

# 1 Samuel 9 Commentary

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## 1 Samuel 9:26

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Chart from recommended resource Jensen's Survey of the OT - used by permission  
1 Samuel Chart from Charles Swindoll

Timeline of the Books of Samuel, Kings & Chronicles									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as **"Judah"** and the Northern Kingdom as **"Israel."** Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

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Map on Left [ESV Global Study Bible](#), on right [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#)  
 CLICK TO ENLARGE

1 Samuel 8	1 Samuel 9	1 Samuel 10	1 Samuel 11	1 Samuel 12
A King Requested	A King Chosen		King Goes Forth	The Kingdom Admonished
People request a king	Saul comes to Samuel	Saul Anointed	Saul's call to arms	Samuel's call to commitment

**1 Samuel 9:1** Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. ([NASB95: Lockman](#))

BGT 1 Samuel 9:1 καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔθνεϊ τῶν Βενιαμιν καὶ νομαστὴς Κίς υἱὸς Ἀβιηλ υἱοῦ Ζερεὶ υἱοῦ Βαχίρ υἱοῦ Ἀφεκ υἱοῦ νῶφ ἐξ ἰσραὴλ οὗ ἐν δυνάτει

KJV 1 Samuel 9:1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

NET 1 Samuel 9:1 There was a Benjamite man named Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. He was a prominent person.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:1 There was an influential man of Benjamin named Kish son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, son of a Benjamite.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a man of wealth.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:1 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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:1 There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Becorath son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a man of wealth.

- **Kish:** 1Sa 14:51 1Ch 8:30-33 9:36-39 Acts 13:21
- **valor.** 1Sa 25:2 2Sa 19:32 Job 1:3
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Outline from Dale Ralph Davis** - Part 2—A King in God's Place 1 Samuel 8–14

- The King Thing—1 Samuel 8:1-22
- Lost and Found—1 Samuel 9:1–10:16
- A Lost King?—1 Samuel 10:17–27
- A Hopeful Beginning—1 Samuel 11:1-15
- Covenant—Accusing and Assuring—1 Samuel 12:1-25
- Tarnish on the Crown—1 Samuel 13:1-23
- Sad Success—1 Samuel 14:1-52

**SAUL'S FATHER KISH  
A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR**

One might entitle this chapter how losing donkeys to find a king. To get the full impact of chapters 9-10 you need to understand that behind all these variegated events we see the sovereign hand of God orchestrating the building of Israel's first human monarchy. He will use donkeys, 2 men, 3 men, prophets, girls going for water, evil Ammonite warlord, etc. Ask the Spirit to show you the invisible hand of God controlling the scenes He is behind! This same sovereign God is orchestrating events in each of our lives whether we recognize it or not. Perhaps one of the marvels of heaven will be to see the manifold times He has been behind the events in our life, but that's conjecture.

Now there was a man of [Benjamin](#) whose name was [Kish](#) the son of [Abiel](#), the son of [Zeror](#), the son of [Becorath](#), the son of [Aphiah](#), the son of a [Benjamite](#), a mighty ([gibbor](#)) man of valor - Saul's line is given back 5 generations with emphasis on his father Kish being "a prominent person" (NET Version) or "a man of wealth" (ESV). The latter designation is supported by the fact that we soon see he owned more than one donkey and Saul was accompanied by a servant, indicating he came from a well off family.

[Kish](#) - The son of Abiel and the father of Saul, the first king of Israel. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, of the family of the Matrites (1Sa 9:1; 14:51; compare Acts 13:21; 1Sa 10:21). According to 1Ch 8:33 and 9:39, "Ner begat Kish" By reading "Ner begat Abner" (compare 1Sa 14:51; 1Ch 6:28), the difficulty is at least partly overcome. In 1Ch 12:1, Kish is also mentioned as the father of Saul, and again in 2Sa 21:14, we are told that the sepulcher of Kish was located in the country of Benjamin, in Zela. His place of residence seems to have been at Gibeath.

**J D Greear** - [Saul's name](#) derives from the Hebrew word sha'al meaning "asked" (OR DESIRED) and reminds us that Israel got the king they "asked" (DESIRED) for—a king like all the other nations—but rejected the true King they needed: the Lord God. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel](#))

**Spurgeon** - Here we have the pedigree of the first king of Israel, Saul, the son of Kish. He was descended from a noble tribe, though not a very large one, and he appears to have been endowed with a very notable personal appearance: "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people;" and to the Israelites of that day, who had got away from looking up to God, and to the more valuable accomplishments of the mind and the heart, the striking personal appearance of Saul would be a great attraction and recommendation.

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**Mighty** ([01368](#)) [gibbor](#) cp related verb **gabar** = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong, brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. Mighty man (cp "mighty [[gibbor](#)] men of David" - 2Sa 23:8). See discussion of this word group from TWOT - [Gibbor Word Group](#) **Jehovah** is "the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the **mighty** and the awesome God" (Dt 10:17), the "King of glory, Jehovah strong and **mighty**, Jehovah **mighty** in battle" (Ps 24:8), "a victorious **warrior** ([gibbor](#))" (Zeph 3:17), the "**Mighty** One ([gibbor](#) - in context a prophecy of the Messiah)" (Ps 45:3)

**Valor** (wealth, strength, riches, army) ([02428](#)) [chayil](#) strength, wealth, army. This word has the basic idea of strength and influence. **C P Weber** - In the sense of "strength," "power," or "might" in general, [hayil](#) is used about twenty times: of God ([Psalm 59:11](#)), from God ([Ps 18:32](#)), physical strength of a man (Eccles. 10:10), or even of plant life (Joel 2:22). As wealth is often related to power, [hayil](#) is thus used to mean "wealth" about thirty times being translated "wealth," "riches," "substance," or "goods." It may be the wealth of a nation (Tyre, Ezekiel 28:4-5) an individual (e.g. Job 31:25), the wicked (Job 15:29), or from God (Dt. 8:18, etc.). Approximately eighty-five times [hayil](#) is used as an attribute of people. It follows 'ish "man" ("valiant man," 1 Kings 1:42), sometimes [bēn](#), son" ("valiant man," 2 Sa 17:10), and most often follows [gibbôr](#) "mighty (man)" ("mighty man of valor"). The individual designated seems to be the elite warrior similar to the hero of the Homeric epic, and it may be that the [gibbôr hayil](#) was a member of a social class. Although in most contexts his military prowess was involved, he was wealthy enough to bear special taxes (2 Kings 15:20, translated because of context, "mighty men of wealth"). The use in 1 Kings 1:52 indicates that the [ben hayil](#) (translated "worthy man") was also to be honorable or reputable. Adonijah's life was in danger because of his treachery, not because of lack of strength or wealth. [hayil](#) also designates men of ability to care for Joseph's sheep (Genesis 47:6, translated "men of activity"), or to judge the people (Exodus 18:21, 25, translated able men"). When the term is used of a woman (Ruth 3:11; Proverbs 12:4; and Proverbs 31:10) it is translated virtuous" (ASV, RSV "worthy" or "good"), but it may well be that a woman of this caliber had all the attributes of her male counterpart. The use of [hayil](#) to designate a class of people is seldom found outside the historical books from Joshua to 2 Chronicles. Moreover the translation sometimes obscures its occurrence, such as: "men of activity," "able men," "worthy man," "men of wealth," "man of power" (1 Samuel 9:1), "man of might" (2 Kings 24:16), "strong men" (1 Chr 26:7, 9), and even "meet for the war" (KJV, Deut. 3:18). [hayil](#) follows 'āsâ "do" or "make" in an idiom translated "do worthily" (Ruth 4:11), "virtuously" (Proverbs 31:29) for women, and "do valiantly" (Psalm 60:12 [H 14], et al.) for men. Resulting from the meaning "strength," [hayil](#) is used over one hundred times (about half of which are in Jeremiah and Ezekiel) in the sense of "army," "host," or "forces." In this connection it is also translated "band of men" (1 Samuel 10:26), "band of soldiers" (Ezra 8:22), and for some reason war" meaning "army" in the phrase "captains of war" (KJV, 2 Chr 33:14). In a related sense [hayil](#) is used for the entourage which

accompanied the queen of Sheba when she visited Solomon (1 Kings 10:2; 2 Chron. 9:1; variously translated "company," "train," "retinue"). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

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## **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - SAUL, THE CHOICE YOUNG MAN 1 Samuel 9**

"Life is the day of grace,  
Up! Strive to win the race;  
Lo! Grace and Truth have come;  
Turn, listen, be not dumb."  
—GROSART.

The morning of Saul's life was calm and bright, and full of promise; the midday was cloudy and threatening; the afternoon was cold, and dark, and stormy; the evening was terrific with the thunderstorm of despair, and suicidal blackness. His life began with a day of grace, and ended with the "wages of sin." In this chapter we have Saul brought before us as a "choice young man, and goodly." Let us take a look at him. He was so in his—

I. Personal Appearance. "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he" (v. 2). He had what almost every young man covets to have—an attractive and commanding persona. God had richly blessed him with a finely-formed and superior physical body. This is an inheritance that is not to be lightly esteemed, although many, both young men and young women, use this gift of God only for their own selfish ends. A healthy and well-formed body makes a beautiful temple for the Holy Spirit, and may be a mighty weapon in His hands to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan.

II. Child-like Obedience. He went at once at his father's bidding to "seek the asses" (vv. 3, 4). Although Saul was "head and shoulders higher than any of the people," he was not too big to obey his father. This is a lovely trait in the character of a handsome young man. When the disciples strove about who should be greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst as an example of the true spirit of greatness, and said, "He that will be chiefest among you, let him be the servant of all" (Mark 10:44). He loved us, and gave Himself for us.

III. Filial Thoughtfulness. "Come, let us return, lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us" (v. 5). He was not so anxious about the objects of his pursuit as to forget the anxious thoughts of a loving father. There be many young men who leave home in the pursuit of business who, in their new surroundings, forget the yearnings of a father's heart, so that their letters home are long in coming. They are wise fathers who are more concerned about the safety of their sons than the success of their worldly business.

IV. Generous Disposition. When his servant suggested that they should consult the prophet about the lost asses, he at once reminded him that he had "not a present to bring to the man of God" (vv. 6, 7). This is quite an incidental revelation of the kindness of his nature. He could not think of asking a favour, even from "the man of God," without recompensing him in some way (Judges 6:18). It is said that "generous natures go most readily astray." The very depth and force of their generous affections may be their greatest temptation. But the shallow inconsiderate and selfish young man is already far astray. Look not every man on his own things (interests), but on the things (interests) of others (1 John 2:15).

V. Relationship to God. "When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto Him, Behold the man!... this same man shall reign over My people" (v. 17). Not only was he "a choice young man" in the sight of men, but he was "a choice young man" in the sight of God. The highest honour any young man can have on earth is to be a chosen one of God; it is worth sacrificing all the world for such a favour. And this honour have all the saints in Christ Jesus. A young man may have many lovely features in his character, many rich moral qualities, yet if this link of Divine approbation is wanting he is like a beautiful ship laden with valuable goods, but drifting aimlessly on the ocean of life. He is out of harmony with the purpose of God. Saul did not find the asses, but he found a kingdom. His disappointment was God's appointment. The Gospel of Christ is God's call to every man to inherit the kingdom of Heaven. Ho! weary seekers in the world of business or pleasure, turn aside and seek the Prophet of Nazareth, He will give you a kingdom.

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### **1 Samuel 9:1-6 Godliman Street**

Several years ago my wife and I were walking in London when we came across a road named Godliman Street. We were told that a man once lived there whose life was so saintly that his street became known as "that godly man's street." This reminded me of an Old Testament story.

Saul's father sent his son and a servant to look for some donkeys that had wandered away. The young men searched for many days but couldn't find the animals.

Saul was ready to give up and go home, but his servant pointed toward Ramah, the prophet Samuel's village, and replied, "Look

now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go" (1 Samuel 9:6).

Throughout his years and into old age, Samuel had sought friendship and fellowship with God, and his words were weighty with truth. People knew him to be a prophet of the Lord. So Saul and his servant "went to the city where the man of God was" (v.10).

Oh, that our lives would so reflect Jesus that we would leave a mark on our neighborhoods, and the memory of our godliness would linger on!—David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### Thinking It Over

- How would your neighbors describe you?
- For further study, read [Why Would Anyone Want To Be Holy?](#)

**The most powerful testimony is a godly life.**

**1 Samuel 9:2 He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:2 κα το τ υ ς κα νομα ατ Σαουλ εμεγ θης ν ρ γαθ ς κα ο κ ν ν υ ο ς Ισραηλ γαθ ς  
π ρ α τ ν π ρ μ α ν κα π ν ω ψηλ ς π ρ π σαν τ ν γ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

NET 1 Samuel 9:2 He had a son named Saul, a handsome young man. There was no one among the Israelites more handsome than he was; he stood head and shoulders above all the people.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:2 He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man. There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:2 And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:2 He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites--a head taller than any of the others.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:2 His son Saul was the most handsome man in Israel-- head and shoulders taller than anyone else in the land.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:2 He had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he; he stood head and shoulders above everyone else.

- **choice:** 1Sa 16:7 Ge 6:2 2Sa 14:25,26 Jer 9:23
- **from his shoulders:** 1Sa 10:23 17:4 Nu 13:33
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Gigantic Proportions of Sovereign,  
from the Egyptian Sculptures

## A CHOICE SON NAMED SAUL

He had a son whose name was [Saul](#), a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people ("head and shoulders" taller) - Tall, dark and handsome, a perfect picture of a regal ruler (see picture above)! Saul's name means "asked of God," very apropos in view of the fact that he was the answer to the answer to Israel's asking for a king. Saul's description indicates he had the look of a king in his appearance and stature! Samuel filled the image of a king. You might say Saul "had it all" coming from a wealthy family and

having what the world craves for, good looks, even standing out because of his height. You would say he is a perfect candidate to be Israel's first king. Note what is not mentioned about Saul - his relationship with God.

**Bergen** makes a fascinating comment - Saul is the only Israelite specifically noted in the Bible as being tall; elsewhere it was only Israel's enemies whose height was noted (cf. Num 13:33; Deut 1:28; 2:10; 9:2; 1 Sam 17:4). Israel had asked for a king "like all the other nations" (8:20), and the Lord was giving them the desires of their heart, even down to the physical details! (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Guzik** says "There is nothing said because there was nothing to say. Saul reflected the spiritual state of the whole nation of Israel. There may have been some spiritual image present, but the heart was far from where God wanted it to be."

**Dale Ralph Davis** - What a handsome fellow! People would have voted him Mr. Israel had there been such a contest. A shame they didn't have basketball at Gibeath High School; with his height Saul would have been a star center. The writer passes on into his story; but you must keep in mind this description of Saul in 1Sa 9:1-2, his ideal appearance and his physical impressiveness. File it away; it will prove important much later in our story. ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart](#))

**1 Samuel 9:3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now with you one of the servants, and arise, go search for the donkeys."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:3 κα π λοντο α νοι Κις πατρ ς Σαουλ κα ε πεν Κις πρ ς Σαουλ τ ν υ ν α το λαβ μετ σεαυτο ν τ ν παιδαρ ων κα ν στητε κα πορε θητε κα ζητ σατε τ ς νους

KJV 1 Samuel 9:3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

NET 1 Samuel 9:3 The donkeys of Saul's father Kish wandered off, so Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go look for the donkeys."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:3 One day the donkeys of Saul's father Kish wandered off. Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the attendants with you and go look for the donkeys."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:3 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:3 One day Kish's donkeys strayed away, and he told Saul, "Take a servant with you, and go look for the donkeys."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, had strayed. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the boys with you; go and look for the donkeys."

- 1Sa 10:2 Jdg 5:10 10:4
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE PROVIDENTIAL DONKEY "DEBACLE"

**Now the [donkeys](#) of Kish, Saul's father, were lost** - Donkey's were prized animals and used by royalty, which is interesting for these lost donkeys will lead to the discovery of royalty! Why were the donkeys lost? Sure there were human reasons, but remember that ultimately Jehovah is sovereign over every event in every life, all the time (good for all of us to remember)! He is in control of donkeys that have gone out of control! We will watch how God uses this seeming negative event to providentially bring Saul into contact with the man of God, Samuel.

**THOUGHT** - There were no chance occurrences in Saul's life nor are there in our lives. We need to remember that truth. My son called me this morning and related how he was served with a lawsuit on January 1, 2023, a Sunday! What are the "chances? But then he said something that shocked me. After his initial shock and "Are you kidding me" response, he opted to thank God for the "pop test," and prayed God would use it to order his steps according to God's will. This is a response only the Holy Spirit could have enabled, for he is the son who had been on drugs and alcohol for 20 years before coming to his senses. God is good! So if you have some



situations that seem hopeless, let me encourage you to put your hope in God, the God of hopeless situations. I make no guarantees on the outcome of the situation, but am confident that if your confidence and hope are in the only Hope of the World, Jesus Christ, your inner being will not react to your external circumstances in the ways you may have reacted in the past. Just a thought to ponder.

**Smith** notes that these were "Hebrew, "she-asses." As used for riding (Judges 10:4), the ass was valuable, and as these were probably kept for breeding, they were allowed more liberty than the males, and so strayed away." (The Pulpit Commentary)

**So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now with you one of the servants, and arise, go search for the donkeys."** We don't know how many donkeys made a break for freedom, but we do know that in the ancient world donkeys were valuable pieces of property and so Kish was likely more than just a little upset! And so he assigned Saul an important task. The father sent his son Saul on a search and rescue mission, not knowing that he is doing the Lord's work to send him on a mission to meet the prophet Samuel who will anoint him as the first king of Israel. God's unusual ways of accomplishing His purposes in our lives reminds me of Isaiah's words "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. " (Isaiah 55:8-9)

**Guzik** makes an excellent point "Israel's first king will be led to the throne by three lost donkeys. We have no idea how God will use the seemingly normal and annoying circumstances of life. There are two mistakes people make regarding God's guidance through circumstances. One mistake is to think every event of life is heavy with meaning from God. This is wrong, because though nothing happens by accident, not everything happens for a great purpose. The second mistake is to ignore the moving of God in our lives through circumstances. God wanted to use this situation to guide Saul, and God will often use circumstances in our lives the same way. We need to trust in God's goodness and in His ability to make all things work together for good (Romans 8:28)."

**Spurgeon** - OBSERVE HOW THE HAND OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE CAUSES LITTLE THINGS TO LEAD ON TO GREAT MATTERS. This man Saul must be placed in the way of the prophet Samuel. How shall a meeting be brought about? Poor beasts of burden shall be the intermediate means. The asses go astray, and Saul's father bids him take a servant, and go to seek them. In the course of their wanderings, the animals might have gone North, South, East, or West; for who shall account for the wild will of runaway asses? But so it happened, as men say, that they strayed, or were thought to have strayed, in such a direction that, by-and-by, Saul found himself near to Ramah, where Samuel, the prophet, was ready to anoint him. On how small an incident the greatest results may hinge! The pivots of history are microscopic. Hence, it is most important for us to learn that the smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of providence as the most startling events. He who counts the stars has also numbered the hairs of our heads. Our lives and deaths are predestinated, but so also are our downsitings and our uprising. Had we but sufficiently powerful perceptive faculties, we should see God's hand as clearly in each stone of our pathway as in the revolutions of the earth. In watching our own lives, we may plainly see that, on many occasions, the merest grain has turned the scale. Whereas there seemed to be but a hair's-breadth between one course of action and another, yet that hair's-breadth has sufficed to direct the current of our life. "He," says Flavel, "who will observe providences shall never be long without a providence to observe." Providence may be seen as the finger of God, not merely in those events which shake nations, and are duly emblazoned on the page of history, but in little incidents of common life, ay, in the motion of a grain of dust, the trembling of a dew-drop, the flight of a swallow, or the leaping of a fish. (from [1 Samuel 9:3, 20 Looking for One Thing and Finding Another](#))

**Dale Ralph Davis** - It looks like simply another chapter in "Minor Irritations in Life on the Farm." Lost asses, fruitless search, a servant's suggestion, a prophet's hospitality, sacred oil. Who could've known? That day on Kish's farm it just looked like the usual, ordinary, routine, run-of-the-mill sort of bump-along life most of us have. But Samuel's ear had heard what was really up: "tomorrow about this time I will send you a man..." (9:16). Yahweh frequently magnifies the minutiae of our lives into channels of his mercy. But we are getting ahead of our story..... "**Providence**" is God's way of providing for the needs of his people. That's not all of it, but some of it. When I use "providence" here I mean that wonderful, strange, mysterious, unguessable way Yahweh has of ruling his world and sustaining his people, and his doing it, frequently, over, under, around, through, or in spite of the most common stuff of our lives or even the bias of our wills. Here was common stuff all right: looking for lost asses, asking dozens of local folks ("Have you happened to see...?"), making a thorough tour of the central hill country (9:4-5a), [2] deciding to give up the fruitless search (v. 5b), urging an inquiry of the man of God (v. 6), happening to find a fourth shekel's weight of silver for a prophet's fee (vv. 7-8). It is all so natural and ordinary. As Alexander Maclaren has put it:

Think of the chain of ordinary events which brought Saul to the little city,—the wandering of a drove of asses, the failure to get on their tracks, the accident of being in the land of Zuph when he got tired of the search, the suggestion of the servant; and behind all these, and working through them, **the will and hand of God, thrusting this man, all unconscious, along a path which he knew not.**

It all seems so casual; who would know it was planned? It looks like we are dealing simply with what appears rather than with what is ordained. How do we know losing the asses and finding a kingdom was God's doing? Because of an "intrusion" into our story. ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart](#))

**NIV Study Bible** - Saul is introduced as a donkey wrangler sent in search of donkeys that had strayed from home—perhaps symbolizing Saul and the rebellious people who had asked for a king (cf. Isa 1:3). David would be introduced as a shepherd caring for his father's flock (16:11-13) and later pictured as the shepherd over the Lord's flock (see 2Sa 5:2 and note; 7:7-8; Ps 78:70-72 and note on Ps 78:72). (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**TECHNICAL NOTE - NET NOTE** - The Syriac Peshitta includes the following words: "So Saul arose and went out. He took with him one of the boys and went out to look for his father's donkeys."

**Related Resource:**

- See more comments on the providential nature of the "Tail" of Donkey Debacle or "How to Find a King by Losing Donkeys."

**1 Samuel 9:4 He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:4 καὶ διελθὼν διὰ τοὺς ἑφραϊμ καὶ διελθὼν διὰ τὴν γῆν Σελῶ καὶ ὁχερὸν καὶ διελθὼν διὰ τὴν γῆν Εἰσακεμ καὶ ὁκὼν καὶ διελθὼν διὰ τὴν γῆν Ἰακὴμ καὶ ὁχερὸν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.

NET 1 Samuel 9:4 So Saul crossed through the hill country of Ephraim, passing through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. So they crossed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he crossed through the land of Benjamin, and still they did not find them.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:4 Saul and his attendant went through the hill country of Ephraim and then through the region of Shalishah, but they didn't find them. They went through the region of Shaalim-- nothing. Then they went through the Benjaminite region but still didn't find them.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:4 And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:4 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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:4 So Saul took one of the servants and traveled through the hill country of Ephraim, the land of Shalishah, the Shaalim area, and the entire land of Benjamin, but they couldn't find the donkeys anywhere.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:4 He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

- **hill country of Ephraim:** Jdg 17:1 19:1
- **Shalisha:** 2Ki 4:42
- **Shalim:** Ge 33:18 Joh 3:23
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Central Location of Ephraim

## SAUL'S SEARCH LACKS SUCCESS

**He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them** - Recall that the prophet Samuel's home base was located in the hill country of Ephraim

**Then** - Don't miss the conjunction **then**, which occurs 31x in 30 verses in this story of the anointing of Saul as King (1 Samuel 9-12).



So what's significant about "then?" Just this - it means at that time, soon after that, next in order of time and helps one see the sequence of events in a narrative.

**They passed through the land of [Shaalim](#), but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.** - God was leading Saul on this journey. Saul thought he was seeking the donkeys, not knowing that God was seeking to make him king. God is always "behind the scenes," controlling the scenes He is behind. These "dead ends" also indicate the diligence of Saul. And they show that the donkeys went where God wanted them. Had they found the donkeys, they would have returned home and missed the crucial meeting with Samuel.

**Spurgeon** - He was diligent in his father's service, even though that service meant a fruitless journey in search of some straying asses. As he was thus faithfully discharging the duties of his station in life; he was the man who was likely to rise to some higher position. He was the son of "a mighty man of power" or substance, and yet, so simple were the manners of the time that he was sent, with one of the servants, to look for the lost donkeys, and he appears to have started at once to carry out the commission which had been entrusted to him. Learn from Saul's obedience, dear young people, never to despise any duty which falls to your lot in the ordinary avocations of daily life; you will be preparing yourselves for some higher position by doing well what you are called to do now.

**1 Samuel 9:5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, or else my father will cease to be concerned about the donkeys and will become anxious for us."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:5 α τ ν λ θ ν τ ω ν ε ς τ ν Σ ι φ κ α Σ α ο υ λ ε π ε ν τ παι δ α ρ α τ ο τ με τ α τ ο δ ε ρ ο κ α ν α σ τ ρ ψ ω με ν μ ν ε ς πα τ ρ μου τ ς ν ο υ ς φ ρ ο ν τ ζ πε ρ μ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

NET 1 Samuel 9:5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come on, let's head back before my father quits worrying about the donkeys and becomes anxious about us!"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the attendant who was with him, "Come on, let's go back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:5 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:5 Finally, they entered the region of Zuph, and Saul said to his servant, "Let's go home. By now my father will be more worried about us than about the donkeys!"

NRS 1 Samuel 9:5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the boy who was with him, "Let us turn back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and worry about us."

- Zuph: 1Sa 1:1
- take thought: 1Sa 10:2 Mt 6:25,28,34 Lu 12:11,22
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL'S TENDER HEART TOWARD HIS FATHER

**When they came to the land of [Zuph](#)** - We do not know exactly where Zuph was located but apparently it was relatively central (like Ephraim -- see map above).

**Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, or else my father will cease to be concerned about the donkeys and will become anxious for us** - Servant indicates Saul's family had some wealth. Saul shows his concern for his father is more important than his concern for his father's donkeys.

**Spurgeon** - There was evidently in Saul, at that time, a great considerateness of spirit; he wished to save his father from having any painful anxiety concerning his son and his servant, for Saul put both together when he said "us." It is most desirable that young men, in the present day, should have a tender regard for those to whom they owe their being, and who have done so much for them in

the years of their tender infancy; and that all young people should be careful never needlessly to give their parents one anxious thought on their account.

**1 Samuel 9:6 He said to him, "Behold now, there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he says surely comes true. Now let us go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:6 κα ε πεν α τ τ παιδ ριον δο δ νθρωπος το θεο ν τ π λει τα τ κα νθρωπος νδοξος π ν ν λαλ σ παραγιν μενον παρ σται κα ν ν πορευθ μεν πωσ παγγε λ μ ν τ ν δ ν μ ν φ ν πορε θημεν π α τ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:6 And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

NET 1 Samuel 9:6 But the servant said to him, "Look, there is a man of God in this town. He is highly respected. Everything that he says really happens. Now let's go there. Perhaps he will tell us where we should go from here."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:6 "Look," the attendant said, "there's a man of God in this city who is highly respected; everything he says is sure to come true. Let's go there now. Maybe he'll tell us which way we should go."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:6 But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:6 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:6 But the servant said, "I've just thought of something! There is a man of God who lives here in this town. He is held in high honor by all the people because everything he says comes true. Let's go find him. Perhaps he can tell us which way to go."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:6 But he said to him, "There is a man of God in this town; he is a man held in honor. Whatever he says always comes true. Let us go there now; perhaps he will tell us about the journey on which we have set out."

- **city:** 1Sa 2:27 De 33:1 1Ki 13:1 2Ki 6:6 1Ti 6:11
- **honor:** 1Th 2:10 5:13
- **all that he says surely comes true** 1Sa 3:19,20 Isa 44:26 Zec 1:5,6 Mt 24:35
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MAN OF GOD'S EXCELLENT REPUTATION

**He** (Saul's servant) **said to him** (Saul), **"Behold now, there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor"**(cf 1Sa 3:20+); **all that he says surely comes true**- **Man of God** clearly refers to Samuel the prophet and the fact that all he said **comes true** testifies that everyone believed he was a true prophet of God. What is amazing/surprising is that the implication is that Saul is not aware of this man of God!

**Man of God** is key phrase in 1 Samuel 9 - 1 Sam 9:6 1 Sam 9:7 1 Sam 9:8 1 Sam 9:10 (Only other use in 1Sa = 1 Sam 2:27)

**THOUGHT** - Do others think of you primarily as a man (or woman) of God or a man (or woman) of the world. These reputations are "worlds apart!" May others call us man/woman of God, because we have walked worthy of our high calling in Christ. Amen.

**Now let us go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out**- Let's go to a prophet of God and he will enable us to find our donkeys. Actually the phrase **perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out** proves to be prophetic, as Samuel would indeed tell them why they had set out on this journey for donkeys! It was really a journey to find (anoint) a king!

**Spurgeon** - In this case, as in so many others, the servant seems to have had more grace than his young master had, for the name

of Samuel the prophet was not unknown to him, and he knew where the “man of God” lived, and told Saul a good deal about him, and gave him some good advice as to what they should do. In any case where the servant, and not the master, knows the Lord, it is well, when occasion offers, and it can be done prudently and discreetly, for the servant to speak up, and give a good word for the cause of God and truth.

**Brian Bell** - Up to this point Saul had been totally ignorant of Samuel's existence until now. This seems strange seeing that Samuel lived so close to Saul's hometown & had been such a blessing o the nation. Saul's lack of awareness indicated that Kish & his family were entirely irreligious & totally immersed in their own pursuits. How disappointing that the only reason they visited Samuel was to find their lost animals! a) People often “use” their religion to solve their problems & not to strengthen their character or overcome their sins. b) Nevertheless, God uses all of this to bring Saul to Samuel. Faithfulness in a small task led Saul to a new friend, a new calling, & a new opportunity to serve God. (Warren Wiersbe)

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**William Blaikie** - from the very beginning, a great want in Saul. He appears from the very first to have wanted all that was most conspicuous and most valuable in Samuel. It is a circumstance not without its significance, that the very name and work of Samuel do not seem to have been familiar or even known to him. It was his servant that knew about Samuel, and that told Saul of his being in the city, in the land of Zuph (1 Samuel 9:5-6). **This cannot but strike us as very strange. We should have thought that the name of Samuel would have been as familiar to all the people of Israel as that of Queen Victoria to the people of Great Britain. But Saul does not appear to have heard it, as in any way remarkable. Does not this indicate a family living entirely outside of all religious connections, entirely immersed in secular things, caring nothing about godly people, and hardly ever even pronouncing their name?** It is singular how utterly ignorant worldly men are of what passes in religious circles, if they happen to have no near relative, or familiar acquaintance in the religious world to carry the news to them from time to time. **And as Saul thus lived outside of all religious circles, so he seems to have been entirely wanting in that great quality which was needed for a king of Israel - loyalty to the Heavenly King. Here it was that the difference between him and Samuel was so great. Loyalty to God and to God's nation was the very foundation of Samuel's life.** Anything like self-seeking was unknown to him. He had early undergone that momentous change, when **God** is substituted for **self** as the pivot of one's life. The claims of the great King were ever paramount in his eyes. What would please God and be honouring to Him, was the first question that rose to his mind. And as Israel was God's people, so the interest and the welfare of Israel were ever dear to him. And thus it was that Samuel might be relied on not to think of himself, not to think of his own wishes or interests, except as utterly subordinate to the wishes and interests of his God and his nation. It was this that gave such solidity to Samuel's character, and made him so invaluable to his people. **In every sphere of life it is a precious quality.** Whether as domestic servants, or clerks, or managers, dependent on others, **those persons are ever of priceless worth whose hearts are thus set on objects outside themselves, and who are proof against the common temptations of selfishness and worldliness. And when they are the rulers of a nation, and are able to disregard their personal welfare in their burning desire to benefit the whole people, they rise to the rank of heroes, and after their death, their names are enshrined in the memories of a grateful and admiring people.** (ED: O BELOVED, HOW WE NEED TO INTERCEDE FOR AMERICA'S LEADERS TO BE MEN OF SUCH AN ILK! DO IT LORD, FOR THY GLORY. AMEN - cf 1Ti 2:1-2+).

But in these high qualities, Saul seems to have been altogether wanting. For though he was not selfish and self-indulgent at first, though he readily obeyed his father in going to search for the strayed asses, he had no deep root of unselfishness in his nature, and by-and-bye, in the hour of temptation, the cloven foot unhappily appeared. And ere long the people would learn, that as Saul had in him no profound reverence for the will of God, so he had in him no profound and indefeasible regard for the welfare of God's people. The people would come to see what a fatal mistake they had made in selecting a king merely for superficial qualities, and passing by all that would have allied him, as Samuel was allied, to God himself. Now it seems to have been God's purpose that the first king of Israel should be a man of this kind. Through him the people were to learn that the king who simply fulfilled their notions, was capable, when his self-will was developed, of dragging the nation to ruin. No! it was not the superficial qualities of Saul that would be a blessing to the nation. It was not a man out of all spiritual sympathy with the living God that would raise the standing of Israel among the kingdoms around, and bring them the submission and respect of foreign kings. The intense and consistent godliness of Samuel was probably the quality that was not popular among the people. In the worldliness of his spirit, Saul was probably more to their liking. Yet it was this unworldly but godly Samuel that had delivered them from the bitter yoke of the Philistines, and it was this handsome but unspiritual Saul that was to bring them again into bondage to their ancient foes. **This was the sad lesson to be learned from the reign of Saul.**

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**F B Meyer - Behold, there is in this city a man of God.**

There is a street in London, near St. Paul's, which I never traverse without very peculiar feelings. It is Godliman Street. Evidently the name is a corruption of godly man. Did some saint of God once live here, whose life was so holy as to give a sweet savor to the very street in which he dwelt? Were the neighbors who knew him best, the most sure of his godliness? Would that our piety might

leave its mark on our neighborhoods, and the memory linger long after we have passed away!

A generation or two ago in the Highlands, there were earnest and holy men who were known by the significant title of the men. No great religious gathering was deemed complete without them. Their prayers and exhortations were accompanied by an especial unction.

In such manner Samuel's godliness was recognized far and wide. The fragrance of his character could not be concealed. And this gave men confidence in him. They said, "He is an honorable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass." How much credit redounds to godliness, when it is combined with trustworthiness and high credit amongst our fellows!

Let us seek to be God's men and women. Let us live not only soberly and righteously, but godly, in this present world. Let us remember that God hath set apart the godly for Himself. The godly are the godlike. They become so by cultivating the fellowship and friendship of God. Their faces become enlightened with His beauty; their words are weighty with His truth. After being for a little in their company, you detect the gravity, serenity, gentleness, beauty of holiness, which are the court manners of heaven.

**1 Samuel 9:7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is gone from our sack and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:7 κα ε πεν Σαουλ τ παιδαρ α το τ μετ α το κα δο πορευς μεθα κα τ ο σομεν τ νθρ π το θεο π ο ρτοι κλελο πασιν κ τ ν γγε ων μ ν κα πλε ον ο κ σιν μεθ μ ν ε σενεγκε ν τ νθρ π το θεο τ π ρχον μ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?

NET 1 Samuel 9:7 So Saul said to his servant, "All right, we can go. But what can we bring the man, since the food in our bags is used up? We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:7 "Suppose we do go," Saul said to his attendant, "what do we take the man? The food from our packs is gone, and there's no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

ESV 1 Samuel 9:7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"

NIV 1 Samuel 9:7 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?"

NLT 1 Samuel 9:7 "But we don't have anything to offer him," Saul replied. "Even our food is gone, and we don't have a thing to give him."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:7 Then Saul replied to the boy, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What have we?"

- **what shall:** Jdg 6:18 13:15-17 1Ki 14:3 2Ki 4:42 5:5 8:8
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NOTHING TO BRING TO THE PROPHET

**Then Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man?-** Saul seems to feel you must take the man of God a present. Does he mean to imply we then can merit his prophetic insight regarding the location of the donkeys? It's hard to say for sure, but apparently others took gifts to Samuel and that would make sense as he would need some way to maintain a standard of living. On the other hand Samuel was not charging fees for fortunes, like some fake fortune teller.

**Treasury of Scripture note** - We are not to suppose from this that the prophets took money to predict future events: Saul only refers to an invariable custom, that no man approached a superior without some present or another, however small in value....Presents then are tokens of honour; not intended as offers of payment or enrichment.

**For the bread is gone from our sack and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"-** They were out of food.

**Spurgeon** has an interesting comment - He says nothing about any money that he may have had in his own pocket, and again his servant has to lead the way.

**1 Samuel 9:8 The servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give it to the man of God and he will tell us our way."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:8 κα προσθετο τ παιδ ριον ποκριθ ναι τ Σαουλ κα επεν δο ερηται ν τ χειρ μου τ ταρτον σ κλου ργυρ ου κα δ σεις τ νθρ π το θεο κα παγγελε μ ν τ ν δ ν μ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

NET 1 Samuel 9:8 The servant went on to answer Saul, "Look, I happen to have in my hand a quarter shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God and he will tell us where we should go."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:8 The attendant answered Saul: "Here, I have a piece of silver. I'll give it to the man of God, and he will tell us our way."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:8 The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:8 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:8 "Well," the servant said, "I have one small silver piece. We can at least offer it to the man of God and see what happens!"

YLT 1 Samuel 9:8 And the young man addeth to answer Saul, and saith, 'Lo, there is found with me a fourth of a shekel of silver: and I have given to the man of God, and he hath declared to us our way.'

NRS 1 Samuel 9:8 The boy answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter shekel of silver; I will give it to the man of God, to tell us our way."

- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A SHEKEL OF SILVER FOR A PROPHECY

**The servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give it to the man of God and he will tell us our way** - This passage does seem to imply the servant thought he could "buy" a prophecy from Samuel.

**NET NOTE** - A quarter shekel of silver would weigh about a tenth of an ounce (about 3 grams).

**Youngblood** - When consulting a prophet, it was common courtesy to bring a gift (Amos 7:12), whether modest (1 Kings 14:3) or lavish (2 Kings 8:8–9)."

**1 Samuel 9:9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.)**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:9 κα μπροσθεν ν Ισραηλ τ δε λεγεν καστος ν τ πορε εσθαι περωτ ν τ ν θε ν δε ρο πορευθ μεν πρ ς τ ν βλ ποντα τι τ ν προφ την κ λει λα ς μπροσθεν βλ πων

KJV 1 Samuel 9:9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

NET 1 Samuel 9:9 (Now it used to be in Israel that whenever someone went to inquire of God he would say, "Come on, let's go to the seer." For today's prophet used to be called a seer.)

CSB 1 Samuel 9:9 Formerly in Israel, a man who was going to inquire of God would say, "Come, let's go to

the seer," for the prophet of today was formerly called the seer.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.)

NIV 1 Samuel 9:9 (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.)

NLT 1 Samuel 9:9 (In those days if people wanted a message from God, they would say, "Let's go and ask the seer," for prophets used to be called seers.)

YLT 1 Samuel 9:9 Formerly in Israel, thus said the man in his going to seek God, 'Come and we go unto the seer,' for the 'prophet' of to-day is called formerly 'the seer.'

NRS 1 Samuel 9:9 (Formerly in Israel, anyone who went to inquire of God would say, "Come, let us go to the seer"; for the one who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.)

- **inquire:** Ge 25:22 Jdg 1:1
- **a Seer:** 2Sa 24:11 2Ki 17:13 1Ch 26:28 29:29 2Ch 16:7,10 Isa 29:10 Isa 30:10 Am 7:12
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PARENTHETICAL EXPLANATION

### A SEER = A PROPHET

(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.) - Note there is no mention of requirement to bring remuneration in any form to the seer/prophet.

**Adam Clarke** on **seer** - "The word seer, roeh, occurs for the first time in this place; it literally signifies a person who sees; particularly preternatural [supernatural] sights. A seer and a prophet were the same in most cases; only with this difference, the seer was always a prophet, but the prophet was not always a seer."

**Spurgeon** - He was a man who looked further ahead than others could; for, under divine inspiration, he could see into futurity.

**1 Samuel 9:10 Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:10 κα ε πεν Σαουλ πρ ς τ παιδ ριον α το γαθ ν τ μα δε ρο κα πορευθ μεν κα πορε θησαν ε ς τ ν π λιν ο ν κε νθρωπος το θεο

KJV 1 Samuel 9:10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

NET 1 Samuel 9:10 So Saul said to his servant, "That's a good idea! Come on. Let's go." So they went to the town where the man of God was.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:10 "Good," Saul replied to his attendant. "Come on, let's go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:10 And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:10 "Good," Saul said to his servant. "Come, let's go." So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:10 "All right," Saul agreed, "let's try it!" So they started into the town where the man of God lived.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:10 Saul said to the boy, "Good; come, let us go." So they went to the town where the man of God was.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:10 And Saul saith to his young man, 'Thy word is good; come, we go;' and they go unto the city where the man of God is.



- **Well said:** 2Ki 5:13,14
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL ACCEPTS SERVANT'S ADVICE

**Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said (Lit - Thy word is good); come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was** - The city is not named. Presumably it is related to the fact that Samuel "he used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places." (1Sa 7:16).

**Spurgeon** - Saul was willing to be liberal at his servant's expense, and to let him give "the fourth part of a shekel of silver" to the prophet for him; and we have known some other folk who have been very generous in giving away the money of other people rather than their own.

**1 Samuel 9:11 As they went up the slope to the city, they found young women going out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?"**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:11 α τ ν ν α β α ι ν ν τ ω ν τ ν ν β α σ ι ν τ ς π λ ε ω ς κ α α τ ο ε ρ σ κ ο υ σ ι ν τ κ ο ρ σ ι α ξ ε λ η λ υ θ τ α  
δ ρ ε σ α σ θ α ι δ ω ρ κ α λ γ ο υ σ ι ν α τ α ς ε σ τ ι ν ν τ α θ α β λ π ω ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:11 And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

NET 1 Samuel 9:11 As they were going up the ascent to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water. They said to them, "Is this where the seer is?"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:11 As they were climbing the hill to the city, they found some young women coming out to draw water and asked, "Is the seer here?"

ESV 1 Samuel 9:11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

NIV 1 Samuel 9:11 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?"

NLT 1 Samuel 9:11 As they were climbing the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water. So Saul and his servant asked, "Is the seer here today?"

NRS 1 Samuel 9:11 As they went up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

YLT 1 Samuel 9:11 They are going up in the ascent of the city, and have found young women going out to draw water, and say to them, 'Is the seer in this place?'

- **slope of the city:** Ge 24:11,18-20 Ex 2:16 Jdg 5:11
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## UP TO THE CITY TO MEET THE PROPHET

**As they went up the slope to the city** - They had to ascend to the unnamed city.

**They found young women going out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?"** - In that day, the women went for water. This encounter was not accidental but divinely providential!

**THOUGHT** - Have you experienced divinely ordained providential encounters? I'm sure you have. But O to have our spiritual eyes opened wider to see the innumerable occasions of divine providence in our lives, that we might, guided by His Spirit, rightly respond to them. Amen See discussion of "opportunities" in article on Redeem the Time.

**1 Samuel 9:12 They answered them and said, "He is; see, he is ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, for the people have a sacrifice on the high place today.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:12 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη τὰ κοῦρσια αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτοῖς σὺν δόκῳ κατὰ πρόσωπον μὴ νυνδὶ τὸν μόνον κείεσται τὴν τιθυσὶν σήμερον τὰ λαμβανά

KJV 1 Samuel 9:12 And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:

NET 1 Samuel 9:12 They replied, "Yes, straight ahead! But hurry now, for he came to the town today, and the people are making a sacrifice at the high place.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:12 The women answered, "Yes, he is ahead of you. Hurry, he just now came to the city, because there's a sacrifice for the people at the high place today.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:12 They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:12 "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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:12 "Yes," they replied. "Stay right on this road. He is at the town gates. He has just arrived to take part in a public sacrifice up at the place of worship.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:12 They answered, "Yes, there he is just ahead of you. Hurry; he has come just now to the town, because the people have a sacrifice today at the shrine.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:12 And they answer them and say, 'He is; lo, before thee! haste, now, for to-day he hath come in to the city, for the people hath a stated sacrifice in a high place.

- **sacrifice:** 1Sa 16:2 Ge 31:54 De 12:6,7 1Co 5:7,8
- **the high place:** 1Ki 3:2-4 1Ch 16:39
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Kings 3:2-4 The people were still sacrificing on the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. 3 Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 4 The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

Leviticus 26:30 'I then will destroy your **high places**, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you.

### HURRY TO THE SEER

**They answered them and said, "He is; see, he is ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, for the people have a sacrifice on the high place ([bamah](#)) today** - The statement **he has come into the city today** suggests this was part of Samuel's annual cycle and that this was not his home base Ramah. Why would they sacrifice on the **high place**? The most likely answer is there was at that time no tabernacle. This would support the premise that the Tabernacle at Shiloh had been destroyed, presumably in the war with the Philistines when they captured the Ark of the Covenant. The high places later became locations of unbiblical practices and finally even locations of abominable idolatrous worship.

**Bergen** - Being an itinerant judge for the region (cf. 7:16–17), Samuel visited his hometown only occasionally. The altar that he had previously constructed there, likely "at the high place" (Hb. *bāmâ*), had apparently become a sacred site that served as a local substitute for the ruined worship center at Shiloh (cf. comments on 1Sa 7:17). (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**William Blaikie** - But now, as Saul and his servant came to the city, another providential meeting takes place to help them to their object. "As they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water." The city was up the hill, and the water supply would naturally be at the bottom. From the maidens that were going down to the fountain, they obtained information fitted to quicken their movements. They learned that the prophet had already arrived. The preparations for the sacrifice which he

was to offer were now going on. It was just the time to get a word with him, if they had business to transact. Very soon he would be going up to the high place, and then the solemn rites would begin, and be followed by the feast, which would engross his whole attention. If they would catch him at the proper moment they must **"make haste."** **That they did quicken their pace, we cannot doubt. And it was necessary; for just as they reached the city Samuel made his appearance, about to go up to the high place. If they had lost that moment, they would probably have had no opportunity during the whole day. Nor is it likely that Saul, who had no great desire for the company of the prophet, would have waited till the sacrifice and the feast were over.** The two men were brought together **just in the nick of time**. And thus another essential link of God's chain, bringing the old and the new ruler of Israel into contact with each other, was happily adjusted, all through means to us apparently accidental, but forming parts of the great scheme of God.

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**High places** (01116) **bamah** Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - [NET Note](#) = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp Isa 58:14) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

**Henry Morris** notes that "Worship in high places was forbidden in the Mosaic law (Leviticus 26:30) because of its universal association with the idolatrous polytheistic pantheism of other nations. Such practice probably originated at the Tower of Babel and then was carried worldwide by the subsequent dispersion."

A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Chr 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and **Josiah** (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about **Josiah** 300 years earlier = 1Ki 13:2) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son **Manasseh** rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them!

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high places** in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

One of the most incredible (and saddest) verses in the OT (in my opinion) is "Then Solomon built a **high place** for **Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon." (1Ki 11:7, cp 1Ki 3:3 = Solomon had "half a heart" for God!) This was too much for Jehovah and He declared that the 12 tribes would be split as a result of Solomon's sin! Sin is costly. You may think you are getting away with it, but you are not! You may think you are the wisest man in the world (like Solomon) but you are really the most foolish (as Solomon was)! There was one high place that was not idolatrous (at least not at the outset) - "Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness." (2Chr 1:3, cp 1Ch 16:39-40, 21:29).

**1 Samuel 9:13 "As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up for you will find him at once."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:13 ζ ν ε σ λθητε τ ν π λιν ο τω ς ε ρ σετε α τ ν ν τ π λει π ρ ν ν α β ναι α τ ν ε ς Βα ρα το φα γε ν τι ο μ φ γ λ α ς ω ς το ε σελθε ν α τ ν τι ο το ς ε λο γε τ ν θ υ σ αν κα με τ τα τα σ θ ου σιν ο ξ νοι κα ν ν ν β η τε τι δι τ ν μ ρ αν ε ρ σετε α τ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:13 As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

NET 1 Samuel 9:13 When you enter the town, you can find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people won't eat until he arrives, for he must bless the sacrifice. Once that happens, those who have been invited will eat. Now go on up, for this is the time when you can find him!"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:13 If you go quickly, you can catch up with him before he goes to the high place to eat. The people won't eat until he comes because he must bless the sacrifice; after that, the guests can eat. Go up immediately-- you can find him now."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:13 As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:13 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:13 Hurry and catch him before he goes up there to eat. The guests won't begin eating until he arrives to bless the food."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:13 As soon as you enter the town, you will find him, before he goes up to the shrine to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those eat who are invited. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately."

YLT 1 Samuel 9:13 At your going in to the city so ye do find him, before he doth go up in to the high place to eat; for the people do not eat till his coming, for he doth bless the sacrifice; afterwards they eat, who are called, and now, go up, for at this time ye find him.'

- **bless:** Mt 26:26 Mk 6:41 Lu 24:30 Joh 6:11,23 1Co 10:30 1Ti 4:4
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SACRIFICE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A MEAL

**As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up for you will find him at once** - NET has "for this is the time when you can find him!" The women give Saul and his servant detailed guidance and implied they needed to go quickly.

**TECHNICAL NOTE - NET NOTE** - The MT has "him" (הֵן, 'oto) here, in addition to the "him" at the end of the verse. The ancient versions attest to only one occurrence of the pronoun, although it is possible that this is due to translation technique rather than to their having a Hebrew text with the pronoun used only once. The present translation assumes textual duplication in the MT and does not attempt to represent the pronoun twice. However, for a defense of the MT here, with the suggested translation "for him just now—you will find him," see S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel, 72–73.

**1 Samuel 9:14 So they went up to the city. As they came into the city, behold, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the high place.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:14 καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ ὡς ἔρχοντο εἰς τὴν μέσσην τῆς πόλεως καὶ ὁ Σαμουὴλ ἐλθὼν ἐξ ἐκτῆς ἐπὶ ἔρχοντο εἰς Βαμὰ

KJV 1 Samuel 9:14 And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

NET 1 Samuel 9:14 So they went up to the town. As they were heading for the middle of the town, Samuel was coming in their direction to go up to the high place.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:14 So they went up toward the city. Saul and his attendant were entering the city when they saw Samuel coming toward them on his way to the high place.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:14 So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:14 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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:14 So they entered the town, and as they passed through the gates, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the place of worship.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:14 So they went up to the town. As they were entering the town, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the shrine.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:14 And they go up in to the city; they are coming in to the midst of the city, and lo, Samuel is coming out to meet them, to go up to the high place;

- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A PROVIDENTIAL MEETING OF PROPHET & FUTURE KING

**So they went up to the city** - They followed the instructions of the women. This is not small detail as women were not held in high esteem in the ancient world. Nevertheless, Saul and his servant were satisfied with their statements.

**As they came into the city, behold, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the high place**- The timing was perfect. The God of providence left nothing to chance in this "chance meeting."

[Brian Bell](#) on **providence** - (see also 1 Samuel 10:2 commentary) - Perfect timing - they would have missed Samuel if they came to the gate a minute or 2 later. Let's talk about the providential hand of God: You don't hear of any cities being named Providence anymore. Providence, R.I. - was 1st settled in June 1636 by Roger Williams, and was one of the first cities established in the U.S. and one of the original 13 Colonies. He named the area in honor of "God's merciful Providence" which he believed was responsible for revealing such a haven for him and his followers to settle. Providence = to see in advance or beforehand. It's used to summarize God's ongoing relationship to His creation. Four common errors regarding God and His relationship to creation: [1] Deism (God created the world and then essentially abandoned it); [2] Pantheism (creation doesn't have a real, distinct existence in itself, but is only part of God); [3] Chance (or randomness); [4] Fate (impersonal determinism). Big difference between the Providence of God and fortune, fate, or luck. The key to this difference is found in the personal character of God: Fortune is blind while God is all-seeing. Fate is impersonal while God is a Father. Luck is dumb while God can speak. There are no blind, impersonal forces at work in human history. All is brought to pass by the invisible hand of Providence. **R.C.Sproul**, "There is no such thing as chance. Chance does not exist. It is merely a word we use to describe mathematical possibilities. But chance itself has no power because it has no being. Chance is not an entity that can influence reality. Chance is not a thing, It is nothing."

**Providence** teaches: God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that He

1. keeps them existing & maintaining the properties with which he created them
2. cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and
3. directs them to fulfill his purposes.

**Or, Preservation, Concurrence, & Government.**

1. Preservation - Providence includes God's work of sustaining His creation.
2. Concurrence - We are creatures w/a will of our own. We make things happen. Yet the causal power we exert is secondary. God's sovereign providence stands over & above our actions. He works out His will through the actions of human wills, w/o violating the freedom of those human wills. Clear example: in the case of Joseph & his brothers. Though his brothers incurred true guilt through their treachery against him, the providence of God was working even though their sin. Joseph said to his brothers, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."
3. Government - He rules His creation w/absolute sovereignty & authority. (The earth is His ball, & He can take it & go home when He wants! He governs everything that comes to pass, from the greatest to the least. He makes the rain to fall & the sun to shine. He raises up kingdoms & brings them down. He numbers the hairs on our heads & the days of our life.

Q: How does this doctrine increase your trust in God?

Q: How will this changed the way you think about the future?

Q: Do you sometimes think of luck or chance as causing events that happen in your life? Does it increase or decrease your anxiety about the future?

Q: Do you see how little superstitions won't prevent or bring good luck? Like, walking under a ladder; worrying when a black cat walks across your path; stepping on a crack in the sidewalk; or carrying a certain good luck charm?

In him(God) we live, move, & have our being. Acts 17:28

So God uses here, in our story: run away donkeys; young women fetching water; hurrying up; & right time/right place...for his glory

**1 Samuel 9:15 Now a day before Saul's coming, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel saying,**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:15 κα κ ριος πεκ λυψεν τ τον Σαμουηλ μ ρ μι μπροσθεν το λθε ν πρ ς α τ ν Σαουλ λ γων

KJV 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

NET 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the day before Saul arrived, the LORD had told Samuel:

CSB 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the day before Saul's arrival, the LORD had informed Samuel,

ESV 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel:

NIV 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel:

NLT 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the LORD had told Samuel the previous day,

NRS 1 Samuel 9:15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel:

YLT 1 Samuel 9:15 and Jehovah had uncovered the ear of Samuel one day before the coming of Saul, saying,

- **the Lord:** 1Sa 9:17 15:1 Ps 25:14 Am 3:7 Mk 11:2-4 14:13-16 Ac 13:21 27:23
- told Samuel in his ear: Heb. revealed the ear of Samuel, 1Sa 20:2 2Sa 7:27 Job 33:16
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION GIVEN**

**Now a day before Saul's coming, the LORD had revealed** (literally - uncovered the ear) **this to Samuel saying** - More literally this reads "Jehovah had **uncovered the ear** of Samuel one day before the coming of Saul" (1Sa 9:15YLT) The Spirit inspires the writer to give us some background in 1Sa 9:15-17 concerning God's revelation to Samuel the previous day. How did Yahweh reveal these truths? The text does not say. One is reminded of the words in Amos 3:7 that "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets." And so Yahweh revealed His will to His prophet in preparation for the meeting with Saul.

**Guzik** spares no words in describing Saul as a man who "had no relationship with the Lord, so God spoke to Saul through lost donkeys. But Samuel knew and loved the Lord, so God spoke to Samuel in his ear."

**Cyril Barber** - In a brief flashback we learn that God had taken the initiative in selecting a king for His people. The day before, He had whispered in Samuel's ear, "About [this] time tomorrow I will send to you a man out of the land of Benjamin; and you shall anoint him [to be] the leader of my people Israel" (1 Samuel 9:16). Samuel's godward relationship was remarkable. His trust in the Lord was implicit. After being rejected by the people (1 Samuel 8) he did not show any resentment when God told him about the man who would replace him as judge of the nation. Instead we note a readiness to further the plan and purpose of God. Such obedience is both noteworthy and praiseworthy. When Samuel saw Saul and his servant, the Lord said to him, "Look, the man of whom I spoke to you; this [one] shall rule over My people" (1Sa 9:17). ([Books of Samuel](#))

**William Blaikie** - THE meeting between Samuel and Saul was preceded by previous meetings between Samuel and God. God had prepared the prophet for his visit from the future king of Israel, and the first thing brought before us in these verses is the communication on this subject which had been made to the prophet a day before. **It is very interesting to observe how readily Samuel still lends himself for any service he can render on behalf of his people, under the new arrangement that God had permitted for their government.** We have seen how mortified Samuel was at first, when the people came to him with their request



for a king. He took it as a personal affront, as well as a grave public error. Conscious as he was of having done his duty faithfully, and of having rendered high service to the nation, and reposing calmly, as he probably was, on the expectation that at least for some time to come, Israel would move forward peacefully and happily on the lines which he had drawn for them, it must have been a staggering blow when they came to him and asked him to overturn all that he had done, and make them a king. It must have been one of those bewildering moments when one's whole life appears lost, and all one's dearest hopes and hardest labours lie shattered, like the fragments of a potter's vessel. We have seen how, in that sad moment, Samuel carried his sorrows to the Lord, and learning thus to view the whole matter from God's point of view, how he came to make comparatively little account of his own disappointment, and to think only how he could still serve the cause of God, how he could still help the people, how he could prevent the vessel which he was no longer to steer from dashing against the hidden rocks he saw so clearly ahead. It is impossible not to be struck with the beauty and purity of Samuel's character in this mode of action. **How many a good man takes offence when slighted or superseded by some committee or other body, in connection with a political, social, or religious cause which he has tried to help! If they won't have me, he says, let them do without me. If they won't allow me to carry out the course which I have followed, and which has been undoubtedly highly beneficial, I'll have nothing more to do with them. He sulks in his tent like Achilles, or goes over to the enemy like Coriolanus. Not so Samuel!** His love for the people is too deep to allow of such a course. They have behaved badly to him, but notwithstanding he will not leave them. Like an injured but loving wife, who labours with every art of patient affection to reclaim the husband that has abused her and broken her heart; like a long-suffering father, who attends with his own hands to the neglected work of his dissipated son, to save him if possible from the consequences of his folly - Samuel overlooks his personal slight, and bears with the public folly of the people, in the endeavour to be of some use to them in the important stage of their history on which they are entering. He receives Divine communications respecting the man who is to supersede him in the government of the people, and instead of jealousy and dislike, shows every readiness to help him. It is refreshing to find such tokens of magnanimity and disinterestedness. However paltry human nature may be in itself, it can become very noble when rehabilitated by the Spirit of God. Need we ask which is the nobler course? You feel that you have not been treated perhaps by your church with sufficient consideration. You fret, you complain, you stay away from church, you pour your grievance into every open ear. Would Samuel have done so? Is not your conduct the very reverse of his? Side by side with his, must not yours be pronounced poor and paltry? Have you not need to study the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and when you read of the charity that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," ask yourselves whether it might not be said of you that you have neither part nor lot in this matter?

**1 Samuel 9:16 "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:16 ζ καιρ ζ α ρ ι ο ν ποστελ π ρ ζ σ νδρα κ γ ζ Βενιαμιν κα χ ρ σεις α τ ν ε ρ ρ χ ο ν τ α π τ ν λα ν μου Ισραηλ κα σ σ ει τ ν λα ν μου κ χει ρ ζ λ λ ο φ λ ω ν τι π β λ ε ψ α π τ ν τα π ε ν ω σ ι ν το λα ο μου τι λ θ ε ν βο α τ ν π ρ ζ με

KJV 1 Samuel 9:16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

NET 1 Samuel 9:16 "At this time tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin. You must consecrate him as a leader over my people Israel. He will save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have looked with favor on my people. Their cry has reached me!"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:16 "At this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over My people Israel. He will save them from the hand of the Philistines because I have seen the affliction of My people, for their cry has come to Me."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:16 "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:16 "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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:16 "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him to be the leader of my people, Israel. He will rescue them from the Philistines, for I have looked down on my

people in mercy and have heard their cry."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:16 "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be ruler over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen the suffering of my people, because their outcry has come to me."

YLT 1 Samuel 9:16 'At this time tomorrow, I send unto thee a man out of the land of Benjamin -- and thou hast anointed him for leader over My people Israel, and he hath saved My people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen My people, for its cry hath come in unto Me.'

- **you shall** 1Sa 10:1 15:1 16:3 1Ki 19:15,16 2Ki 9:3-6
- **regarded:** Ex 2:23-25 Ex 3:7-9 Ps 25:18 106:44
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 16:9 The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

Proverbs 20:24 Man's steps are ordained by the LORD, How then can man understand his way?

Exodus 2:23-25 Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So **God heard their groaning**; and (**WHY DID GOD RESPOND TO THEM?**) God remembered His (**UNCONDITIONAL**) covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

Exodus 3:7 The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.

### GOD WILL SEND A MAN TO HIS PROPHET

**About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin** - Note (1) God gives the exact time and (2) states it is He who is sending Saul, clearly indicating the donkey "two step" was God plan all along! In this entire unfolding scenario God is behind the scene and is in full control! God says **a man** but does not tell Samuel his name. The implication is that He will give Samuel discernment to recognize Saul, which in fact he does in verse 17. God said it and the next day God followed through like He always does!

**Guzik on I will send a man** - He would indeed give them a king, but He sent a flawed king to a flawed Israel.

**Bergen** alludes to the sovereignty of God - Deeper than any mortal motives driving the encounter were the currents of divine will: the Lord was fulfilling his promise to give Israel their new leader (Hb. nāgīd), who would deliver (Hb. hōšîa') Israel from "the hand of the Philistines." (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

As **Davis** quips "This is not another episode of "As the Cookie Crumbles"; Saul is sent, designated, disclosed by **Yahweh**. Sometimes it helps to be in on the secret."

**And you shall anoint** ([masah/maschah](#)); Lxx = [chrio](#)) **him to be prince** ([nagid](#)) **over My people Israel** - **NET** - "You must consecrate him as a leader over my people Israel. God does not call Saul a king here but uses the word for leader (Lxx = archōo - one exercising authority, invested with power).

**And he will deliver** (save - [yasha](#)) **My people from the hand of the Philistines** - Notice **will** defines this as a prophecy. Not all uses of "will" indicate a prophetic statement, but many do as shown by the context. **Deliver** is used repeatedly in the book of Judges to describe the role of the judges God raised up to **deliver** the people from the hand of their enemies. Now that role transfers to the monarchy and God will use kings to carry out that same function. It is notable that the Philistines are now "back in the picture," for during all the days of Samuel the Philistines were subdued and did not come anymore within the border of Israel (1Sa 7:13). Clearly the Philistines are "rattling their sabers" again and we will encounter them in 1Sa 13+. And remember God is sovereign over all these events so clearly it is God Who is arousing the Philistines. But He is also the One anointing a king to provide deliverance. These events will prove crucial in laying a foundation for the new king to exert power and authority.

**For** - Term of explanation. What is Yahweh explaining to Samuel.

**I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me** - God says He heard the cries of Israel. While this could refer to

their cry for a king, in context it more likely refers to their cry because they are aware of the rising Philistine threat.

Note God refers to Israel not as Saul's subjects but as **"My people"** (4x in vv16-17). The point is that while they had rejected God as their King, God had not rejected them and still laid claim to them as His treasured possession (Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2; Dt 26:18).

**W. G. Blaikie** has summed God's response to **their cry** - God speaks after the manner of men. He needs no cry to come into His ears to tell Him of the woes of the oppressed. Nevertheless He seems to wait till that cry is raised, till the appeal is made to Him, till the consciousness of utter helplessness sends men to His footstool. And a very blessed truth it is, that He sympathizes with the cry of the oppressed. There is much meaning in the simple expression—"their cry is come up to Me." It denotes a very tender sympathy a concern for all that they have been suffering, and a resolution to interpose on their behalf. God is never impassive nor indifferent to the sorrows and sufferings of His people. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Davis** has an interesting comment which relates the events in chapter 9 to all of our lives - However, we might ask: Does Yahweh's providence only operate in the affairs of major figures in salvation history (Saul in this case) or does his (mostly) invisible wisdom follow my path as well? Does Yahweh direct only major episodes in his kingdom or does his sway extend to the individual lives of his subjects? Surely the latter. Wisdom testifies to it: "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (Pr 16:9); and "A man's steps are ordered by the Lord; how then can man understand his way?" (Pr 20:24RSV). So Yahweh's strange and baffling providence is not the exclusive privilege of some kingdom elite; it extends to each of his people no matter how apparently common. However, unlike 1 Samuel 9, he may not let you in on the secret. You may see traces of what he has been doing much later as you look back, but in the present you may be just as much in the dark as Saul was. If so, you must simply go on looking for the lost asses—or whatever task God has given you to do.

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**Anoint** (04886) **masah/maschah** is a verb which basically means to smear something on, to rub with oil, to anoint (as in setting one apart for office or function - Elisha as prophet = 1Ki 19:16, kings for office = 1Sa 9:16 = Saul, 1Sa 16:12 = David, 1Ki 1:39 = Solomon) and by implication to sanctify (set aside for sacred purpose) or consecrate (dedicate for a sacred purpose) (altar = Nu 7:10; vessels for worship - Ex 29:36 = "you shall anoint it to consecrate it," Ex 30:26, 40:9-10). In the first OT use, Jacob **"anointed a pillar"** and made a vow to God (Ge 31:13; Lxx = alepho = to anoint by applying a liquid - Jesus' feet were anointed with perfume - Lk 7:38, 46). **Baker** adds that "The anointing was done with oil to symbolize the elevation of the person to a new position such as priest or king (2Sa 5:3)." **Masah** is used of Aaron being **anointed** (Ex 28:41<sup>+</sup>, Ex 29:7<sup>+</sup>, Ex 29:29<sup>+</sup>) and is translated in the **Septuagint** (Lxx) with **chrio** which means to anoint and in the NT only referred to an anointing by God of someone, setting them apart for special service under divine direction (2Co 1:21). In Lk 4:18<sup>+</sup> **chrio** refers to the anointing of Jesus for His ministry (quoting from Isa 61:1<sup>+</sup> which also uses chrio to translate masah) **Chrio** also refers to Jesus' being anointed in Hebrew 1:9<sup>+</sup> **"YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS."**

**Deliver** (save, help) (03467) **yasha'** (See also **yeshua** from which we get our word "Jesus") is an important Hebrew verb which means to help, to save, to deliver. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of yasha' as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger. **Yasha'** connotes protection that produces freedom from a present danger (2Sa 22:3, Job 5:4), salvation or deliverance in a religious sense (Ps 51:12), a title of God (Savior - 2Sa 22:47; 1Chr 16:35; Ps 18:46; Ps 24:5; Ps 25:5; Ps 27:9; Ps 65:5; Ps 79:9; Ps 85:4; Isa 17:10; 62:11; Mic 7:7 Hab 3:18), victory as an act or a result of conquering (2Sa 22:36; Ps 18:35) It is notable that almost 20% of the uses of yasha' are found during the dark days of Judges (dominated by the heart attitude of Jdg 21:25), which surely speaks of the undeserved lovingkindness of God! Uses in this section of 1 Samuel - 1 Sam. 9:16; 1 Sam. 10:19; 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Sam. 11:3;

Yasha - 198 verses - Exod. 2:17; Exod. 14:30; Num. 10:9; Deut. 20:4; Deut. 22:27; Deut. 28:29; Deut. 28:31; Deut. 33:29; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 22:22; Jdg. 2:16; Jdg. 2:18; Jdg. 3:9; Jdg. 3:15; Jdg. 3:31; Jdg. 6:14; Jdg. 6:15; Jdg. 6:31; Jdg. 6:36; Jdg. 6:37; Jdg. 7:2; Jdg. 7:7; Jdg. 8:22; Jdg. 10:1; Jdg. 10:12; Jdg. 10:13; Jdg. 10:14; Jdg. 12:2; Jdg. 12:3; Jdg. 13:5; 1 Sam. 4:3; 1 Sam. 7:8; 1 Sam. 9:16; 1 Sam. 10:19; 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Sam. 11:3; 1 Sam. 14:6; 1 Sam. 14:23; 1 Sam. 14:39; 1 Sam. 17:47; 1 Sam. 23:2; 1 Sam. 23:5; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 25:31; 1 Sam. 25:33; 2 Sam. 3:18; 2 Sam. 8:6; 2 Sam. 8:14; 2 Sam. 10:11; 2 Sam. 10:19; 2 Sam. 14:4; 2 Sam. 22:3; 2 Sam. 22:4; 2 Sam. 22:28; 2 Sam. 22:42; 2 Ki. 6:26; 2 Ki. 6:27; 2 Ki. 13:5; 2 Ki. 14:27; 2 Ki. 16:7; 2 Ki. 19:19; 2 Ki. 19:34; 1 Chr. 11:14; 1 Chr. 16:35; 1 Chr. 18:6; 1 Chr. 18:13; 1 Chr. 19:12; 1 Chr. 19:19; 2 Chr. 20:9; 2 Chr. 32:22; Neh. 9:27; Job 5:15; Job 22:29; Job 26:2; Job 40:14; Ps. 3:7; Ps. 6:4; Ps. 7:1; Ps. 7:10; Ps. 12:1; Ps. 17:7; Ps. 18:3; Ps. 18:27; Ps. 18:41; Ps. 20:6; Ps. 20:9; Ps. 22:21; Ps. 28:9; Ps. 31:2; Ps. 31:16; Ps. 33:16; Ps. 34:6; Ps. 34:18; Ps. 36:6; Ps. 37:40; Ps. 44:3; Ps. 44:6; Ps. 44:7; Ps. 54:1; Ps. 55:16; Ps. 57:3; Ps. 59:2; Ps. 60:5; Ps. 69:1; Ps. 69:35; Ps. 71:2; Ps. 71:3; Ps. 72:4; Ps. 72:13; Ps. 76:9; Ps. 80:3; Ps. 80:7; Ps. 80:19; Ps. 86:2; Ps. 86:16; Ps. 98:1; Ps. 106:8; Ps. 106:10; Ps. 106:21; Ps. 106:47; Ps. 107:13; Ps. 107:19; Ps. 108:6; Ps. 109:26; Ps. 109:31; Ps. 116:6; Ps. 118:25; Ps. 119:94; Ps. 119:117; Ps. 119:146; Ps. 138:7; Ps. 145:19; Prov. 20:22; Prov. 28:18; Isa. 19:20; Isa. 25:9; Isa. 30:15; Isa. 33:22; Isa. 35:4; Isa. 37:20; Isa. 37:35; Isa. 38:20; Isa. 43:3; Isa. 43:11; Isa. 43:12; Isa. 45:15; Isa. 45:17; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 45:21; Isa. 45:22; Isa. 46:7; Isa. 47:13; Isa. 47:15; Isa. 49:25; Isa. 49:26; Isa. 59:1; Isa. 59:16; Isa. 60:16; Isa. 63:1; Isa. 63:5; Isa. 63:8; Isa. 63:9; Isa. 64:5; Jer. 2:27; Jer. 2:28; Jer. 4:14; Jer. 8:20; Jer. 11:12; Jer. 14:8; Jer. 14:9; Jer. 15:20; Jer. 17:14; Jer. 23:6; Jer. 30:7; Jer. 30:10; Jer. 30:11; Jer. 31:7; Jer. 33:16; Jer. 42:11; Jer. 46:27; Lam. 4:17; Ezek. 34:22; Ezek. 36:29; Ezek. 37:23; Hos. 1:7; Hos. 13:4; Hos. 13:10; Hos. 14:3; Obad. 1:21; Hab. 1:2; Zeph. 3:17; Zeph. 3:19; Zech. 8:7; Zech. 8:13; Zech. 9:9; Zech. 9:16; Zech. 10:6; Zech. 12:7

**Prince** (05057) (nagid/nagiyd) leader, a ruler, a prince. This root basically denotes "to place a matter high, conspicuous before a person" (KB).

**Baker** - This term has a broad range of applications. At the top, it could allude to the king of Israel (1 Sam. 9:16; 13:14; 1 Ki. 1:35); a ruler from a foreign land like Tyre (Ezek. 28:2); or Assyria (2 Chr. 32:21). It could also be used regarding cultic leaders and officials from the high priest down (1 Chr. 9:11, 20; 2 Chr. 31:12, 13;

35:8; Jer. 20:1). It could also be a label for various other lesser positions of leadership (1 Chr. 27:16; 2 Chr. 11:11, 22; 19:11; Job 29:10). The word is also used in an abstract sense to convey that which is princely, noble, and honorable (Prov. 8:6). ([The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament](#))

**Vine** - nāgîd Usage Notes: "chief leader." This noun occurs 44 times in biblical Hebrew. In 1 Sam. 9:16 the word is used as a "chief leader" that is equivalent to a king: "Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel...." Nāgîd appears in 1 Chron. 9:11 to refer to a "chief leader" (ruler) of a smaller region. The word may also be used of a head of a family (1 Chron. 9:20). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Gilbrant** - Nāghîdh is best understood as a generic word, indicating one who is a leader in a variety of societal roles. The head of a tribe falls under this rubric (1 Chr. 27:16).

A number of public officials bore this title. The most notable were the kings of the united monarchy (Saul, 1 Sam. 10:1; David, 1 Sam. 13:14; Solomon, 1 Ki. 1:35), Israel (Jeroboam, 1 Ki. 14:7; Jehu, 1 Ki. 16:2) and Judah (Hezekiah, 2 Ki. 20:5). An unnamed king of Tyre is alluded to in Ezekiel's satirical lament of the coming destruction of the city (Ezek. 28:2).

A number of priestly officials had this designation. The high priest (Jer. 20:1), the overseer of community offerings (2 Chr. 31:12) and the supervisor of the gatekeepers (1 Chr. 9:20) all are referred to by nāghîdh.

Court officials also bore this title, though they had otherwise unidentified roles (1 Chr. 26:24; 2 Chr. 19:11; 28:7). Israelite military governors of fortresses were designated as nāghîdh (2 Chr. 11:11). Lesser officers in David's army were nāghîdh (1 Chr. 13:1) as were Assyrian military officials of uncertain rank (2 Chr. 32:21). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Nagid/nagiyd** - 45v - **chief(2), chief officer(3), commander(1), leader(14), noble things(1), nobles(1), officer(3), officers(1), officials(1), Prince(1), prince(5), princes(1), ruler(11)**. 1 Sam. 9:16; 1 Sam. 10:1; 1 Sam. 13:14; 1 Sam. 25:30; 2 Sam. 5:2; 2 Sam. 6:21; 2 Sam. 7:8; 1 Ki. 1:35; 1 Ki. 14:7; 1 Ki. 16:2; 2 Ki. 20:5; 1 Chr. 5:2; 1 Chr. 9:11; 1 Chr. 9:20; 1 Chr. 9:26; 1 Chr. 11:2; 1 Chr. 12:27; 1 Chr. 13:1; 1 Chr. 17:7; 1 Chr. 26:24; 1 Chr. 27:4; 1 Chr. 27:16; 1 Chr. 28:4; 1 Chr. 29:22; 2 Chr. 6:5; 2 Chr. 11:11; 2 Chr. 11:22; 2 Chr. 19:11; 2 Chr. 28:7; 2 Chr. 31:12; 2 Chr. 31:13; 2 Chr. 32:21; 2 Chr. 35:8; Neh. 11:11; Job 29:10; Job 31:37; Ps. 76:12; Prov. 8:6; Prov. 28:16; Isa. 55:4; Jer. 20:1; Ezek. 28:2; Dan. 9:25; Dan. 9:26; Dan. 11:22

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - I have looked upon My people, because their cry is come unto Me.—1 Sam. 9.16.**

These words were spoken by Jehovah to Samuel in explanation of His action in giving them a king. His perfect counsel for them was that they should have no king other than Himself. They had failed to realize this high possibility. Their God knew them; He had looked upon them. Their cry for a king had come up to Him. That cry should be answered. He would give them a king, in order that, in the long processes of experience, they might learn the folly of their choice. In this is revealed a constant method of the Divine government. When men fail to rise to the height of the purpose of God, and clamour for something lower, He gives them what they ask, and then watches over them and guards them as they work out their low choice to its ultimate conclusion, and thus are eventually brought back to His purpose with a full understanding of its perfection. The grace of the method is discovered in the fact that, while God gave them up to the discipline of their choice, He selected the king. If there be one thing more important than any other in our lives, it surely is that we should begin all our praying by petitions which ask that we may be taught to desire only what God desires for us. When desire is out of harmony with the will of God, He constantly grants its petitions, and then in justice and mercy watches over us until we have discovered in experience how much better is His way. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

**1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, 'Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people.'**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:17 καὶ Σαμουὴλ εἶδεν τὸν Σαουλ καὶ κριοῦς περὶ θηῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου νῦν πεισσοτοῦς ῥῥῥ  
ντ λα μου

KJV 1 Samuel 9:17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

NET 1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said, "Here is the man that I told you about! He will rule over my people."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man I told you about; he will rule over My people."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:17 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said, "That's the man I told you about! He will rule my people."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you. He it is who shall rule over my people."

YLT 1 Samuel 9:17 When Samuel hath seen Saul, then hath Jehovah answered him, 'Lo, the man of whom I have spoken unto thee; this one doth restrain My people.'

- **Behold:** 1Sa 16:6-12 Ho 13:11
- **rule over:** 1Sa 3:13 2Sa 23:6,7 Ne 13:19,25 Ac 13:21 Ro 13:3,4
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## YAHWEH SAYS THIS IS THE MAN!

**When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, 'Behold, the (unnamed) man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over** (atsar; Lxx - [archo](#)) **My people** - Yahweh takes care of the details to make sure that Samuel recognizes Saul (remember He had not given his name before). In some way not stated God communicates clearly with His prophet that "Saul is the man." Notice God prophesies that Saul would rule over My people, not over his subjects. Saul was to be God's representative authority over God's people. The verb for rule is interesting in that it means conveys the sense of controlling or restraining the people, thus ruling over them.

**Bergen** has an interesting note on **rule** - God's words to Samuel regarding Saul in v. 17 are filled with irony: the Hebrew verb 'sr, translated here as "govern," can equally well mean "restrain/hold back/hinder" or even "imprison." The core meaning is "to restrain/constrict." In the majority of its forty-six occurrences in the Hebrew text the word possesses a negative connotation, suggesting imprisonment (2 Kgs 17:4; Jer 33:1), sterility (Gen 20:18), silencing (Job 4:2), or holding back (2 Kgs 4:24). In fact, 9:17 is the only location in Scripture where the word can be taken to mean "rule." By employing the verb here, the writer was suggesting that the Lord had determined to use Saul's career as a means of punishing the nation. Saul would literally fulfill the various meanings of this verb. Even as he governed Israel, his policies and behavior would hinder the welfare of the nation and act as a sort of barrier separating Israel from God's best for them. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Brian Bell** Samuel's godward relationship was remarkable. His trust in the Lord implicit. 1. After being rejected by the people (ch.8) he didn't show any resentment when God told him about the man that would replace him as judge of the nation. 2. Instead a readiness to further the plan & purpose of God. 3. Such obedience is both noteworthy & praiseworthy! 4. Your response to your employer? "I need to let you go, but before you leave I want you to train the new guy!"

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**Rule** ([06113](#))(atsar) to restrain, retain, hold back, shut in, to keep in slavery, to keep from, to prevent (Ge 16:2). Of stopping something like plague (Nu 16:48, 30, 25:8). Shutting up the heavens (Dt 11:17). Refers to one enslaved or kept in bondage (Dt 32:36). To bind as in prison (2Ki 17:4).

**Ronald Allen** - In the Qal stem this root has three basic meanings: (1) to hold back, restrain, retain, prevent" as in Sarai's words, "Yahweh has prevented me from bearing" (Genesis 16:2; cf. Genesis 20:18); (2) "to keep from," as in David's words, "women have been kept from us" (1 Samuel 21:5 [H 6]), and (3) "to rule," only in 1 Samuel 9:17, Yahweh to Samuel, of Saul. "This one shall rule over my people." The Niphal has the passive renderings, "to be restrained, shut up under restraint," as in Numbers 16:48 [H 17:13], "and the plague was checked" (NASB). With Yahweh as subject, this verb contributes greatly to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. It is he who restrains as well as who wills. ([TWOT](#) online)

**Gilbrant** - Appearing forty-six times in the OT, usually in literal contexts, 'atsar means "to hold back," "to restrain," "to prevent," "to confine." It has cognates in Arabic, Ethiopic and Syriac. Some scholars also suggest a connection to an Akkadian word that means "to draw."



In the Qal stem, 'ātsar can mean "to be confined" or "to be imprisoned." It is used of both people and inanimate objects. The verb is used of Jeremiah when "he was shut up in the court of the prison" (Jer. 39:15) and of the fire "shut up" in his bones (Jer. 20:9). Also, with 'ātsar, Job tells us God "withholdeth the waters" (Job 12:15). An inanimate subject of 'ātsar is seen in the sentence, "Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not" (1 Ki. 18:44). In this occurrence, "rain" is the subject of 'ātsar. Three times in Daniel (10:8, 16; 11:6), 'ātsar is used in an idiom with kōach (HED #3699), "strength," "power." The idiom is rendered, "to retain strength," "to retain power." The verb is used of the Lord's closing the womb (Gen. 20:18) and shutting up heaven (2 Chr. 6:26; 7:13). Here the scope of Yahweh's rule over life is expressed. He sustains by opening heaven and sending life-giving rain, and He opens and closes the womb, displaying his authority over regeneration.

In the Niphal (passive) stem, 'ātsar yields renderings such as "is shut up," "was stayed," "was checked." Twice in this stem, the verb is used in the phrase, "when heaven is shut up" (1 Ki. 8:35; 2 Chr. 6:26). Most of the occurrences in this stem are in reference to various plagues. When the Lord struck the children of Israel with a plague because they grumbled against Moses (Num. 16:41-48), He had Aaron carry incense through the congregation to make atonement for them. Verse 48 says that Aaron "stood between the the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed." When God sent a pestilence for David's sin of numbering the army of Israel, David offered a sacrifice, and "the plague was stayed" (2 Sam. 24:25).

The verb is used in the idiomatic expression, "him that is shut up and left in Israel" (1 Ki. 14:10; 21:21; 2 Ki. 9:8). The meaning of the expression is debated and interpretations have been proposed such as: "the slave and the free," "the man who is obligated to military duty and the one who is exempt," "the family member and the guest" and "the one under parental guardianship and the one who is of age." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Atsar - 45v - able\*(2), bond(5), checked(3), closed fast(1), confined(3), could(1), detain(2), detained(1), held back(2), kept(1), prevail(1), prevented(1), recover(1), refrain(1), restrained(1), restrains(1), restricted(2), retain(2), retained(2), rule(1), shut(7), slow down(1), stayed(1), stop(1), stopped(1).** Gen. 16:2; Gen. 20:18; Num. 16:48; Num. 16:50; Num. 25:8; Deut. 11:17; Deut. 32:36; Jdg. 13:15; Jdg. 13:16; 1 Sam. 9:17; 1 Sam. 21:5; 1 Sam. 21:7; 2 Sam. 24:21; 2 Sam. 24:25; 1 Ki. 8:35; 1 Ki. 14:10; 1 Ki. 18:44; 1 Ki. 21:21; 2 Ki. 4:24; 2 Ki. 9:8; 2 Ki. 14:26; 2 Ki. 17:4; 1 Chr. 12:1; 1 Chr. 21:22; 1 Chr. 29:14; 2 Chr. 2:6; 2 Chr. 6:26; 2 Chr. 7:13; 2 Chr. 13:20; 2 Chr. 14:11; 2 Chr. 20:37; 2 Chr. 22:9; Neh. 6:10; Job 4:2; Job 12:15; Job 29:9; Ps. 106:30; Isa. 66:9; Jer. 20:9; Jer. 33:1; Jer. 36:5; Jer. 39:15; Dan. 10:8; Dan. 10:16; Dan. 11:6

**1 Samuel 9:18 Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:18 κα προσ γαγεν Σαουλ πρ ς Σαμουηλ ε ς μ σον τ ς π λεως κα ε πεν π γγειλον δ πο ος ο κο ς το βλ ποντο ς

KJV 1 Samuel 9:18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

NET 1 Samuel 9:18 As Saul approached Samuel in the middle of the gate, he said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:18 Saul approached Samuel in the gate area and asked, "Would you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

ESV 1 Samuel 9:18 Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?"

NIV 1 Samuel 9:18 Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, "Would you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

NLT 1 Samuel 9:18 Just then Saul approached Samuel at the gateway and asked, "Can you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

NRS 1 Samuel 9:18 Then Saul approached Samuel inside the gate, and said, "Tell me, please, where is the house of the seer?"

YLT 1 Samuel 9:18 And Saul draweth nigh to Samuel in the midst of the gate, and saith, 'Declare, I pray thee, to me, where is this -- the seer's house?'



## AN AMAZING ENCOUNTER WHERE IS THE SEER'S HOUSE

**Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is** - Saul does not know one of the greatest prophets in Israel's history. What might this say about Saul's spirituality? Just wondering! Since Saul mentions the **seer's house**, it does raise the possibility that this city is Ramah.

**Bergen** on Saul's spiritual condition - One function of the Saul narratives is to depict the spiritual unfitness of the man who would serve as Israel's first king. In so doing the writer demonstrates that Saul is spiritually, as in other ways, "a king such as all the other nations have." Emblematic of Saul's spiritual blindness is his initial encounter with Samuel. Though Samuel was the most famous and honored spiritual leader in Israel since the time of Moses, when Saul looked at him he saw only a stranger. The contrast between Saul and Samuel is striking: Samuel, the man of spiritual insight (the "seer"), knew all about an obscure young man even before he met up with him; Saul, the paragon of spiritual blindness, knew nothing of the most famous man in Israel even after he encountered him. The narrative motif of Saul's incapacity to see the true nature of people would later be expressed in the context of his relationships with Jonathan, David, and Ahimelech. He would misjudge Jonathan to be an unworthy son and traitor; David, a treacherous revolutionary; and Ahimelech, a co-conspirator against the throne. All of these misreadings of others resulted in tragedy, both for Saul and others. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**1 Samuel 9:19 Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is on your mind.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:19 κα περ θη Σαμουηλ τ Σαουλ κα επεν γ επι α τ ς ν βηθι μπροσθ ν μου ε ς Βαμα κα φ γε μετ μο σ μερον κα ξαποστελ σε πρω κα π ντα τ ν τ καρδ σου παγγελ σοι

KJV 1 Samuel 9:19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

NET 1 Samuel 9:19 Samuel replied to Saul, "I am the seer! Go up in front of me to the high place! Today you will eat with me and in the morning I will send you away. I will tell you everything that you are thinking.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:19 "I am the seer," Samuel answered. "Go up ahead of me to the high place and eat with me today. When I send you off in the morning, I'll tell you everything that's in your heart.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:19 Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:19 "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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:19 "I am the seer!" Samuel replied. "Go up to the place of worship ahead of me. We will eat there together, and in the morning I'll tell you what you want to know and send you on your way.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:19 Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer; go up before me to the shrine, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:19 And Samuel answereth Saul and saith, 'I am the seer; go up before me into the high place, and ye have eaten with me to-day, and I have sent thee away in the morning, and all that is in thy heart I declare to thee.

- **and will tell:** Joh 4:29 1Co 14:25
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAMUEL'S INVITATION AND PREDICTION

**Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer** - Samuel does not direct him to the seer's house to the seer himself! Samuel identifies himself. Imagine the reaction of Saul. Was he taken aback? Embarrassed? We really cannot say for certain. Clearly the point is that Saul had no clue who Samuel was! One wonders why the servant did not recognize him, but at least he had heard of his reputation in contrast to Saul.

Go up before me to the high place ([bamah](#)), for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is on your mind - Samuel predicts he will "read" Saul's mind. Samuel's reference to the high place ([bamah](#)) is notable. Clearly Samuel is a man of God, and so it follows he would never attend a place of worship that was inappropriate, much less idolatrous. So it seems that at this time in Israel's history (when likely the sanctuary at Shiloh had been destroyed with no replacement) it was appropriate for Israel to worship Yahweh at the high places. This would change in years to come as their worship of Yahweh became syncretistic and mixed with idolatry and the high places because a place of inappropriate (being euphemistic!) worship of Yahweh.

[Brian Bell](#) I am the seer - simple & direct. 1. Without waiting for Saul to tell him of their errand or for the servant to offer him any money for his services, Samuel invited Saul to dine w/him & other hand selected guests. He promised Saul that he'd get home soon; He assured Saul that he'd tell him what's on his mind; He informed Saul that the donkeys had been found. Then, he gave him this strange statement, "And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on you and on all your father's house?" Samuel's words were probably designed to arouse Saul's curiosity & lead him into an ever-deepening understanding of himself & God's purpose for him.

**1 Samuel 9:20 "As for your donkeys which were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's household?"**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:20 κα περ τ ν νων σου τ ν πολωλιν σ μερον τριτα ων μ θ ς τ ν καρδ αν σου α τα ς τι ε ρηνται κα τ ν ι τ ρα α το Ισραηλ ο σο κα τ ο κ το πατρ ς σου

KJV 1 Samuel 9:20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

NET 1 Samuel 9:20 Don't be concerned about the donkeys that you lost three days ago, for they have been found. Whom does all Israel desire? Is it not you, and all your father's family?"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:20 As for the donkeys that wandered away from you three days ago, don't worry about them because they've been found. And who does all Israel desire but you and all your father's family?"

ESV 1 Samuel 9:20 As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?"

NIV 1 Samuel 9:20 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?"

NLT 1 Samuel 9:20 And don't worry about those donkeys that were lost three days ago, for they have been found. And I am here to tell you that you and your family are the focus of all Israel's hopes."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:20 As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, give no further thought to them, for they have been found. And on whom is all Israel's desire fixed, if not on you and on all your ancestral house?"

YLT 1 Samuel 9:20 As to the asses which are lost to thee this day three days, set not thy heart to them, for they have been found; and to whom is all the desire of Israel? is it not to thee and to all thy father's house?"

- **three days ago:** 1Sa 9:3
- **set:** 1Sa 4:20 \*marg: 1Ch 29:3 Ps 62:10 Col 3:2
- **whom:** 1Sa 8:5,19 12:13,15
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL YOU ARE ISRAEL'S DESIRE

**As for your donkeys which were lost three days ago** - There is no evidence Saul related to Samuel the scenario about the lost donkeys. Therefore Samuel's knowledge would show Saul he had supernatural powers.

**Do not set your mind on them, for they have been found** - Samuel goes on to say the lost have been found. They had served God's sovereign purpose of providentially connecting Saul to Samuel.

**And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's household** - CSB = "And who does all

Israel desire but you and all your father's family?" **NET** = "Whom does all Israel desire? Is it not you, and all your father's family?" **NLT** helps understand paraphrasing it "And I am here to tell you that you and your family are the focus of all Israel's hopes."

**Cyril Barber** - Samuel's words were designed to arouse Saul's curiosity and lead him into an ever-deepening understanding of himself and God's purpose for him. ([Books of Samuel](#))

**1 Samuel 9:21 Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?"**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:21 καὶ περὶ τοῦ Σαουλ καὶ ἐπεὶ ὁ Χὺρ υἱὸς Ἰεμὶνα οὐ γέμει το μικρο σκπτρου φυλῆς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῆς φυλῆς τῆς λαχσ της ξ λου σκπτρου Βενιαμιν καὶ νατ λ λησας πρς μ κατ τ μα το το

KJV 1 Samuel 9:21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

NET 1 Samuel 9:21 Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the smallest of Israel's tribes, and is not my family clan the smallest of all the tribes of Benjamin? Why do you speak to me in this way?"

CSB 1 Samuel 9:21 Saul responded, "Am I not a Benjaminite from the smallest of Israel's tribes and isn't my clan the least important of all the clans of the Benjaminite tribe? So why have you said something like this to me?"

ESV 1 Samuel 9:21 Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

NIV 1 Samuel 9:21 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?"

NLT 1 Samuel 9:21 Saul replied, "But I'm only from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel, and my family is the least important of all the families of that tribe! Why are you talking like this to me?"

NRS 1 Samuel 9:21 Saul answered, "I am only a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel, and my family is the humblest of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin. Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

YLT 1 Samuel 9:21 And Saul answereth and saith, 'Am not I a Benjamite -- of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? and why hast thou spoken unto me according to this word?'

- **a Benjamite:** Jdg 20:46-48 Ps 68:27
- my family: 1Sa 10:27 15:17 18:18,23 Jdg 6:14,15 Ho 13:1 Lu 14:11 Eph 3:8
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL'S HUMILITY OVER SAMUEL'S PROPHECY

**Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?"** - Saul is perplexed, not fully grasping the intent of Israel's desire (for a king). Also Saul's attitude appears to speak of some degree of humility, a good place to be, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. Saul's mention of being a Benjamite is not without significance, for this is the tribe that the other 11 tribes had almost annihilated because of their sin (cf Jdg 20:35, 48). Indeed Saul came from [Gibeah](#), a Benjamite town whose citizens (Saul's forebears?) had committed one of the most heinous crimes in Israelite history (cf. Judg 19:22–26).

**Why then do you speak to me in this way?"** - Saul has a "why me" attitude in view of his tribal and family origins. Why would God want him as to be king? Oh, had he maintained this humble attitude once the crown was placed on his head! And as Adam Clarke chimes "This speech of Saul is exceedingly modest; he was now becomingly humble; but who can bear elevation and prosperity?" Note that we have no record of Samuel responding to Saul's questions.

**Spurgeon** - There was a very becoming modesty about him, he was really surprised and startled that such an honour should be in store for him; he had many natural virtues; but, alas! the grace of God was not upon him.

**1 Samuel 9:22 Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who were invited, who were about thirty men.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:22 καὶ ἔλαβεν Σαμουὴλ τὸν Σαουλ καὶ τὸ παιδίον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐσγάγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ κατὰ λυμὰ καὶ θέτο αὐτοὺς τὸν ἐν πρώτοις τῶν κεκλημένων· σὲ βδομὴν κοντὰ νῶτον·

KJV 1 Samuel 9:22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.

NET 1 Samuel 9:22 Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the room and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited. There were about thirty people present.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:22 Samuel took Saul and his attendant, brought them to the banquet hall, and gave them a place at the head of the 30 or so men who had been invited.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:22 Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:22 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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:22 Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and placed them at the head of the table, honoring them above the thirty special guests.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:22 Then Samuel took Saul and his servant-boy and brought them into the hall, and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, of whom there were about thirty.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:22 And Samuel taketh Saul, and his young man, and bringeth them in to the chamber, and giveth to them a place at the head of those called; and they are about thirty men.

- **at the head** Ge 43:32 Lu 14:10
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 14:10 "But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you.

### SAUL HONORED IN SEATING

**Then** - Then marks progression in the narrative.

**Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who were invited, who were about thirty men** - In other words Saul and servant were honored above the other 30 guests. Saul willingly submitted to Samuel's directions, without any objections.

**1 Samuel 9:23 Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion that I gave you, concerning which I said to you, 'Set it aside.'"**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:23 καὶ εἶπεν Σαμουὴλ τῷ μάγειρι· ὅς μοι τὴν μερῶν ὅν δωκ' σοὶ νῦν ἐπιθείναι αὐτὴν παρ' σοί·

KJV 1 Samuel 9:23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

NET 1 Samuel 9:23 Samuel said to the cook, "Give me the portion of meat that I gave to you—the one I asked you to keep with you."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:23 Then Samuel said to the cook, "Get the portion of meat that I gave you and told you to set aside."

ESV 1 Samuel 9:23 And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'"

NIV 1 Samuel 9:23 Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:23 Samuel then instructed the cook to bring Saul the finest cut of meat, the piece that had been set aside for the guest of honor.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:23 And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, the one I asked you to put aside."

YLT 1 Samuel 9:23 And Samuel saith to the cook, 'Give the portion which I gave to thee, of which I said unto thee, 'Set it by thee?'

- **Bring:** 1Sa 1:5 Ge 43:34
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL SERVED SUPERIOR STEAK

**Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion that I gave you, concerning which I said to you, 'Set it aside-** NLT paraphrases it "Samuel then instructed the cook to bring Saul the finest cut of meat, the piece that had been set aside for the guest of honor."

**Bergen** writes "The site of the banquet was a rectangular room (Hrb. liškâ) that opened into a courtyard, apparently part of a sanctuary associated with the high place in Ramah." (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**1 Samuel 9:24 Then the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, "Here is what has been reserved! Set it before you and eat, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, since I said I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:24 κα ψωσεν μ γειρος τ ν κωλ αν κα παρ θηκεν α τ ν ν πιον Σαουλ κα ε πεν Σαμουηλ τ Σαουλ δο π λειμμα παρ θες α τ ν πι ν σου κα φ γε τι ε ς μαρτ ριον τ θειτα σοι παρ το ς αλλους π κνιζε κα φαγεν Σαουλ μετ Σαμουηλ ν τ μ ρ κε ν

KJV 1 Samuel 9:24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

NET 1 Samuel 9:24 So the cook picked up the leg and brought it and set it in front of Saul. Samuel said, "What was kept is now set before you! Eat, for it has been kept for you for this meeting time, from the time I said, 'I have invited the people.'" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:24 The cook picked up the thigh and what was attached to it and set it before Saul. Then Samuel said, "Notice that the reserved piece is set before you. Eat it because it was saved for you for this solemn event at the time I said, 'I've invited the people.'" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:24 So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:24 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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:24 So the cook brought in the meat and placed it before Saul. "Go ahead and eat it," Samuel said. "I was saving it for you even before I invited these others!" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:24 The cook took up the thigh and what went with it and set them before Saul. Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat; for it is set before you at the appointed time, so that you might eat with the guests." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:24 (and the cook lifteth up the leg, and that which is on it, and setteth before Saul), and he saith, 'Lo, that which is left; set it before thee -- eat, for to this appointed season it is kept for thee, saying, The people I have called;' and Saul eateth with Samuel on that day.

- **the leg:** Lev 7:32,33 Eze 24:4
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL EATS WITH SAMUEL

**Then the cook took up the leg** (shoulder) **with what was on it and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, "Here is what has been reserved!** - Samuel had pre-prepared for this meal. The Hebrew has "leg" and could refer to either the front or the back legs. Because Saul was being honored in a significant way, the hindquarters are most probable. In accordance with custom his portion would have been the thigh.

**Cyril Barber** - A great deal of controversy has arisen over Saul's being given this honor. Some commentators point out that the right thigh was reserved solely for the priests (cf. Exodus 29:27; Leviticus 7:34; 10:14–15; Numbers 6:20) and imply that Samuel was virtually bestowing priestly prerogatives on Saul. These commentators seem to forget that an animal has two hind legs and that the words "that which remains" (1 Samuel 9:24) may well be a reference to the left hind leg that remained after the priests had taken their rightful share. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews identified this piece of meat as the "royal portion," which would have further indicated to Saul the great events that were soon to fulfill Samuel's words of 9:20. ([Books of Samuel](#))

**Spurgeon** - The right shoulder of the animal that was offered in sacrifice was part of the priest's portion, and this shoulder Samuel now ordered the cook to set before Saul as he sat in the place of honour.

**Set it before you and eat, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, since I said I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.**

**1 Samuel 9:25 When they came down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:25 κα κατ βη κ τ ς Βαμα ν τ π λει κα δι στρωσαν τ Σαουλ π τ ὀ ματι

KJV 1 Samuel 9:25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

NET 1 Samuel 9:25 When they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:25 Afterward, they went down from the high place to the city, and Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:25 And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:25 After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:25 When they came down from the place of worship and returned to town, Samuel took Saul up to the roof of the house and prepared a bed for him there.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:25 When they came down from the shrine into the town, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:25 And they come down from the high place to the city, and he speaketh with Saul on the roof.

- **when:** 1Sa 9:13
- **roof:** De 22:8 2Sa 11:2 Ne 8:16 Jer 19:13 Mt 10:27 Ac 10:9
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAMUEL & SAUL HAVE



## "HIGH LEVEL" DISCUSSION

By "high level" discussion of course I am punning their conversation on the rooftop!

**When they came down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof-** ESV = "a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep." Ancient roofs were flat and were often slept on as they were cooler. Is this Samuel's own home? We cannot be certain. Clearly Saul accepted the invitation to spend the night without any objection.

**William Blaikie** wrote of their rooftop conversation - Samuel could not but communicate to Saul the treasured thoughts of his lifetime regarding the way to govern Israel. He must have recalled to him God's purpose regarding His people, beginning with the call of Abraham, dwelling on the deliverance from Egypt, and touching on the history of several judges, and the lessons to be learned from each. We may fancy the fervour with which he would urge on Saul, that the one thing most essential for the prosperity of the nation ... was loyalty by the people to their heavenly King, and the faithful obedience to His law and covenant. ([1 Samuel 9 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - For quietness and seclusion, Samuel took the young man upstairs to the flat roof of the house, and they walked to and fro, in the cool of the evening, talking about the high destiny to which Saul was called, and Samuel doubtless giving him valuable instructions concerning his new and important duties.

**ISBE on roof** - Roof (gag; stege).--These were flat. Compare "The beams of our house are cedars, and our rafters are firs" (Song 1:17). To get over the difficulty of the larger spans, a common practice was to introduce a main beam (qurah) carried on the walls and strengthened by one or more intermediate posts let into stone sockets laid on the floor. Smaller timbers as joists ("rafters," rahiT) were spaced out and covered in turn with brushwood; the final covering, being of mud mixed with chopped straw, was beaten and rolled. A tiny stone roller is found on every modern native roof, and is used to roll the mud into greater solidity every year on the advent of the first rains. Similar rollers have been found among the ancient remains throughout the country; see Excavations of Gezer, I, 190; PEFS, Warren's letters, 46. "They let him down through the tiles (keramos) with his couch into the midst before Jesus" (Lk 5:19) refers to the breaking through of a roof similar to this. The roof ("housetop," gagh; doma) was an important part of every house and was subjected to many uses. It was used for worship (2 Ki 23:12; Jer 19:13; 32:29; Zeph 1:5; Acts 10:9). Absalom spread his tent on the "top of the house" (2 Sam 16:22). In the Feast of the Tabernacles temporary booths (cukkah) were erected on the housetops. The people, as is their habit today, gathered together on the roof as a common meeting-place on high days and holidays (Jdg 16:27). The wild wranglings which can be heard in any modern native village, resulting in vile accusations and exposure of family secrets hurled from the housetops of the conflicting parties, illustrate the passage, "And what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Lk 12:3).

**1 Samuel 9:26 And they arose early; and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up, that I may send you away." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:26 κα κοιμ θη κα γ νετο ς ν βαινεν ρθρος κα κ λεσεν Σαμουηλ τ ν Σαουλ π τ δ ματι λ γων ν στα κα ξαπροστελ σε κα ν στη Σαουλ κα ξ λθεν α τ ς κα Σαμουηλ ως ξω

KJV 1 Samuel 9:26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

NET 1 Samuel 9:26 They got up at dawn and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get up, so I can send you on your way." So Saul got up and the two of them— he and Samuel— went outside.

CSB 1 Samuel 9:26 They got up early, and just before dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get up, and I'll send you on your way!" Saul got up, and both he and Samuel went outside.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:26 Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Up, that I may send you on your way." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

NIV 1 Samuel 9:26 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.

NLT 1 Samuel 9:26 At daybreak the next morning, Samuel called to Saul, "Get up! It's time you were on your way." So Saul got ready, and he and Samuel left the house together.

NRS 1 Samuel 9:26 Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, "Get up, so that I may

send you on your way." Saul got up, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

YLT 1 Samuel 9:26 And they rise early, and it cometh to pass, at the ascending of the dawn, that Samuel calleth unto Saul, on the roof, saying, 'Rise, and I send thee away;' and Saul riseth, and they go out, both of them -- he and Samuel, without.

- **Up:** Ge 19:14 44:4 Jos 7:13 Jdg 19:28
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL'S WAKE UP CALL

**And they arose early; and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up, that I may send you away." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street** - Samuel is telling Saul "rise and shine"!

[Cyril Barber](#) - Samuel showed Saul a significant honor by walking with him down to the gate of the city to see him on his way.

**1 Samuel 9:27 As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Say to the servant that he might go ahead of us and pass on, but you remain standing now, that I may proclaim the word of God to you."**

BGT 1 Samuel 9:27 α τ ν καταβαιν ντων ε ς μ ρος τ ς π λεως κα Σαμουηλ ε πεν τ Σαουλ ε π ν τ νεαν σκ κα διελθ τω μπροσθεν μ ν κα σ στ θι ς σ μερον κα κουσον μα θεο

KJV 1 Samuel 9:27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

NET 1 Samuel 9:27 While they were going down to the edge of town, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us." So he did. Samuel then said, "You remain here awhile, so I can inform you of God's message."

CSB 1 Samuel 9:27 As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the attendant to go on ahead of us, but you stay for a while, and I'll reveal the word of God to you." So the attendant went on.

ESV 1 Samuel 9:27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God."

NIV 1 Samuel 9:27 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."

NLT 1 Samuel 9:27 When they reached the edge of town, Samuel told Saul to send his servant on ahead. After the servant was gone, Samuel said, "Stay here, for I have received a special message for you from God."

NRS 1 Samuel 9:27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the town, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the boy to go on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God."

YLT 1 Samuel 9:27 They are going down in the extremity of the city, and Samuel hath said unto Saul, 'Say to the young man that he pass on before us (and he passeth on), and thou, stand at this time, and I cause thee to hear the word of God.'

- **the servant:** 1Sa 20:38,39 Joh 15:14,15
- **that I may:** 1Sa 15:16 2Ki 9:5,6
- 1 Samuel 9 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAMUEL SEPARATES SAUL FOR SPECIAL MESSAGE

This verse is a poor chapter break as the narrative clearly continues in 1Sa 10:1+ "Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his

head, kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you a ruler over His inheritance?"

**As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Say to the servant that he might go ahead of us and pass on, but you remain standing now, that I may proclaim the word of God to you."** - This message for to be given in private. Note **the word of God to you** indicates the message Samuel has is not his but is the **word of God** to Saul.

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### **Samuel and the Young Man Saul - Spurgeon, Charles Haddon**

1 Samuel 9:27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on)...

This was Samuel's third interview with this goodly young man. This time he spoke to him with great closeness of personal application, sending the servant out of the way that he might say things to him which nobody else might hear. He tried to speak to the young man's inmost soul. The prophet felt a deep solemnity, his whole heart saying every word that fell from his lip. I think I hear his earnest tones, and accents sweetened by a great love, for Samuel loved Saul, and it was his affection which made him speak so earnestly and pointedly. This time the preacher would hold you fast, as if he said to each one, "I will not let thee go unless thou givest thy heart to Christ, and become His servant from this very hour."

#### **I. First, let us think upon THE ATTENTION WHICH HE REQUESTED.**

He said to the servant, "Pass on before us," and he passed on. Bid the servant pass on; forget for a while your business, forget your family, forget your joys, forget your sorrows. I wish I could so speak that men would say of my preaching what they said of Whitefields. One man said, "Whenever I went to church before, I calculated how many looms the church would hold" — for he was a weaver — "but when I heard Whitefield I never thought of a loom." Another said, "While I have been in church I have often built a ship from stem to stern; but when I heard Mr. Whitefield I could not lay a plank; he took my mind right away from such things, and occupied me with higher thoughts." The next point in the attention requested was the desire that he would "stand still a while." I pray you bask in the gospel as men do in the sunlight when they would be warm. Let the gospel have its own legitimate effect upon you. Lay bare your bosom to it. Ask that your soul may have no stone of carelessness laid upon it, as though it were a dead thing in a sepulchre, but that it may come forth in resurrection life through the quickening word of the Divine Spirit. Is not this what the word of God deserves? Should it not have our living, loving attention? When God speaks let all be silent. I have heard that the great clock at St. Paul's can scarcely be heard in Cheapside, by reason of the traffic that is going on; and so the most solemn voices are drowned amidst the din and uproar of our business, and we do not often hear God's voice, unless we are accustomed to give ourselves a little quiet and holy stillness, and sit in our chamber alone, and say, "Now, Lord, commune with me." As the Word of God deserves such quiet attention, it certainly is only by such attention that it is likely to bless us. I remember a child who used to be noted for great attention during sermon, and his mother, noticing his deep earnestness, asked him why He said, "Because, mother, I heard the preacher once say that if there was a piece of the discourse that was likely to be of good to our souls, Satan would try to make us lose it; and as I do not know which part God will bless me by, I try to hear it all, and to remember it all." Oh, when people come to listen to the preacher with such a spirit as that, it is sweet work to preach. But many things arise to prevent this attrition. You cannot get some folks to be still, they are so frivolous; you cannot make them think. Some men dread the process of thinking, almost as much as they would a touch of the "cat" on their backs. They cannot bear to consider and meditate. God has distinguished them above brutes by giving them the faculty of thought, but this high privilege they try to ignore. Do stand still a while, and let nothing come in to break the silence of your spirit, while you listen to the voice of God. I would earnestly persuade every one here who is not saved to get an hour alone somehow.

**II. THE SUBJECT UPON WHICH SAMUEL DISCOURSED** with Saul, or rather the subject about which I would discourse at this time, if I am so happy as to have secured your ear. The subject is the Word of God. That God should give us a Word at all is very gracious. It is wonderful that he should condescend to speak to us, because we cannot understand much: we are like little children at the very best. In the particular word of God which Samuel spoke to Saul there was some likeness to the message which I am bound to deliver to you! Samuel spoke to Saul about a kingdom, of which this young man should be the king. Little did Saul dream that on this day the kingdom should be given him, and little dost thou dream of it perhaps as yet; but I pray thee let me show thee the word of God, for thou mayest yet find a kingdom there, a kingdom for thee, a crown of life for thee which fadeth not away, and a seat at the right hand of God with Christ in the day of His appearing.

2. Samuel not only spoke about the kingdom, but he showed him the word of God by an anointing Thou sayest, "I am not capable of high and noble things." Thou shalt be made capable, for in the day when God anoints thee thou shalt receive strength, — "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Thou shalt receive enlightenment and illumination by the Divine unction of the Holy Ghost.

3. Samuel spake to Saul about another matter, namely, about a change that he should undergo. Hast thou never heard that God can create thee for the second time? can destroy in thee the power for sin, and bring thee under another dominion, and make thee an eager after right as thou hast been after wrong, and make thee as happy in the service of Christ as ever thou wast in the service of the devil, ay, and ten thousand times more so?