Sunday Night Message
June 16, 2019
Head and Shoulders Above the Rest
Topics – The People Desire a King; Saul
Series – *1 Samuel*
Text – 1 Samuel 9

Introduction

In chapter eight, we saw the beginning of the transition from the period of the judges to the period of the kings. Israel will no longer be content with a judge ruling over them; they demand a king. The last straw was when Samuel appointed his two sons to be judges over Beersheba. His two sons were not good men: they "took bribes and perverted judgment," and the people did not want to submit to them.

God finally acquiesces to their wishes, and instructs Samuel to give them what they want, but not before he warns them what the consequences will be as a result of their desire. A king will impose taxes on them, and take their children to be used in the service of his kingdom. Even after the warnings, the people still demand a king.

Here in chapter nine, we meet the first king of Israel, Saul.

I   A Sanguine First Glimpse of Saul (vs. 1 – 2)

Our first look at Saul is positive; optimistic. He looks to be, from a human perspective, a good candidate for the job.

Saul comes from a powerful family.

Saul was the best human choice for the position of king. Notice that most of the description of Saul is external.

Note – contrast with David (see 1 Samuel 16:1 – 13)

God looks on the heart. David had heart.

The Philistine giant misjudged David based upon his appearance:

"And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance." (1 Samuel 17:42)

II   The Sovereign Factors Guiding Saul to Samuel (vs. 3 – 14)

Neither Saul or Samuel have a clue as to what is coming. Samuel is tending to his prophetic duties, and Saul is looking for some lost donkeys. Either the donkeys were just lost on their own, and God just used it as an opportunity to move forward his plan; or, God sovereignly orchestrated these events in order to bring Saul to Samuel. We can't be sure. God miraculously used the situation with the donkeys to bring Saul to Samuel.

Donkeys represented wealth. Saul's father could have just sent a couple of servants, but Saul was sent because of the value of the donkeys.

Notice in vs. 4 & 5 the long trip that they made, and had nearly circled back to where they started. Saul's house was in Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:26). Samuel's house was in Ramah (1 Samuel 7:17).

Notice in v. 6 that it is the servant who suggests that they go and find Samuel.

V. 8 – a fourth part of a shekel is a tenth of an ounce. (about $1.50 today)

V. 9 - Though at some points in history, a seer may have been somewhat different than a prophet, at this point, when the people thought of a seer, they were thinking of a prophet.

V. 12 – high place – not a pagan altar, but an elevated place where sacrifices to Jehovah God could be made.

III   The Surprising Focus Given to Saul at Dinner (vs. 15 – 27)

It was surprising because Saul never expected anything to happen to him that day. 'You never know when God is going to break into your life and do something awesome. Saul was just minding his business when all of a sudden, God stepped in.

Vs 15 & 16 - Notice that God had Samuel prepared a day ahead of time. Notice also that God had brought Saul in to deliver the people of Israel from the hand of the Philistines.

V. 20 – Samuel's miraculous knowledge of the loss of the donkeys, and their subsequent rescue provided proof that Samuel was intimately acquainted with God's will for Saul.

V. 21 – Notice the humility of Saul at the beginning. Later, he will struggle greatly with insecurity and pride. (See 1 Samuel 15)

V. 26 – "spring of the day" - dawn

Conclusion

Two practical thoughts:

1. You never know when God is going to step into your life and do something big:

    a. Stay Faithful

    b. Don't mess up

2. God only calls humble people. Pride will eventually disqualify you.

    You were humble when God called you – stay humble after He uses you. Stay dependent on the Lord.

EPHRAIM

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ISRAEL

Gilgal

BENJAMIN

Mizpah

Ramah

Gibeath-elohim

Gibeah