

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

As this chapter opens, we are introduced to Saul, the future king of Israel. He is identified as descended from Benjamin, through Aphiah, Bechorath, Zeror and Abiel through his father Kish. Kish was evidently a man of great influence in the tribe of Benjamin.

Saul is described as a beautiful and kind young man (from the Hebrew) without equal among the children of Israel. He was also taller than anyone else. In other words, he sounds like the obvious choice for king.

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

Some donkeys belonging to Kish, Saul's father, had wandered off, so he sent Saul with one of his servants to go and find them. They traveled throughout the hill country of Ephraim and the lands of Shalisha and Shalim and the territory of Benjamin but still could not find them. When they reached the land of Zuph, Saul told his servant that they needed to go back home before his father started worrying about them more than about the donkeys.

The lost donkeys are an example of how God often, but not always, uses the normal circumstances of life to bring about His will in our lives. I liked Guzik's observation on this section: "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)."

1Samuel 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.

The servant told Saul that there was a man of God in the city that might be able to help them. He was known as an honorable man who always spoke the truth.

1Samuel 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?*

1Samuel 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.*

Saul was willing to go see the man of God, but he was concerned that they had no gift to offer him for his help. The servant told Saul that he had a fourth shekel of silver to offer him for his assistance in directing them.

The IVP Old Testament Commentary offers this insight: "A quarter of a shekel of silver would have been the equivalent of a week or so of wages for the ordinary working man. This would be appropriate considering the value of the donkeys that had been lost."

1Samuel 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.*)

This verse provides a parenthetical note. It is basically informing us that those known as Prophets (at the time this record was written) were formerly known as Seers.

1Samuel 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.*

1Samuel 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?*

1Samuel 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:*

1Samuel 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.

Saul liked the servant's suggestion, so they went into the city to find the man of God. As they went up the hill to the city, they encountered some girls that were headed to the well to draw water and asked them if the seer was there. They answered that he was and told them that if they hurried, they could find him before the sacrifice that was scheduled to take place in the high place that day. They should find him right away before he went to eat at the high place because the people would not eat until he came to bless the sacrifice. After the sacrifice, there would be a meal for all that were invited.

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

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

Saul and his servant went up into the city and encountered Samuel coming toward them headed toward the high place. The LORD had told Samuel the day before that He would send a man from the land of Benjamin that he was to anoint as captain over the people of Israel. He had been chosen to deliver the people from the Philistines because the LORD had heard the cries of distress. Saul's anointing represented the fact that God would be with him.

When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him that this was the man that would reign over His people.

It is always so amazing to me to hear the LORD continue to identify the people of Israel as His people in spite of their continual rebellion against Him.

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

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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?

Saul approached Samuel and asked him where to find the seer's house, and Samuel told him that he was the seer. Samuel asked Saul to go with him to the high place and invited him to the meal that followed the sacrifice. He then told Saul that he would help him the next day. His next statement must have amazed Saul. He told him that his donkeys that had been lost for the last three days had been found.

Samuel then asked Saul two questions that he readily understood though the meaning to us might not be quite as clear at first.

- "On whom is all the desire of Israel?"
- "Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?"

Saul knew that Samuel was telling him that he was meant to be the king as shown by his answer in the next verse.

1Samuel 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?

Saul pointed out that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel; and his family was least important of all others in the tribe. (Seems that this was a bit of false humility in light of verse 1.) How could Samuel possibly make such a statement to him in light of those facts?

I am reminded that the tribe of Benjamin was almost wiped out (as recorded in Judges 19-21), so that is why they were the smallest tribe.

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

It seems that Samuel didn't really answer him right away. He took Saul and his servant into the room in which the feast was being held and had them sit with 30 of those considered to be the most important guests. Samuel then told the cook to bring Saul the shoulder portion that he had told him to set aside. Samuel told Saul that this portion had been reserved for him since inviting people to the meal. Then they ate their meal.

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

1Samuel 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.

When they came down from the feast, Samuel and Saul had a talk on the roof of the house. Samuel woke Saul up at daybreak and told him to get up so he could send him on his way. Saul (and his servant) got up and Samuel headed out with them. As they got to the edge of the city, Samuel asked Saul to tell his servant to go on ahead while he talked to Saul. He wanted to tell Saul privately what God had told him.