

Silent Saul: More Questions on His Fitness as King (1 Samuel 9:25-10:16)

1. Saul is Honored (9:22-27)

Meal: Samuel assumes the role as a gracious host to travelers who are in need (Saul and his servant). The LORD told Samuel that He was sending him a guest (v.16). Saul is more than a guest; he is placed at the seat of honor and given high-quality meat (v.23-24). This was a pre-coronation ceremonial meal, although no one other than Samuel knew it.

Lodging: After the ceremony, Saul and his servant were lodged on the roof. This is the ideal place of sleeping during dry weather; the breeze would have pleasant.

2. Saul is Anointed (10:1)

- At daybreak, Samuel summoned Saul and his servant to depart from Ramah. Samuel, as a good host, accompanied the two guests to the edge of the city (Gen. 18:16). This time, Samuel requested that Saul send the servant ahead; Samuel and Saul are alone.
- Samuel made known to Saul “the word of God.” The time, location, situation, and means by which Saul is going to be anointed perhaps points to Samuel’s hesitancy to follow through with the inauguration; they are outside the city boundaries, they are alone, and Samuel uses a flask/vial; not a horn.
- A horn of oil was used in anointing David and Solomon as kings (1 Sam 2:10; 16:1; 1 Kings 1:38-39). Instead, a flask is used. Another king is noted for being anointed with a flask, and it is Jehu, who had a very brief reign that was far from ideal.
- Anointing: this was an act reserved for sacred objects (Lev. 8:10-11; Num. 7:1) and Aaronic priests (Lev.8:30). The act of pouring oil on Saul’s head symbolized:
 - the staking of divine claim
 - the outpouring of the LORD’s spirit to enable the designated “king”
- Saul is anointed over God’s “heritage” (v.1). Heritage cannot be transferred to another. When Samuel anoints Saul, the LORD is limiting Saul’s authority; he is the LORD’s vessel. Saul’s degree of leadership will be determined by the LORD.

3. Saul is Given Three Signs as Validation (v.2-8)

Saul is given three signs to confirm the word of Samuel:

- A. Saul will encounter two men with connections to his family near Rachel’s Tomb, who will relieve him of his worry (still) of the lost donkeys (v.2)
- B. Saul will meet three men at the Oak of Tabor who are on their way to Bethel and will greet him and give to him two loaves of bread (v.4)
- C. When Saul comes to Gibeath-elohim, there will be a garrison of Philistines. Prophets will be prophesying, and Saul will join them (v.5-7)

*Two of the three prophecies occurred without any additional comments. There are semantic parallels between donkeys (9:20; 10:2, 9), food (9:24; 10:4, 9) and the anointing (10:1; 10:6, 10).

4. Saul is not the “Old Saul” (v.9, 12-13)

- Just as Saul turned his back to depart from Samuel, God gave him “another heart.” This is not regeneration. This is God changing Saul’s dispositions to receive the spirit of God that will rush on him, and eventually leave him (16:14).
- When the Spirit comes upon Saul (v.10) he starts to prophesy like the other prophets. There is a musical, ecstatic prophesying jamming-session and Saul joins in. Saul is near his hometown, and those who knew him are so shocked by what they see, that it became a “proverb.”

5. Saul is Given a Command and a Choice (v.7-8)

- This is the first time that the nation will be given a human king. What will be the relationship between the prophet and the king? Who will be subordinate to who? Samuel, by giving the command for Saul to wait for him (v.8) will indicate that moving forward, the kings will be accountable and will answer to the prophets who speak on behalf of the LORD.
- Saul was chosen by the LORD so he would save the LORD’s people from the hands of the Philistines and restrain his people. The Philistines have a garrison at Gibeath-elohim. Did Saul attack them and defeat them? (v.5). Is this the reason for the planned sacrifice? (v.8).
- “do what your hands do” is a Hebrew idiom that was used to describe military action against the enemy (Judges 9:33).

6. Saul Discloses His Anointing and Empowerment (v.14-16)

- When Saul approached his hometown, he was met by his uncle. Two questions were asked:
 - “Where did you go?” or “Where have you been?”
 - “What did Samuel tell you?”
- While Saul answered honestly in the first question, he demonstrated the perfect example of dissimulation without dishonesty concerning the second; Saul withheld information.
- Saul had not shared any details of the pre-coronation meal, anointing, signs, or of prophesy to his uncle.
- Saul had mentioned nothing regarding the “matters of the kingdom.” This is the first mention of kingship from Saul. The word of God that was shared with Saul (9:27) were the matters of the kingdom that Saul has veiled. Saul is still a man who is concerned with worldly things; Silent Saul remains quiet about the word of God.

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