

**File No. 53**

## **I SAMUEL 7:15 — 10:9**

### **'GIVE US A KING' / HOW SAMUEL FOUND A KING**

(SBS Bk 2 Story NoS.28 & 29)

*Story Notes*

#### **Chapter 7:15 — 8:22**

When Samuel's sons proved unworthy, Israel's request for a king seemed reasonable. However, it was not just the sons Israel wished to replace. They craved to have the security other nations appeared to have with a visible monarch. The Lord was not near enough!

Samuel approached the Lord with the request of the people. The Lord explained that he had always been dealing with a rebellious people; Samuel was just discovering what God knew all along. He must take notice of what the people said, but warn them of the increased demands to cover the cost of human glory and power that a king would find necessary. How gentler they would find the yoke that God put on them! However, 'So let it be' the people said. 'So let it be' said the Lord.

#### **Chapters 9 – 10**

Saul came from a noble family and had a noble appearance, although he was aware of the smallness of his family and his tribe (brought about by a slaughter— Judg. 21:6). He did not appear to know the prophet Samuel or the possibility of seeking help from him. However, God had heard the cry of Israel for release from their oppressors. He had not ceased to care for them because they had rejected him and would give Israel the deliverer they needed. He prepared Samuel for a meeting with Saul. Then he led Saul to Samuel and to his destiny through a helpful servant.

Samuel showed Saul that he truly was a prophet. 'On the next day' he said, 'I will tell you all that is on your mind. 'For now', Samuel said, 'your father's donkeys are found'. Then he added, 'You and your family will have the riches of the land.' Samuel had already shown the nation the riches which a king would demand from them.

Saul thought himself and his family unworthy of honour but was tutored by Samuel in the greatness he should now wear. He was honoured as favoured guest at the town's sacrificial feast. On the next day, Samuel would proclaim to him the word of God. The welfare of the nation, and of Saul, would depend on this word (cf. 3:1, 7, 21; 4:1; 15:10, 23, 26). There would be no greater honour than to be the servant of the word and Saul needed to learn to wear it as a servant's coat.

So Saul was anointed as ruler over God's inheritance. Samuel emphasised God's ownership of Israel, suggesting that Saul should seek God's kingship above his own. He would meet two people who would confirm the safety of the donkeys and tell him that his father wanted him home. Then he would meet three men from whom he would receive bread which was intended for presentation to God. After that he would encounter a troop of prophets and the Spirit would come on him so that he would praise God in an ecstasy and be changed in his goals and affections, at least for a time. These would be signs showing that God was with him to enable him to do whatever was needed in his new role. The place where the prophets met him was near a Philistine garrison, emphasising the pressing need Israel had for deliverance. However, there was a limitation on his powers: only Samuel could offer the sacrifices necessary before battle.

All these things occurred and Saul's prophesying became known. It had happened near to his home, and his neighbours knew the family. They could understand a son of Kish, but whose son was he now? Who was 'father' to the prophets? Was Saul now one of them? Something new was afoot. Saul, however, kept the matter of the anointing from his family.

Israel was fragmented and only Samuel could bring them together. The time was ripe to give them the king they demanded and so Samuel summoned the nation. Through him, God reminded Israel that he had always taken care of them, and, that they had rejected him.

However, God gave them the king they asked for and by drawing lots God's chosen one was publicly identified. God's choice of Saul, made known and confirmed privately had now been declared publicly. Saul should have had no doubts about his place in Israel. However, the man chosen by God and so attractive to the people as a leader, was hiding and had to be located, by God, among some baggage.

Samuel wrote the constitution for the newly formed monarchy. There was no structure for the exercise of kingly rule but the new leadership was clearly enough defined to attract godly men to support him and for evil men to resent him.

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