be self-centered, pessimistic, moody (they go up and down), revengeful, critical, negative, unsociable and rigid.

Now let's put the choleric in that and then see what kind of persons are melancholy choleric.

A choleric always has a strong willpower, is a practical leader, optimistic, determined, independent, productive, decisive and confident.

But now put the negative with it. He's got a short fuse, hot tempered, cruel, impetuous, self-sufficient, sarcastic, domineering, good businessman trait or temperament. With a choleric, they do it to someone before someone does it to them. They are inconsiderate, proud, unemotional, crafty and impatient.

Now if we put those two temperaments together, they'd look like this. We would have someone who's a perfectionist, a hard driver. He just will never say quit. He'd make a great attorney, especially a defense attorney. He would prepare

better for a brief than anybody else.

In the field of medicine, he would be the last word in medicine. He's a great doctor. If he in fact is a person who is in the airline industry, he would be an excellent airline captain. If he were in the field of education, he would leave the classroom to go into administration.

Many of the founding fathers of our country were probably melancholy choleric. Moses and Luke are two others who are melancholy choleric in the scripture.

In the field of athletics, he would be a super star because he would spill his insides in order to win. These kinds of people have this in common—they're very difficult to please. They rarely satisfy even themselves and they're tough to live with.

When they think somebody is against them, they just crawl under the woodpile. And they can become manic depressive very quickly and sadistic when they're confronted.

Detailed analyst, perfectionist, nitpicker for details and will drive somebody up the wall.

We find that Moses is this kind of person because he never overcame his temper. And that's a picture of a melancholy choleric.

He's an impressive young man. He probably made it into Who's Who and was one of the outstanding young men of

Israel. The record tells us he was “without equal.”

Listen to Saul of Tarsus, since he is almost exactly the same thing, except for the change in his life that Christ made. Listen to these verses:

Galatians 1:13, 14

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God, and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

v. 2 He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the others.

“He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than all of the others.”

He’s probably about six foot ten and a half tall. A really tall, good looking, great guy, with everything going for him.

v. 3 Now the donkeys belonging to Saul’s father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, “Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.”

“Now the donkeys belonging to Saul’s father Kish were lost,

and Kish said to his son Saul, 'Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.'"

Isn't it interesting how crazy little things turn out to be so different? Who would have ever thought that two prisoners talking together would get Joseph out of prison and make him vice president of the land? Who would have ever thought that a woman going down in the morning to take a bath would find in the bulrushes baby Moses who was going to be the liberator of the nation Israel from bondage?

Who would have ever thought that a love relationship between a woman and a Persian king would save the lives of the whole nation? Esther did just that.

Who'd have ever thought that a dad who was concerned about his sons who were out in battle would put his youngest son together with the king and eventually he would become a man after God's own heart and rule and reign in the land?

And who wouldn't have ever thought that a man like Saul with a servant looking for some donkeys would come back with a kingdom?

Sometimes it's amazing what happens in the most unlikely places. And nothing is insignificant to us.

v. 4 So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of

Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

“So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.”

Evidently it was round-up time and they were counting the stock and a whole bunch of them were missing. They got out of some fencing. And it's mostly a mountainous region and so they're off checking out all these little valleys and areas where these donkeys could have gotten out. And they haven't been able to find them. The search is futile.

v. 5 When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, “Come, let’s go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.”

“When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, ‘Come, let’s go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.’”

v. 6 But the servant replied, “Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let’s go there now.

Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.”

“But the servant replied, ‘Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let’s go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.’”

Saul feels like, “It’s time to go back.” And the servant says, “Over here in this town there is really this cool guy. He is a man of God.” Saul doesn’t know anything about him, notice that? He doesn’t even know what he looks like. That tells us he’s come up from a rich home and they didn’t have time for religion. It’s just further evidence of the fact that he doesn’t even know this guy. He doesn’t know him by name or that he lives there. The servant does.

What is amazing is how God brings nobody’s into the lives of somebody’s to touch them.

Ever studied Obadiah? He was the little old servant who worked in that crummy palace of Ahab and Jezebel. He saved all those prophets and now Jehoshaphat, when the kings of Edom and Israel and Judah were all ready to fight against the Moabites and they thought they were going to starve to death and go for water. And Jehoshaphat said this, “Is there not a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of the Lord by him?” And one of the servants answered and said, “Elisha, the son of Shaphat, is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” (see 2 Kings 3)

And remember that little captive maid up in Syria? She was captured out of the land of Israel and Naaman's wife was saying, "Oh I wish we had some way to cure Naaman of his leprosy." And she says, "There was a prophet in the land of Israel. Would that my master have found him?" (see 2 Kings 5)

This really doesn't negate the fact that we might think we're a nobody because one of these days we might touch a somebody. And wow what God's going to do as a result of what happens in that relationship.

It's a servant. He says, "There's somebody over here. He's a man of God." There are two things about him:

1. "he is highly respected"—he's a good man

And secondly:

2. "everything he says comes true"—he's 100% accurate.

That's the one way we can tell a prophet. We hear all these people running around saying they've got to get the prophecy but we don't find anybody that's one hundred percent correct so they don't have to get a prophecy.

Our prophet—everything that's said is going to come true. It's going to be 100%. And this guy is a real prophet. He is the last of the Judges and the first of the prophets.

v. 7 Saul said to his servant, “If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?”

“Saul said to his servant, ‘If we go, what can we give the man?’”

Isn’t that always the way it is? We’re going to go see him. We have to have an offering.

“The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?”

We don’t have any gifts. “What do we have?”

v. 8 The servant answered him again. “Look,” he said, “I have a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take.”

“The servant answered him again. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I have a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take.’”

Evidently this was some kind of a good luck piece that the servant had carried with him and he says, “Listen, I’ve got a quarter of a shekel of silver here. We’ll give this to him and then he’ll tell us what we need to know.”

Isn’t verse 9 neat? That’s the way the Holy Spirit does things.

He puts things in parenthesis that help us understand the story. The Spirit just drops in and says, “Hey, I want to get your attention here. I’ve got something I want to tell you.”

v. 9 (Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, “Come, let us go to the seer,” because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)

“(Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, ‘Come, let us go to the seer,’ because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)”

But now a “seer” is one to see for reading of the palm and all that junk and so it’s the satanic part of it. The prophet is the real man of God. The Spirit of God just kind of drops that in there.

v.10 “Good,” Saul said to his servant. “Come, let’s go.” So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

“Good,’ Saul said to his servant. ‘Come, let’s go.’ So they set out for the town where the man of God was.”

v. 11 As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water, and they asked them, “Is the seer here?”

“As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water, and they asked them, ‘Is the

seer here?”

This six foot ten-and-a-half-inch man comes walking up the road. He's good looking, and blows their socks off. Robert Redford wouldn't have a thing on him.

v. 12 “He is,” they answered. “He’s ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place.

“He is,’ they answered. ‘He’s ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place.”

God doesn't ever make a mistake in putting us right where we need to be. And if we're in the center of God's will, we're going to find that sometimes miracles are going to take place. People just drop into our life, walk across our path as a sacred, divine appointment. God just wonderfully uses that.

God works in all of our lives in bringing people to us. These guys are in their tent. If they'd have been a minute late from this occasion, they'd have had to wait all day and who knows, they certainly wouldn't have sat around starving to death with all their food gone.

And they said, “Hurry.”

v. 13 As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because

he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time.”

“As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time.””

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He makes it beautiful in His time.

Isaiah 30:21

Your ears will hear a word behind you saying, this is the way walk ye in it. When you turn to the right hand and you turn to the left.

This just falls together when we’re in the will of God and He’s involved.

The news of this made them quicken their pace and they hustled up to town.

v. 14 They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way up to the high place.

“They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way to a high place.”

Silently, secretly, slowly, surely, steadily God is working out His will and His way.

Doesn't that sound dumb? They're out looking for a bunch of donkeys, walk into a town, ask a bunch of girls where they're supposed to go, and all of a sudden coming down the middle of the street—in a town where they've never been before—insignificant happenings all contributing toward an ultimate cause and purpose that the Lord has in mind.

Any of the instruments in God's hands are there without us even knowing it.

v. 15 Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel:

“Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel:”

The Lord sometimes works on the people ahead of time that we're coming to, to speak to, because He's got to get them prepared for it.

v. 16 “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the

hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.”

“About this time tomorrow”—the Lord had said—“I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.”

Sometimes we get so caught up in the star of the story we forget the other characters that are supporting characters. Let’s say that someone is the leader of the land, okay? They’re the big leader and all of a sudden God says, “Tomorrow your replacement’s coming.”

How would someone handle that? Being asked to step aside?

“We’re changing the administration. We’re no longer going to have a judge, we’re now going to have a king.”

Now keep in mind through the whole series with Samuel, here’s a guy who’s been basically in the eyes of the world shoved in the background. But we don’t find him angry about it. We don’t find him non-supportive. We don’t find him bitter and resentful.

He could take this as a personal affront, a grave error in God’s sight. That’s what happened. A staggering blow. Bewildering moment.

Well, the same thing happened in the life of Christ, when in the Garden of Gethsemane, He's asked to take the cup and give His life.

With the apostle Paul it's a thorn in the flesh. He asked the Lord to deliver him and the Lord said no. "But my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in your weakness." (ref. 2 Corinthians 12:9)

Samuel is so mature. He carries all of this to the Lord. And he's willing to trust the Lord. And he's beautiful in the rest of this encounter when we realize the trauma and the emotional condition of the guy when he meets him.

He could have looked at him and said, "Now I see you guys after a while over there. We'll talk together for a little bit. I knew you were coming." Just be terribly impersonal and very businesslike and the whole thing.

First Corinthians 13 says, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (ref. 1 Corinthians 13:7)

Samuel overlooks this personal slight, this public reproach, and he goes on to be a man who is very supportive. And because of his attitude he sets the stage for the period in the history of Israel is now beginning. This is the beginning of the kingdom.

And so here we have a person who wants the will of God more

than his own selfish desires. That's the way we get our prayers answered too. When we want His will more than our own selfish desires, we're ready for God to really start to work. Because God is going to bless us when we want His glory more than anything.

Paul in Philippians 1:20 says, "that Christ may be glorified in body whether by life or by death." He's going to get prayers answered. He wants God glorified whether he gets out of that prison or whether he dies in it. He wants the will of God and God to have the glory.

v. 17 When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, "This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people."

"When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, 'This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.'"

Isaiah 30:21

Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left."

The Lord just softly speaks, "Sam, that's him walking up the road."

v. 18 Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and

asked, ‘Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?’”

“Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, ‘Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?’”

He’s never seen him before. And he doesn’t know anything about him. Looking right at him he says, “I want to know where the seer’s house is.”

v. 19 “I am the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart.

“I am the seer,’ Samuel replied. ‘Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart.”

He issues a series of instructions.

v. 20 As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?”

“As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found.”—side deal here—And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all

your father's family?"

He said, "Awe hey, hey, what was that? To whom is all of Israel turned, if not to you and to your family?"

And now we get a clue in verse 21 of the condition of the man's heart.

v. 21 Saul answered, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?"

"Saul answered, 'But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?'"

A man is no more proud than when he has to speak of his humility. And this guy is proud. Pride is lurking in the inner recesses of his heart. He's quickly going to become a man who's going to lose his perspective by his success.

"Why do you say such a thing to me?"

v. 22 Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited—about thirty in number.

"Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited—about

thirty in number.”

Evidently, he got some of the key people in the land together, about thirty of them, to have lunch.

v. 23 Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside.”

“Samuel said to the cook, ‘Bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside.’”

Evidently this was the piece of meat that was prepared for Samuel. It's being given to Saul who prepared it specially to honor him. Just like the Lord soaked that piece of bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot in the upper room as a guest of honor Samuel had this special piece of meat put aside and prepared for the new king who's going to be king over the land. And so he's going to honor him and he brings this piece of meat.

v. 24 So the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it in front of Saul. Samuel said, “Here is what has been kept for you. Eat, because it was set aside for you for this occasion, from the time I said, ‘I have invited guests.’” And Saul dined with Samuel that day.

“So the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it in front of Saul. Samuel said, ‘Here is what has been kept for you. Eat, because it was set aside for you for this occasion, from the time I said, “I have invited guests.”’ And Saul dined

with Samuel that day.”

They were hungry. Probably peeled their stomach off their backbone because their bags were empty and they hadn’t had anything to eat for quite a long time. And here they come.

What’s happening? He’s sitting there at the table with this mysterious look on his face. “I can’t believe this is happening. What in the world is going on? Why is he speaking about my family? How did he know I was coming? Why has the food been prepared like this?”

Remember Joseph when the other eleven brothers were all brought to the white house for lunch that day and they hadn’t seen Joseph for 22 years? They went to their place settings and when they sat down, they were all sitting in order, from the firstborn to the last born. And they’re looking at each other—Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulum.

“Somebody around here knows something. We’re in a foreign land but something’s happening.” Saul probably has those strange feelings that something is going on here.

v. 25 After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house.

“After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house.”

What did he talk to him about? What would two guys talk about when the religious leader is getting ready to turn over the reins of the kingdom to somebody else?

What's the first thing he probably said to him? Most likely it was something he really needed to hear. When someone is leading God's people it's awfully easy to play God in their lives.

He took them back to the Abrahamic covenant and showed him how they were God's people. And the history of these people.

He told them the dangers of disobedience and when we fail to respond. He told them about the future and about spiritual responsibilities and the fact that they'd never had a king before. And the only way a king could honor God would be to consult God before a king ever did anything to rule God's people. And above all, to be obedient above everything else to the law of God.

v. 26 They rose about daybreak and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Get ready, and I will send you on your way.” When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together.

“They rose about daybreak and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, ‘Get ready, and I will send you on your way.’ When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together.”

Wakes him up in the morning and says, “I’ve got the bacon and eggs on. Get in the shower and shave. Come on down and eat. Time to leave.”

And as they’re walking, he probably told him his concerns for the present condition of the people and their waywardness and their sinfulness. And his future expectations and excitement over Saul’s leadership and that he was going to be so supportive of him. No matter what he did he was going to try to hang in there and be with him.

But it’s awfully easy to become god when we’re God’s representative with the people.

And the last verse, as the sun sets in the west or as the sun rises in the east, and they’re beginning to walk off:

v. 27 As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us”—and the servant did so—“but you stay here awhile, so that I may give you a message from God.”

“As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, ‘Tell the servant to go on ahead of us’”

This is private talk between two men.

“—and the servant did so—‘but you stay here awhile, so that I

may give you a message from God.”

The thing that is so hard in this study is to see this first meeting with Samuel and then to see their last. It is tragic. It is just the opposite. It is just so, so sad.

We want to treasure this particular thing in our mind because we’re getting ready to see it later.

God had this design to get him there and brought them together. He goes out looking for donkeys and he finds a king.

Here are the lessons that summarize our passage:

Lesson #1: How sensitive we need to be to God’s direction when it’s contrary to our desires.

Lesson #2: Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

The next king is going to be a man after God’s own heart. Saul—it’s never said that of him. He’s only chosen because of his outward appearance.

Lesson #3: God sometimes uses negative and insignificant happenings in our lives to accomplish His purpose.

Lesson #4: How perfect is the Lord’s timing.

Lesson #5: Samuel’s humble and obedient heart is revealed in

his treatment of Saul on this occasion.

Lesson #6: The tragedy of Saul's life is he did not hear and heed the message from God.

This is the best scene between him and Samuel.

Lesson #7: A man's maturity is best reflected when he is still supportive after being set aside.

Lesson #8: Saul is superficial and self-centered.

Diotropes loved to be in the center of everything. A man's leadership is developed and also demonstrated by his act of service.

Mark 10:45

I came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give my life a ransom for many.

It is the servant.

Lesson #9: Before we become Christians, we play God in our own lives and afterwards in the lives of others.

Lesson #10: Life was designed by God to be impossible without Him.

Our loving Father we come to You and thank You for the biographies of scripture. And that out of their lives there are lessons which we can learn and principles that can be applied in our own lives. Thank You for the privilege of studying Your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsurrendered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

STUDY NUMBER ONE - 1 SAMUEL 9:1-27

NOTES

v. 1 There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.

v. 2 He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the others.

v. 3 Now the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, “Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.”

v. 4 So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there.

Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

v. 5 When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, “Come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.”

v. 6 But the servant replied, “Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.”

v. 7 Saul said to his servant, “If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?”

v. 8 The servant answered him again. “Look,” he said, “I have a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take.”

v. 9 (Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, “Come, let us go to the seer,” because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)

v. 10 “Good,” Saul said to his servant. “Come, let's go.” So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

NOTES

v. 11 As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water, and they asked them, “Is the seer here?”

v. 12 “He is,” they answered. “He’s ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place.

v. 13 As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time.”

v. 14 They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way up to the high place.

v. 15 Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel:

v. 16 “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.”

v. 17 When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.”

v. 18 Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, “Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?”

v. 19 “I am the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart.

v. 20 As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?”

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Samuel 9:1-27 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. How is Saul described in verse 2?

3. Describe the problem facing Saul in verses 3-5.

4. What is the servant's advice, according to verse 6?

5. How had the Lord been preparing Samuel for his meeting with Saul, according to verses 15 & 16?

6. Summarize the conversation between Samuel and Saul in verses 19-21.

7. What did Samuel do for Saul in verses 22-24?

8. Why does Samuel delay Saul in verse 27?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: How sensitive we must be to God's direction when it seems to run contrary to our desires.

LESSON #2: Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart.

LESSON #3: God sometimes uses negative and insignificant happenings in our lives to the accomplishment of His purpose.

LESSON #4: How perfect is the Lord's timing in the happening of events in our lives.

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