

Invitation in Accidents and Randomness

Samuel anoints Saul king

Invitation to Leadership Series - Part 5

1 Samuel 9:1–10:27

May 17-18, 2025

Introduction

- How many of us are surprised where we are at life? If I asked you 20 years ago if you thought that this would be your life, would any of you have guessed it? Then how did you get here? Probably a lot of coincidence, some good decisions and some bad decisions. But what if I were to tell you that God was orchestrating some things behind the scenes. Would you believe me?
- Tell a Story here – Fran’s Story?

God uses ordinary MOMENTS to lead us into extraordinary PURPOSES.

- Last Week – **Monarchy Shift** - Found out that Samuel, the great prophet tried to put his kids in power with him, and they turned out to be bad guys. This spurred the nation of Israel to demand that they shift their government from a Theocracy (ruled by God) to a Monarchy (ruled by a king). God warned them that it would be a bad idea, but they didn’t want to listen, so He approved it. And we talked about what would happen if God really let us have what we want?
- This week – so they want a king...**who is God going to pick** to be the FIRST king of Israel?

Lesson

- Hey Good-Lookin’
 - We are introduced to Saul
 - 1 Samuel 9:1–2 – *“There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. 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.”*
 - There was a man of Benjamin – This means there was a guy who we haven’t met yet in the Bible narrative from the tribe of Benjamin. The nation of Israel is divided into 12 portions for the 12 sons of Israel/Jacob. Levi didn’t get a tribal allotment but was scattered around the nation, so Joseph (the favored son) got two portions which he named after his kids: Ephraim and Manasseh. Benjamin and Joseph were full brothers (sons of Rachel). Benjamin was born last and was most favored. The Benjamin tribe were known for a couple things: although they were a small geographic size, they were medium size in population. They were known to be tough warriors and hot-headed, impulsive people. Famously they almost got wiped out by the rest of Israel when they defended one of their wicked towns (Levite and Concubine story), likely reduced 2/3 in size

or more. A number of famous people are from the tribe of Benjamin: Paul the Apostle; Mordecai Esther's uncle; Ehud the Judge (deliverer); and maybe even Jeremiah (although he may have just lived there).

- Ge 35:22–26 – “Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.²³ The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.²⁴ The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.²⁵ The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant: Dan and Naphtali.²⁶ The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.”
- Father's Prophecy about Benjamin and his tribe - Ge 49:27 “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil.”
- Census of the tribes during Moses' era (Smaller-midsized tribe) – Nu 1:36–37 - “Of the people of Benjamin, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:³⁷ those listed of the tribe of Benjamin were 35,400.” (cf. 45,600 by the Numbers census)
- Moses' prophecy/blessing of Benjamin tribe – Dt 33:12 - “Of Benjamin he said, “The beloved of the LORD dwells in safety. The High God surrounds him all day long, and dwells between his shoulders.”
- Tribal allotment¹ (between Judah in the South and Ephraim/Manasseh in the north – contained Jerusalem area and Jericho) – Jos 18:11–28 - “The lot of the tribe of the people of Benjamin according to its clans came up, and the territory allotted to it fell between the people of Judah and the people of Joseph.¹² On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan. Then the boundary goes up to the shoulder north of Jericho, then up through the hill country westward, and it ends at the wilderness of Beth-aven.¹³ From there the boundary passes along southward in the direction of Luz, to the shoulder of Luz (that is, Bethel), then the boundary goes down to Ataroth-addar, on the mountain that lies south of Lower Beth-horon.¹⁴ Then the boundary goes in another direction, turning on the western side southward from the mountain that lies to the south, opposite Beth-horon, and it ends at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city belonging to the people of Judah. This forms the western side.¹⁵ And the southern side begins at the outskirts of Kiriath-jearim. And the boundary goes from there to Ephron, to the spring of the waters of Nephtoa.¹⁶ Then the boundary goes down to the border of the mountain that overlooks the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is at the north end of the Valley of Rephaim. And it then goes down the Valley of Hinnom, south of the shoulder of the Jebusites, and downward to En-rogel.¹⁷ Then it bends in a northerly direction going on to En-shemesh, and from there goes to Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim. Then it goes down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben,¹⁸ and passing on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-arabah it goes down to the Arabah.¹⁹ Then the boundary passes on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-hoglah. And the boundary ends at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan: this is the southern border.²⁰ The Jordan forms its boundary on the eastern side. This is the inheritance of the people of Benjamin, according to their clans, boundary by boundary all around.²¹ Now the cities of the tribe of the people of Benjamin according to their clans were Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz,²² Beth-arabah,

¹ “At the Israelite conquest of Canaan, after the tribes of Judah and Ephraim had received their territory, the first lot came to Benjamin. The tribe was allotted territory between Judah and Ephraim, a strip of land between Mt Ephraim and the Judean hills. The southern boundary with Judah was clearly defined: through the valley of Hinnom immediately south of Jerusalem to a point north of the Dead Sea. Its eastern limit was the Jordan, and its northern boundary with Ephraim ran from the Jordan to Bethel, to Ataroth-addar south of Lower Beth-horon (Jos 18:11–20). Benjamin's territory extended about 28 miles from west to east and 12 miles north to south. It was hilly country, strategically located to control key passes, but with fertile hill basins. Among its hill settlements were the important towns of Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethel, Gibeon, Gibeah, and Mizpeh (Jos 18:21–28). Not all of its towns were immediately taken from their previous possessors; Jerusalem, for example, was in the hands of the Jebusites until David's time. The environment bred a hardy race of highlanders, well described in Jacob's blessing of Benjamin as “a ravenous wolf” (Gn 49:27).” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

Zemaraim, Bethel,²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah,²⁴ Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, Geba—twelve cities with their villages:²⁵ Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,²⁶ Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah,²⁷ Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah,²⁸ Zela, Haeleph, Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kiriath-jearim—fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the people of Benjamin according to its clans.”

- Unable to drive out enemies - Jdg 1:21 “But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.”
- Creepy city – one of the worst stories in the OT is the story of the Levite and the Concubine. It’s basically the story of Sodom and Gomorrah but in Israel’s territory and Jewish. That homosexual gang rape attack happened at a city (Gibeah) within the tribe region of Benjamin. This kicked off a brutal civil war.
- Civil War Badasses – Judges 20 tells the story of the aftermath of the Levite and Concubine story where one of the towns of Benjamin did a wicked thing and the rest of the tribes came against them for war (400,000). Benjamin showed up to defend themselves and refused to give up the bad guys in their territory. They showed up with 26,000 men (Gibeah brought 700 additional) of which there were 700 amazing warriors with the sling (let-handed). Israel attacked Benjamin one tribe at a time: First Judah who lost 22,000. The next day Israel rallied and sent in a massive army but ended up losing and losing 18,000 more men. Demoralized Israel’s main forces called out to God and asked if they should attack again. God said yes. They lured Benjamin out and attacked them and killed 25,100 of them and won. They burned the towns and killed the people and animals decimating the tribe. In the end there were 600 warriors left who had no wives left. Israel felt bad for killing off one of their tribes so they gave 400 wives to them from another Israelite city that had disobeyed the rules. But to get the final 200 to restart the tribe, they allowed the Benjaminite men to kidnap single women from a festival and take them back as wives (Israelite families had sworn not to GIVE their daughters to Benjaminite men, but if they were STOLEN...).
- Ehud - The sneaky-brave-warrior Ehud was from the tribe of Benjamin, who killed Eglon the fat king of Moab.
- Great warriors and leaders in history.² Oddly enough most of the main leaders are **hot heads who are impulsive and stubborn** defending themselves at all costs regardless of the moral implications (Shimei, Sheba, Palti, etc.).
- Jeremiah the prophet was a Benjaminite or at least lived in the Benjamin tribal area. Mordecai (Esther’s uncle) was from there too.
- Paul the Apostle – Saul of Tarsus was from this tribe.
- Wiped out tribe – **by the time all of this was done, the tribe of Benjamin was almost totally wiped out. This was the era just before Samuel** but unknown how long they had a chance to replenish before our story today (with Saul) starts.
- whose name was Kish, - Not much known about this guy other than he was rich and influential at the time.
- the son of Abiel³ - this is Saul’s grandfather (Abiel means, ‘my father is God’). His dad is named Ner.
- son of Zeror, - unknown
- son of Becorath, - unknown

² “Members of the tribe later helped Deborah and Barak defeat Sisera (Jgs 5:14). The tribe continued to produce great men: political leaders (1 Chr 27:21), captains in Saul’s army (2 Sm 4:2) and David’s army (2 Sm 23:29), skilled archers (1 Chr 8:40), and overseers in Solomon’s labor force (1 Kgs 4:18).” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

³ Kish, son of Abiel; that is, Kish, the “grandson” of Abiel (“My father is El”; cf. Abijah in 1 Sam. 8:2). Malamat notes: “Unlike the genealogical lists, and as in narrative and historiographical usage, the sequence of generations here ascends, like the table of ancestors of Shamshi-Adad.” Here, Kish’s father, Ner, is omitted.” NICOT

- son of Aphiah, - unknown
- a Benjaminite, - member of the Benjamin tribe.
- a man of wealth⁴ – member of high-society, the Aristocracy. That meant wealth and high standing.
- And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man⁵ – although he was likely literally handsome the word seems to suggest more of his character which would be more like ‘impressive looking’ unlike Absalom who is referred to specifically as physically handsome.
 - Saul is introduced as the most “handsome man” in Israel and of impressive stature—basically a perfect kingly candidate. But God often looks beyond appearances. This is an opportunity to talk about how we often value outward qualifications, but God looks at the heart. What are the qualities we tend to overvalue when we think about leadership or calling?
- There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. – again this is ‘impressive looking’ even more than handsome although he certainly would have been.
- From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people. – part of the reason he looked so impressive was his size. In general ancient Jewish men were rather small and so anyone of great height stood out.
 - Looking at the outside vs. the inside – there’s nothing wrong with sizing up what we see. There’s nothing wrong with making some determinations upon observation. The problem is when we make firm judgments about someone or something ONLY by what we see.
 - When movie stars are asked their opinions on deep topics – I’ve always found this odd. We really care about what an actor or actress or musician or singer says about world events. Why is that? What about their experience allows them to speak more deeply about the world? Most of them are either unusually attractive and moved through the ranks, or hyper-gifted in one area in music, or grown up theater kids. But when we see them get a lot of attention, we assume more of them than is appropriate.
- Losing our Assess
 - Saul’s servant suggests asking Samuel about lost donkeys
 - 1 Samuel 9:3–10 – *“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.”*⁴ *And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim*

⁴ The phrase a powerful person (gibbôr ḥāyil), or “a man of substance” (REB), would refer to “a member of the nobility,” especially of the “the warrior class, who became the landed aristocracy.” This title refers back to Kish, rather than to Aphiah. Saul is thus a member of the ruling class even though he was from a “junior clan of the smallest tribe” (v. 21). The title had originally a military sense, “a mighty warrior,” as was the case with Gideon, Jephthah, and others. But its meaning had broadened and had come to refer to men of high social standing with economic power, that is, to aristocrats or wealthy citizens (e.g. 2 K. 15:20), such as Jeroboam (1 K. 11:28) or Boaz (Ruth 2:1). That Kish was a “man of wealth” is supported by the reference to the head servant and donkeys in v. 3.” NICOT

⁵ “The phrase a fine young man (bāḥūr wāṭôb) is literally “young and good” (hendiadys). For tōb, various translations have been suggested: “handsome” (NRSV, NASB, McCarter); “impressive” (NIV); “excellent” (JPS); “in his prime” (REB). This “goodness” is not so much a description of the physical appearance as of the nature and personality of a man; cf. the description of Absalom in 2 Sam. 14:25 as yāpeh (“beautiful, handsome”), which describes an external (visual) evaluation. By human judgment Saul seemed to be the ideal person — fine and with a potential for anything, particularly as a leader whom the others would admire and follow.” NICOT

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.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."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."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?"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."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.)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."

- Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. – this seems to be a regular problem for people in the ancient world. Livestock gets away from you. But we know by this story later that God was the one orchestrating the lost donkeys. Saul didn't know that. Kish didn't know that. God kept that to Himself.
- So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men⁶ with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." – likely the helper servant was a **high standing servant** who was not really young. He seems to be a bit noble himself in the house. Likely the character Ziba (2 Sam 19:17), the manager of Kish's estate. Historically the term also could mean, squire of a warrior but that's less likely here.
- And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah,⁷ 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. – there is some question whether the term 'land of Benjamin' is actually a town in Ephraim named 'Yaminite' and not the tribal region of Benjamin. That would mean that Saul and his guy were **locally in the Ephraim territory and not going too far**.
- When they came to the land of Zuph⁸ - no one really knows where this is but it's Samuel's hometown so that makes it important. It's probably primarily the town of Ramah (Ramathaim).
- 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." –

⁶ "Note that Ziba, na'ar of the house of Saul (2 Sam. 19:17), had fifteen sons! "He held the important position of custodian of the personal property of Saul and his family." So the man who accompanied Saul was probably the head servant of Kish's family, even Ziba (also 2 Sam. 9:9). The fact that he is seated with Saul as a guest of honor (v. 22) may also mean that he is not simply a menial." NICOT

⁷ "Shalishah, Shaalim, and Yaminite refer to the hill country of Ephraim. It is difficult to identify these places exactly and to reconstruct the itinerary with relative certainty; hence, most commentators do not try." NICOT

⁸ "The land of Zuph refers to an area of unknown extent. It is the district where Ramathaim, Samuel's hometown, was located." NICOT

Good idea. He's thinking of needing to get back or they have a whole other problem. Sons are more important than donkeys and the dad was going to eventually get worried since they've been gone so long.

- But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, - But as it turns out they happen to be in Samuel, the prophets, homebase town. Hmmmm. Coincidence? Not at all. Orchestrated by God.
 - **Who are you listening to?** – one of the greatest influences in our lives are the voices we allow in our heads. So, who are we listening to? Do we have friends who are leading us toward the perspective of the Lord or away? Are we willing to listen to the wisdom of people who are in a lower social status than we are? Are we listening for the voice of God in others or are we too arrogant to listen at all? Are we listening to voices that disagree with our current opinion on subjects?
 - **Are you willing to share?** – on the other side of this coin there are some of us who are very shy and insecure about what we know. God may be giving us some thoughts to share with those around us but we won't open our mouths for fear that we will be found lacking or even worse, we could get rejected. But what if God wants to use you as a point of wisdom for those in your life? What if you are the voice of reason? What if you are the heart of the Holy Spirit in your friend group? Will you be willing to speak for God?
- and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. – Samuel was really well respected by the Israelite people. They knew that he was a high-level, accurate prophet and man of integrity. The rumor was that he always prophesied correctly.
- So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." – They think of the opportunity to have the man of God who is always right, help them find their lost donkeys. Kind of a weird thing to ask the guy, but hey, they are wealthy aristocracy so maybe they think they have the right to ask.
 - **The BIG SET UP – God made the donkeys get lost to get these guys right here right now. And this is my central point of this story. No one knew that it was a special day. It was a normal problem in a normal season of life, on a normal day. What special thing could possibly happen on a donkey hunt? Well, it just so happens that this donkey hunt is God-inspired and directed. This means that God was working through the mundane, the average, the ordinary, to do something extraordinary. When we think that God can only work with special people, on special days, with special events, or in special locations, we will miss the presence of the Lord in our lives. God works in the everyday and all around us. Are we alert to it?**
- 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?"⁹ – Saul is concerned with showing up to ask something of a famous guy without having anything to give him or pay him for it. Saul knows Middle Eastern hospitality and that's a no-no. Saul is thinking about his own resources, and he doesn't have anything.

- The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver,¹⁰ and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way." – not sure what silver was worth at that time, but it was valuable enough. The servant or manager of the household had the household money at his disposal and was always thinking ahead. He had something to give.
 - (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.) – this is an editor's note telling us that prophet and seer are synonymous terms. Seer means seeing something outside of their own experience or knowledge base. It can mean 'seeing the future'. Whereas prophet tends to be someone who gets a word from the Lord and shares it with others. There is significant overlap in the two offices, so they became synonymous.
 - And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was. – Saul hears the plan, affirms it (he's actually in charge in this duo) and they head on into the city.
- Shhh, it's Him!
 - Samuel and Saul cross paths and God reveal a secret
 - *1 Samuel 9:11–17 – "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?"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.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."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.¹⁵ Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed to Samuel: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."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."*

⁹ "C. H. Gordon notes that gifts were an integral part of social intercourse in the ancient world as reflected in the epics. They were given to friends, guests, and almost anyone whom one wished to treat honorably or have good relations with. A traveler away on a long journey was expected to bring home many gifts (Odyssey 11:355–361)." NICOT

¹⁰ "A quarter shekel of silver weighs about 2.8 grams, since 1 shekel = 11.4 grams." NICOT

- As they went up the hill to the city,¹¹ - this means the city was up in elevation from the roadside they were on.
- they met young women coming out to draw water¹² and said to them, “Is the seer here?” – women tended to draw water from wells in the evening time. They would travel in groups for safety. One of the groups comes up at the same time the guys walk into the city and they ask about Samuel.
- 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 place¹³ – the helpful young ladies, say that Samuel is in town and if they hurry they will run into him on the road as he has a normal job at the high place today. High place tends to mean holy place or shrine in that era of the Old Testament.
- 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.” – they knew a lot about Samuel because he was famous. They knew the protocol of how to handle a famous prophet and told the guys the routine.
- 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. – Sure enough, just as the women said, here comes Samuel on his way up to the holy sport.
- Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed to Samuel: - we are now told that God had prepped Samuel and he wasn’t coming into this divine appointment cold. God had given him secret info ahead of time.
- “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint¹⁴ him to be prince¹⁵ over my people Israel.

¹¹ “The phrase the ascent to the city (ma’ālēh hā’ir) suggests that the city was located on the top of the hill for defensive purposes. The ascent normally led to the complex structure of the city gate.” NICOT

¹² “The girls were descending the path to the well or spring outside of the city walls to draw water (*š’b; cf. 7:6; 2 Sam. 23:16), for it was the duty of women to fetch water daily (see Ugar. Šibt “a woman who draws water” in KTU 1.12:II:60, 1.14:III:9, V:1); normally they went in the evening (see Gen. 24:11).” NICOT

¹³ “The high place (bāmāh) is usually associated with pagan Canaanite practice. Here it is outside of the city wall (see v. 14), a hill or an artificial platform on which a local shrine is located. The high places are condemned by Deuteronomic theology which emphasizes a single, central place of worship. Therefore the expression “high places” often carries “a negative connotation, suggesting non-Yahwistic, syncretistic, or at least illicit cultic practice.”⁵⁰ However, the present passage has no hint of a pagan connection, not so much because of its ancient origin as because of its association with Samuel, the prophet of the Lord (3:20). When Samuel urged the people to “turn aside the foreign gods and goddesses from your midst” in 7:3, those pagan religious cults must have been performed on those high places. Even after Solomon’s temple was built in Jerusalem, the high places played a major part in the religion of Israel, especially on a popular level throughout its history; see 1 K. 3:2.” NICOT

¹⁴ “The act of anointing refers to “rubbing or smearing with a sweet-smelling substance” — animal fat or vegetable oil. According to Fleming, while anointing was an essential part of everyday life in the ancient Near East, it especially marked “a variety of transitions in status.” For example, anointing with oil marks “various changes in legal relationships,” such as women upon betrothal. In Israel, however, the act of anointing was first of all a royal rite; the king was “the anointed one” or “messiah” of Yahweh (see on 2:10b). The anointing rite was believed to impart something of the divine sanctity to the king.” NICOT

¹⁵ “While the term may have referred to the king-designate or “crown prince” during the monarchic period, it simply means “the leader” of Yahweh’s people in the present context since Saul’s father was not a king. As a crown prince was usually expected to prove himself as his father’s successor by being successful in battle (e.g., Nebuchadnezzar), so Saul was chosen as a “military commander” for the people of Israel; in ch. 11 he will prove to be worthy of this title when he fights against the Ammonite Nahash. In fact, despite Mettinger’s claim that the term was “probably not used in the pre-monarchic period as a title denoting the leader of the people”, one may hold that the title prince or “leader” goes

- God gave him details and times. He told him that he would **meet a Benjaminite (which seems to be out of his territory – which is unusual)** and that Samuel is supposed to anoint him as the king/prince.
 - Prince, not King? – **God is still in charge. He is a ‘regent’ which means ‘king in stead’.**
 - He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. – What is this king’s initial purpose and first assignment? Lead a successful war against their primary enemy, the Philistines.
 - For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” – the Philistines had been picking on Israel for quite some time and it was crushing Israel so they had been crying out in prayer. God heard them and that meant He was going to do something about it.
 - When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! – God gives Samuel the authorization on Saul, that he’s the guy.
 - He it is who shall restrain¹⁶ my people.” – Restrain people means **rule over them.**
- Dinner with the Prince
 - Samuel officially meets Saul and they share a meal
 - *1 Samuel 9:18–10:27 – “Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?”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.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?”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?”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.²³ And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Put it aside.’ ”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.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.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*

back to premonarchical times “when it referred to the commanders of the Israelite tribal militia.” The term was originally “the title of a person who was designated to be ruler either by Yahweh or by the reigning monarch” but later became to stand for king, ruler, chief priests, and chief officials, namely, “the appointee as the head of a certain group or organization.”⁶⁶ Since God remained the true king, the title might well have meant “regent.” NICOT

¹⁶ “The verb rule over (ya’šōr; or “govern”) normally means “to hold back, restrain” through the following semantic change: “to hold back” > “to restrain oneself” > “to rule.” NICOT

went out into the street. 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.""

- Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?" – this is demonstrating that Saul has no idea who Samuel is. They are strangers. He asks Samuel where Samuel is.
- 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. – Samuel confirms that he is the seer that Saul is looking for. Once that is confirmed, Samuel immediately starts giving Saul orders, which is interesting because although they are strangers, Samuel is used to telling others what to do and if Saul was seeking his help, then he was seeing him as an authority. Samuel tells him to head up to the location where Samuel was on his way to go to, the high place. It's not clear to me, although it's clear in the language, whether Samuel is asking him to go ahead of him, or saying, come with me. It doesn't matter. The point is that Samuel is going to invite him to the dinner they are going to have for Samuel. He also confirms that he is going to eventually help him with his request and he's not ignoring him.
- As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. – Almost as if he needs to check it off the list (but I consider it a way for the Lord to confirm for Saul that He's in it and responsible even with the donkeys – so He can be trusted with guiding and organizing Saul's life too), Samuel talks about the lost donkey scenario. They are fine. They were found already and brought back home.
- And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?" – this is the strangest line of the whole passage that we are studying, and I don't really get the full meaning. It seems like a poetic way of saying, 'God is doing something special for Saul's family and clan.' What that is, is not clear at this point.
- 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?"¹⁷ – Is this literal or false humility? The tribe of Benjamin was actually almost wiped out in the prior period of the judges so it's likely it was small but clearly some of the families are still wealthy (maybe that's why they moved to Ephraim). Jerusalem is partly in the tribal territory of Benjamin. And Saul of Tarsus/Paul the Apostle was a Benjaminite.
 - **How to navigate insecurities** – let's assume for a moment that Saul truly believed what he said. Let's say that he really believed that he

¹⁷ "Am I not ...? – "Self-deprecation of this sort belongs to a worthy line of tradition which includes Moses (Exod. 3:11) and Gideon (Judg. 6:15)." But Saul's father Kish was, in fact, a "powerful person" (1 Sam. 9:1). Though Benjamin was the smallest tribe and a short time ago had almost been wiped out by its wickedness and stubbornness (Judges 19–20), it lay in a strategic location between north and south; Jerusalem was in traditionally Benjaminite territory. One should note that Saul of Tarsus was from this tribe (Phil. 3:5)." NICOT

was no big deal because he didn't come from the right group or family. Why does he think this? Probably because that's all he heard his whole life. Everyone around him were choosing things based on sight and worldly standards so that's what soaked in. But what if the TRUTH is different than what your immediate culture is saying? What if you are currently insecure about something you have no business being insecure about? What if God views you different than you view yourself? Sure, none of us are perfect, and we don't want to have false confidence, but what I'm saying is that many of us have listened to unhealthy voices and grown up in dysfunctional environments and we are ignoring the voice of God because we don't think we are worthy or capable.

- 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.¹⁸ – it shows that Samuel was WITH the guys and he takes them into the special dinner that had been organized BEFORE the guys showed up. It seems like he's offering them a spot at Samuel's special dinner (that others set up for Samuel), but along the way it seems like Samuel set this dinner up for the two guys. The most important part of this dinner was the 30 people that were there. Regardless of why they thought they were there (to honor Samuel or to honor Saul), their presence as the aristocracy of the region means that it's a bit of a coronation dinner in private (but the reader wouldn't know this yet).
- And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.' " – Again we see the premeditation of God and Samuel together. Samuel had already organized with the chef/cook to prepare a special portion for a special guest.
- 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."¹⁹ – The cook brings in the special portion of the meal that had been prepared for the special guest and Samuel calls it out as a special event. He says, 'go ahead and eat here, it's all for you. In fact all of this dinner is really for you.' Don't feel guilty about it, it's the point.
- So Saul ate with Samuel that day. – Saul finally relented and calmed down and accepted that he is a part of something bigger than himself.

¹⁸ "Samuel could order the butcher to set aside Saul's portion beforehand, since the Lord had told him on the previous day about Saul's arrival. Thus, this was a well-prepared and planned official meal for Saul with thirty representatives of the people, even though to Saul and his servant, their presence looked almost accidental." NICOT

¹⁹ "Thus, the meat which has been kept for Saul stands for the people whom Samuel has invited. This ritual symbolism of eating the special part of the meat reserved for Saul must have something to do with Saul's ruling over the people (see 1 Sam. 9:17); for the thirty invited guests, who are probably the nobles of the region and represented the people, to eat with Saul at their head seat could mean their obedience and subjugation to him. As is often the case in the ancient Near East, in spite of his claim to divine endorsement, the "authority [of a king] depended largely on the goodwill and support of a powerful landowning and military aristocracy." Saul, the future king, would certainly need the full support from these other guests who are representing the people." NICOT

- 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. – In addition to the meal, it was really late, and Samuel invited Saul and his aide to stay the night. They gave him a spot on the roof (roofs were a common extension room of the house) and he slept up there.
 - Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” – In the morning Samuel called up to Saul, to get up because it was time to go.
 - So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street. As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, - Saul got up and everyone headed out to the edge of the city for Saul and his aide to leave. As they got to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, ‘tell your aide/servant to go on ahead of us, I have a private message for you alone.’
 - and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.” – Samuel said, I have a message from you that actually from God Himself. That must have been ominous and nerve-wracking.
- A New Era Begins
 - Samuel anoints Saul as the first King of Israel
 - *1 Samuel 10:1-8 – “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, “Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. ²When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, “What shall I do about my son?” ’ ³Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. ⁴And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. ⁵After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. ⁶Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. ⁷Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. ⁸Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.””*

- Then Samuel took a flask of oil²⁰ and poured it on his head – Samuel may have had a bag or holding different items, or maybe he always carries around a flask of oil. It's not clear how much oil was in the flask, but since "Anointing = "rubbing or smearing with a sweet-smelling substance" with animal fat or vegetable oil, it's clear that it's going to be quite a bit. At Bridgeway we use a tiny bit and smear it in the sign of the cross on people's foreheads, but they would pour it and smear it all around. Oh, and we use oil, not animal fat...just saying.
- and kissed him – this is a blessing kiss, a sign of kindness.
- and said, "Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord, and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. – It's a bit misleading to read this as an opening question, instead of a statement. But it's more poetic. Samuel is simply saying: God has anointed you to be our new leader in this nation. You are going to be the King that people ask for. You will reign over Israel and be the protector of the realm from the Philistines and other enemy people groups.
- And this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. – being named the FIRST KING OF ISRAEL is no small thing and to Saul who feels like he's a nobody, it seems impossible. And for now it's only words. Samuel is saying stuff that's beyond possible to Saul. What proof does Samuel have that this is going to happen? What evidence is there that he can trust these words? Samuel knows all of this, and the Lord already provided a confirmation. He tells Saul, in essence, I know you are going to struggle to believe me, but there will be a sign that what I'm saying is true (that you will be king).
- When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb²¹ – As soon as you leave here, you will meet two guys near Rachel's tomb. The Rachel being referred to is the famous wife of Jacob, and mother of both Joseph and Benjamin. She died giving birth to Benjamin and was buried near Samuel's hometown of Ramah roughly 800 years prior.
- in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah,²² - Again it's not clear if it's the town 'Yaminite' in Ephraim and not Benjamin. The modern location of Rachel's

²⁰ "A flask filled with oil is used here, but in 16:1 "a horn" is used for anointing David. The ingredients of the "sacred anointing oil" were liquid myrrh, fragrant cinnamon, fragrant cane, cassia and olive oil;"

²¹ "For Rachel's tomb, see Jer. 31:15, which mentions Rachel's weeping for her children in Ramah, Samuel's home town. According to Gen. 35:16–20, Rachel died and was buried on the road from Bethel to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)—"still some distance to go to Ephrath" (48:7)—after giving birth to Benjamin. McCarter thinks that Franz Delitzsch was right in thinking this refers to the Benjamite Ephrathah near Kiriath-jearim. However, before Jerusalem was conquered by David the ridge road southward from Bethel could have been called "the Ephrath road," that is, the road to Ephrath, or Bethlehem (Gen. 35:19—derek 'eprātāh; 48:7—'ēlôn tābôr) rather than the "Jerusalem road." Therefore, the original location was near Ramah on the "Bethlehem" road. Also see 1:1; 17:12 on "Ephrathite"; and 13:17 on "the Ephrath road." The present-day "Rachel's Tomb" is based on a later tradition." NICOT

²² "The name Zelzah (ṣelṣah) appears only here. Might it be a non-Semitic name? Because of the "obscure" Hebrew word order, that is, "near/toward Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin in Zelzah," McCarter thinks that the "nearer definition of the location is out of place here, following the foregoing phrases (which a place-name should precede)." Hence, based on the LXX and other Greek MSS, McCarter conjectures bšl'm bmqwt (lit., "in their limping on staffs") to be original. However, the unusual sequence could be due to literary insertion, the "AXB" pattern, in which the prepositional phrase ("in the territory of Benjamin") is inserted between the main noun "Rachel's tomb" and the modifier "in Zelzah" of the noun phrase "Rachel's tomb in Zelzah," and the inserted element modifies the noun phrase as a whole." NICOT

tomb (which is suspect) is in Bethlehem which was traditionally on the border of the tribe of Benjamin and Judah, on the other side of Ephraim's territory which was to the north of Benjamin.

- and they will say to you, 'The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?" ' – The two guys that meet them will have a message. God tells Saul the exact words they were going to say. They were going to explain that he needed to get home cause his dad was freaking out. Also the donkey were found.
- Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor.²³ – No one knows where this is but the original people reading it would likely have known.
- Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, - Then three guys are going to meet you near the holy city of Bethel (as if you need more confirmation).
- one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. – specifically these three guys are going to be carrying these items: 3 young goats, 3 loaves of bread, and a skin of wine. That's really specific.
- And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread,²⁴ which you shall accept from their hand. – those guys will greet you and give you a gift of 2 loaves of bread, which you need to receive from them.
- After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim,²⁵ where there is a garrison of the Philistines.²⁶ – It's just the town of Gibeah. You will continue walking and you are going to cross through Gibeah...

²³ "For the Oak of Tabor ('ēlôn tābôr), see other compound names such as "Chisloth-tabor" (Josh. 19:12), "Aznoth-tabor" (19:34). The location is not known; this tree must be near Bethel (see on 7:16). In the OT the oak is mentioned in connection with holy places and cultic activities; see Gen. 12:6; Judg. 9:37; Isa. 6:13." NICOT

²⁴ "Judging from the sign or "audience-gift" of two of the three loaves of bread, this is not a "mere passing greetings," especially as these were probably meant to be given in sacrifice and would have been eaten by the priests (Num. 18:11). Saul's portion of the meat at the banquet (1 Sam. 9:24) was also the priest's share, so this indicates the sacredness of his kingship. As Wiseman notes, the bread was to be accepted "since such 'greetings' and gifts were part of the customary diplomatic acknowledgement of a king's new position and authority." NICOT

²⁵ The name Gibeath-elohim (so NRSV; lit., "the hill of God") and its shorter name Gibeah (v. 10) could refer to a place the same as or near to "Gibeah of Saul" in 11:4, since people who knew him from before (v. 11) are there...Most scholars accept it as "Gibeah of Saul" and identify it with the modern Tell el-Fûl [MR172–136], about 3 miles north of Jerusalem; the ancient north-south road ran along the foot of the site to the west. Its location and panoramic view (it rises about 30 m. above the surrounding plain; 862 m. above sea level) have made it an important strategic site; the geological shape of the city gave it the name "Gibeah" (i.e., hill), and the city could be also called "the hill" as in 10:13. On a clear day, from the top of the mound, the Dead Sea is visible to the southeast; northeast, the view is toward Geba and Michmash; northwest lies Nebi Samwil, and there is a commanding view of Jerusalem sprawled over the hills to the south." NICOT

²⁶ "The term (Philistine) garrisons (nēšībê pēlištīm) here is plural as in 2 Sam. 8:6, 14; compare the singular in 1 Sam. 13:3, 4. Various translations are "outpost" (NIV) and "prefects" (JPS). The plural form probably denotes a composite structure of buildings such as palaces and fortresses, as in Ugaritic bhtm, mṭbm, etc.; see UT, §19.463. At Tell el-Fûl, the modern site for Gibeah, two fortresses (I and II) have been excavated. While Albright holds that Saul built Fortress I, Alt and B. Mazar have suggested that it was one of a series of Philistine fortresses built to control the principal trade routes. The reason why Philistine garrisons is mentioned here is probably that Saul would be empowered by God to deliver his people from them." NICOT

- And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets²⁷ – you will meet a group of prophets. In ancient Israel groups of men would travel together and use a group environment to seek the Lord. There's debate about who these groups are and what they were about. Some people think of them as wild ecstatic supernatural groups that may be sketchy, while others view them as regular prophets who were more deeply spiritual. The point seems to be that they were supernatural people who had high value for interactions with the spiritual and with God.
- coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them,²⁸ prophesying. – They would use music to encourage and embrace the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Kings 3:15) while they are seeking the Lord and prophesying.
- Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you,²⁹ - this is a controversial statement because some people think of this as a negative and some people think of this as a positive phrase. It is far more complicated in the story of Samson than here. Here it seems to be a clear indicator that God is moving and truly supernaturally impacting them. The Spirit of the Lord is the Holy Spirit. Rushing upon means to come upon suddenly. My opinion is that it's the Holy Spirit coming suddenly upon someone to get something done despite the person.

²⁷ "This "band of prophets" (ḥebel n^ḥbī'îm) is more similar to a group called āpilum "answerer, responder" in Mari than to the muḥḥûm, an ecstatic or frenetic, in light of the fact that āpilum, unlike the other types of prophets, acted occasionally in consort, "in groups similar to the bands of prophets in the Bible." It is often assumed that this band is of a type whose "prophesying" was irrational and ecstatic, but the text only suggests the acts of prophesying in a group with musical instruments. The verbal stem, Hith., of prophesying (mitnabb^ḥ'îm) does not necessarily mean the act is ecstatic, though the prophesying in Israel sometimes accompanied some type of "supernatural" experience. Too much emphasis has been given to this aspect of prophesying; for example, BDB, pp. 611–12. But here as in 19:20, it is the work of the spirit of the Lord that is emphasized; no "pagan" religious actions such as "self-flagellation or mutilation" are mentioned. Prophecy in the ancient Near East has been the subject of intense scholarly scrutiny. What similarities there are between Israelite prophecy and Canaanite prophecy relate to ecstasy. However, though historians were wont to say that Israelite prophecy was just an outgrowth of Canaanite ecstatic prophecy, it is now difficult to hold this view. For example, HALOT, p. 659, is more cautious about the nature of this prophesying; it explains Ni. as "to be in a prophetic trance, behave like a nābī'" (10:11; 19:20; etc.); Hith. as "to exhibit the behaviour of a nābī'" (Num. 11:25; 1 Sam. 10:5; 18:10; 19:20; etc.). In these descriptions the terms "ecstasy" and "ecstatic" are wisely avoided, especially since the terms have been used without a careful definition. Wilson suggests that they may have been in some kind of trance, for music is often used for inducing trances, but he points out that these prophets can still walk and play instruments, though the ones prophesying and those performing may not have been the same individuals since the performers were "before them," so it could not have been a deep trance." NICOT

²⁸ "By playing these musical instruments harp, tambour, double-pipe, and lyre (nēbel w^ḥtōp w^ḥhālîl w^ḥkinnôr), their spiritual "experience" is certainly enhanced, if not caused. On a minstrel and a song, see 2 Sam. 23:1. The instrument tambour is usually associated with joy and gladness in the Bible;"

²⁹ "It is noteworthy that the phrase the spirit of the Lord (rûaḥ YHWH; also 16:13, 14; 19:9; 2 Sam. 23:2) appears in 1–2 Samuel only in connection with Yahweh's anointed, that is, Saul or David (16:13). Likewise, later it departed from Saul (1 Sam. 16:14), and, in its place, the spirit of Yahweh for disaster came upon him (19:9). Thus, the spirit of Yahweh was given to His anointed that they might fulfill their responsibility as the representative of the people Israel and as the vice-regent of God. The verb "to rush" (*šlh) + spirit (rûaḥ) appears only in the stories of Samson (Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14), Saul (10:6, 10; 11:6; 18:10), and David (16:13). The expression does not appear after 18:10. While the onrush of God's spirit usually invigorated the hero's martial spirits—"the hero experiences the spirit as an explosive surge of strength"—the present passage is concerned with endowing the power of "prophecy" (see below). Unlike the normal Canaanite practices, the phenomenon is not artificially manipulated; the spirit of the Lord will rush upon Saul of itself—predicted but not manipulated. Here, the spirit of the Lord functions as the means by which he takes ordinary people and makes them fit for his service. The onrush of the spirit of the Lord was necessary to dispel any doubts Saul might have of his choice and as a public demonstration that he was now the "prince." The precise nature of Saul's "prophesying" is not specified, but "no negative evaluation is given to it"³² here or when it occurs in v. 9." NICOT

- and you will prophesy with them – Here’s the weird part: Samuel tells Saul that despite what he thinks or wants to do, he’s going to prophesy publicly and out loud.
 - and be turned into another man.³⁰ – this is another weird statement. ‘you will be turned into another man’. What the heck does that mean? It means that God fills you with passion and the intention of your heart shifts. In this case it may mean that prior Saul was primarily secular minded, but after this experience, God will become more real to him. It’s not clear.
 - Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. – After all those signs and proof you will know that God is doing all of this, and He is in it. Therefore, whatever happens next you need to walk into it with confidence and do what seems right in the moment. God will be in that.
 - Then go down before me to Gilgal.³¹ – And when you find all that confirmation and know that you need to do something important (your first assignment from God), I need you to go down to the holy site of Gilgal and meet me there. Samuel had a common route of traveling through the towns and doing prophecy and judging. This was on his route. So, they were eventually going to cross paths again.
 - And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. – Samuel explains that he does this route and ends up in Gilgal to offer sacrifices on behalf of Israel to the Lord. It will be at that location that they will meet.
 - Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.” – this part is specific. Samuel says, I need you to wait for me. You are going to wait for a week (7 days). But don’t move forward until I come with instructions. For those of us who know this story, we know how important these final instructions are, but to new readers, and to Saul, it’s just another part of the ton of information he’s hearing for the first time.
- Saul the Prophet?
 - Everything happens like God said including a prophesying time
 - *1 Samuel 10:16-27 – “When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. ¹⁰ When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. ¹¹ And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” ¹² And a man of the place answered, “And who is their father?”*

³⁰ “To change to another person (‘iš ‘ahēr) is not necessarily becoming another person by losing oneself, but rather by being equipped with power to play a new role as Gideon and Jephthah did when the spirit of God came upon them (Judg. 6:34; 11:29).” NICOT

³¹ “We are not told, however, how soon Saul should go down to Gilgal. But Samuel—now at his home town Ramah—was presumably getting ready to start his annual visit to Bethel—Gilgal—Mizpah (see 7:16); so, Saul’s visit to Gilgal would need to occur within a few weeks or possibly a few months, but obviously before “Samuel called the people to the Lord at Mizpah” (10:17). There is no reason to think that Saul’s visit was postponed until many years later (→ 13:7b), as some claim.” NICOT

Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" ¹³ *When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.* ¹⁴ *Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To seek the donkeys. And when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel."* ¹⁵ *And Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."* ¹⁶ *And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything."*

- When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. – The moment Saul turned to leave, God moved on his heart. What this means is not clear, but it seems to indicate that in that moment Saul started thinking like a leader and thinking that God is real and present.
- And all these signs came to pass that day. – sure enough, just as Samuel said, all the stuff happened that he said would happen.
- When they came to Gibeah, - when they got to the town of Gibeah, which by the way was the instigation city of the wicked story of the Levite and Concubine (homosexual gang rape attempt) that got wiped out in the past...
- behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. – they met that group of prophets coming through with the music and instruments. And sure enough, just as God said, the Holy Spirit rushed on Saul and Saul started prophesying aloud among them. It's like he was slain in the Spirit and caught up in sudden ministry. All of this seems to be prepping Saul to know that God is real.
- And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" – The aide and anyone else who knew Saul, that passed by, saw him prophesying and it seemed weird and out of place. That's not the type of guy he was normally. They were wondering what was happening and whether or not Saul had turned into one of the prophet group people.
- And a man of the place answered, "And who is their father?" – I think this is a statement of asking about the leader of the prophetic group (father can mean leader).
- Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" – it was such an odd experience that people kept saying in the future that Saul was prophesying. It brought up the question of: what type of guy is this? Is he a holy roller?
- When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. – Apparently the prophetic group was either traveling along the way when they were prophesying, OR, they finish up and Saul goes on his way and ends up at the destination for the group, the high place, and happens to connect with his uncle (maybe going home after it?).

- And he said to the people of Israel, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, - Samuel shifts into the prophetic side of his judgeship and begins to talk FOR the Lord. He uses the famous and serious phrase, 'thus says the Lord...'
- 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' – God begins by bringing the nation of Israel together and reminding them of their history with Him. He brought them supernaturally and mightily from Egyptian bondage. That was the biggest thing in their history up to that point.
- But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, - Unfortunately it goes quickly from the beauty of the Exodus to a challenge and condemnation for their turn against God's theocracy model for the nation (God as king of Israel). He said you rejected me even though I have been the one who saves you from all your troubles.
- and you have said to him, 'Set a king over us.' – And God calls them out for wanting a king instead of God. Embarrassing.
- Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your thousands." – This was an awkward intro to start the process of revealing the new king of the nation. God wanted to do one last warning and blast to them for wanting this king in the first place. But now it's game time. The way they choose people by God is to draw lots which is like drawing straws or flipping a coin. The goal is to leave space for God to control the outcome. They were going to present each of the tribes of Israel one by one to see if God was going to pick from them. Imagine the tension and anticipation.
- Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. – All the other tribes got a no, but Benjamin tribe got a yes.
- He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; - they needed to whittle it down from a ton of people to one. So they went by clan and family groups by lot. They ended up with the family group of the Matrites. We don't know who they are other than a prior leader named Matri.
- and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. – Eventually they got down to specific families: the family of Kish. Then it was drawn out of all of his kids, Saul. Imagine the intense focus of wanting to see their new king.
- But when they sought him, he could not be found. – but no one could find Saul. He didn't show up to the meeting.
- So they inquired again of the Lord, "Is there a man still to come?" and the Lord said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage." – They thought they got it wrong and so they went back to the Lord and said, 'is there another guy, this one didn't show up'. But God outed him. God said, 'no I didn't make a mistake. He's hiding.' Awkward.

- **What baggage are we hiding behind?** – how many of us are called by God to do great things but we are lost in the baggage of our minds and our past? Is that you? Are you refusing to step into the next with the Lord because you are afraid of failure? If God truly is calling you to do it, then isn't the possible failure more so on Him? What I have learned over the years is that God makes us ready rather than pick us when we are ready.
- Then they ran and took him from there. – representatives or randoms ran to go get Saul out of his hiding place. That must have been terribly weird for him. Also, it's now going to instill confidence in the people he's going to lead to be found hiding.
- And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. – When they finally got him to come up front to be introduced, everyone noticed that he was taller than everyone else. That made him look impressive.
- And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." – Samuel said, 'look at this man that God has chosen among you. There's no one like him.' The hype was real.
- And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!" – all the people cheered and said, 'long live the king!' They got what they wanted, and they were pumped. They were thrilled at the possibilities. Little did they know what was to come.
- Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the Lord. – Samuel reminded everyone of the rules of having a king that were laid down by the Lord. They wrote them down and set it aside before God as accountability. It was things about how a king should act and not act.
- Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home. – then everyone was dismissed.
- Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched. – Saul went home to the town of Gibeah (remember the weird history it had), but interestingly there were a bunch of men who bought in to him. This was supernatural favor of God to get him a team that would back him up.
- But some worthless fellows said, "How can this man save us?" – But some other people were casting doubt on his leadership capability. The bible writes that they were 'worthless'. Meaning they weren't helping at all. In one way it's kind of true, but in another way it's not. Saul WILL help them be free of Philistines.
- And they despised him and brought him no present. But he held his peace. – Those guys didn't want anything to do with Saul. They were likely influential which is why they are named. Saul didn't retaliate in that moment, which demonstrates his willingness to wait for God to clarify things and a bit of maturity.

Conclusion

- I never wanted to be a pastor – I got caught up in a God-roller-coaster assignment process.
 - Steps of obedience from that point forward.
- Why are you where you are at? Take a fresh look at what God might be doing.
- Is your situation an invitation from God for something greater? It may be totally different than your current perspective. Let God renew your mind about it.