

Victory at Mizpah (c. 1084 BC)

1 Samuel 7:2–14

2 It was quite a long time—some twenty years in all—that the ark stayed at Kiriath Jearim. All the people of Israel longed for the LORD.

3 Samuel said to all the people of Israel, “If you are really turning to the LORD with all your hearts, remove from among you the foreign gods and the images of Ashtoreth. Give your hearts to the LORD and serve only him. Then he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”

4 So the Israelites removed the Baals and images of Ashtoreth. They served only the LORD.

5 Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf.”

6 After they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. They fasted on that day, and they confessed there, “We have sinned against the LORD.” So Samuel led the people of Israel at Mizpah.

7 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, the leaders of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the Israelites heard about this, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 The Israelites said to Samuel, “Keep crying out to the LORD our God so that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines!”

9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Samuel cried out to the LORD on Israel’s behalf, and the LORD answered him.

10 As Samuel was offering burnt offerings, the Philistines approached to do battle with Israel. But on that day the LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines. He caused them to panic, and they were defeated by Israel.

11 Then the men of Israel left Mizpah and chased the Philistines, striking them down all the way to an area below Beth Car.

12 Samuel took a stone and placed it between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Up to here the LORD has helped us.”

13 So the Philistines were defeated; they did not invade Israel again. The hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 The cities that the Philistines had captured from Israel were returned to Israel, from Ekron to Gath. Israel also delivered their territory from the control of the Philistines. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Judgeship of Abdon (c. 1083 – c. 1075 BC)

Judges 12:13–15

13 After him [*Elon*] Abdon son of Hillel the Pirathonite led Israel.

14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy donkeys. He led Israel for eight years.

15 Then Abdon son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

Judgeship of Samuel (c. 1084 – c. 1050 BC)

1 Samuel 7:15–17

15 So Samuel led Israel all the days of his life.

16 Year after year he used to travel the circuit of Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah; he used to judge Israel in all of these places.

17 Then he would return to Ramah, because his home was there. He also judged Israel there and built an altar to the LORD there.

Israel Rejects Yahweh as Their King (c. 1050 BC)

1 Samuel 8

Samuel Repeats Eli’s Mistake

1 In his old age Samuel appointed his sons as judges over Israel.

2 The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second son was Abijah. They were judges in Beer Sheba.

3 But his sons did not follow his ways. Instead, they made money dishonestly, accepted bribes, and perverted justice.

The People Want a King

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and approached Samuel at Ramah.

5 They said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons don’t follow your ways. So now appoint over us a king to lead us, just like all the other nations have.”

6 But this request displeased Samuel, for they said, “Give us a king to lead us.” So Samuel prayed to the LORD.

7 The LORD said to Samuel, “Do everything the people request of you. For it is not you that they have rejected, but it is me that they have rejected as their king.

8 Just as they have done from the day that I brought them up from Egypt until this very day, they have rejected me and have served other gods. This is what they are also doing to you.

9 So now do as they say. But seriously warn them and make them aware of the policies of the king who will rule over them.”

Samuel Warns the People

10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.

11 He said, “Here are the policies of the king who will rule over you: He will conscript your sons and put them in his chariot forces and in his cavalry; they will run in front of his chariot.

12 He will appoint for himself leaders of thousands and leaders of fifties, as well as those who plow his ground, reap his harvest, and make his weapons of war and his chariot equipment.

13 He will take your daughters to be ointment makers, cooks, and bakers.

14 He will take your best fields and vineyards and give them to his own servants.

15 He will demand a tenth of your seed and of the produce of your vineyards and give it to his administrators and his servants.

16 He will take your male and female servants, as well as your best cattle and your donkeys, and assign them for his own use.

17 He will demand a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will be his servants.

18 In that day you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD won't answer you in that day.”

The People Refuse to Listen

19 But the people refused to heed Samuel's warning. Instead they said, “No! There will be a king over us!

20 We will be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us and lead us and fight our battles.”

21 So Samuel listened to everything the people said and then reported it to the LORD.

22 The LORD said to Samuel, “Do as they say and install a king over them.” Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Each of you go back to his own city.”

Samuel Anoints Saul King of Israel (c. 1050 BC)

1 Samuel 9–10

Introduction to Saul

9:1 There was a Benjaminite 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.

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.

God Uses Lost Donkeys to Bring Saul to Samuel

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.”

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.

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!”

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.”

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?”

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.”

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.)

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.

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?”

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.

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!”

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.

God Chooses Saul to be Israel's King

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

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!"

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

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

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.

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?"

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?"

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.

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."

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.

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

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.

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."

Samuel Privately Anoints Saul as King

10:1a Then Samuel took a small container of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head. Samuel kissed him and said, "The LORD has chosen you to lead his people Israel! You will rule over the LORD's people and you will deliver them from the power of the enemies who surround them.

The Signs of Saul's Kingship

1b This will be your sign that the LORD has chosen you as leader over his inheritance.

2 When you leave me today, you will find two men near Rachel's tomb at Zelzah on Benjamin's border. They will say to you, 'The donkeys you have gone looking for have been found. Your father is no longer concerned about the donkeys but has become anxious about you two! He is asking, "What should I do about my son?"'

3 "As you continue on from there, you will come to the tall tree of Tabor. At that point three men who are going up to God at Bethel will meet you. One of them will be carrying three young goats, one of them will be carrying three round loaves of bread, and one of them will be carrying a container of wine.

4 They will ask you how you're doing and will give you two loaves of bread. You will accept them.

5 Afterward you will go to Gibeah of God, where there are Philistine officials. When you enter the town, you will meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place. They will have harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres, and they will be prophesying.

6 Then the spirit of the LORD will rush upon you and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.

7 "When these signs have taken place, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God will be with you.

8 You will go down to Gilgal before me. I am going to join you there to offer burnt offerings and to make peace offerings. You should wait for seven days, until I arrive and tell you what to do."

God Gives Saul a New Heart

9a As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed his inmost person.

God Confirms the Signs Given by Samuel

9b All these signs happened on that very day.

10 When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a company of prophets was coming out to meet him. Then the spirit of God rushed upon Saul and he prophesied among them.

11 When everyone who had known him previously saw him prophesying with the prophets, the people all asked one another, "What on earth has happened to the son of Kish? Does even Saul belong with the prophets?"

12 A man who was from there replied, "And who is their father?" Therefore this became a proverb: "Is even Saul among the prophets?"

13 When Saul had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

Saul Conceals His Anointing and Empowerment

14 Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where did you go?" Saul replied, "To look for the donkeys. But when we realized they were lost, we went to Samuel."

15 Saul's uncle said, "Tell me what Samuel said to you."

16 Saul said to his uncle, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But Saul did not tell him what Samuel had said about the matter of kingship.

Samuel Publicly Proclaims Saul as King

17 Then Samuel called the people together before the LORD at Mizpah.

18 He said to the Israelites, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says, 'I brought Israel up from Egypt and I delivered you from the power of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'

19 But today you have rejected your God who saves you from all your trouble and distress. You have said, "No! Appoint a king over us." Now take your positions before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."

20 Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen by lot.

21 Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the family of Matri was chosen by lot. At last Saul son of Kish was chosen by lot. But when they looked for him, he was nowhere to be found.

22 So they inquired again of the LORD, "Has the man arrived here yet?" The LORD said, "He has hidden himself among the equipment."

23 So they ran and brought him from there. When he took his position among the people, he stood head and shoulders above them all.

24 Then Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one whom the LORD has chosen? Indeed, there is no one like him among all the people!" All the people shouted out, "Long live the king!"

25 Then Samuel talked to the people about how the kingship would work. He wrote it all down on a scroll and set it before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away to their homes.

26 Even Saul went to his home in Gibeah. With him went some brave men whose hearts God had touched.

27 But some wicked men said, "How can this man save us?" They despised him and did not even bring him a gift. But Saul said nothing about it.

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