

## Wednesday, June 3, 2020 ▫ Read 1Samuel 9:1–24

Questions from the Scripture text: Who is the primary subject of v1? Of v2? What two characteristics of Saul does v2 emphasize? What was Saul doing in v3–4? Why is he ready to give up in v5? What does the servant suggest trying first in v6? What do they discuss in v7–8? What does v9 note about what they called the prophet? Whom do they ask about the prophet in v11? What do they say about him in (v12–13)? Whom do they encounter in v14? Who had spoken to Samuel when (v15)? What did Yahweh say that He would do (v16)? What did Yahweh say that Samuel should do? What did Yahweh say that Saul would do? Why? What does Yahweh now say in v17? What does Saul ask Samuel in v18? What does Samuel tell him to do that day (v19)? What will Samuel do the next day? What does he tell him about the donkeys (v20)? What does Samuel point out about Saul? What is Saul's objection to this (v21)? Where does Samuel set Saul and his servant at the feast (v22)? What has been prepared for them (v23–24)?

We go through our lives blissfully ignorant of what the Lord is really doing. Saul is head and shoulders above the rest of Israel (v2), and his dad is a great and wealthy man (end of v1, more literally translated), but he still has to do the chores and figure out with his servant when it's time to give up the search for the donkeys. The young women at the well and the people at the feast are intentionally kept in the dark. Even the cook only knows that there has been a special portion set aside, but he isn't in on what is actually happening.

Only Samuel knows, by the Word of the Lord—a word that came to him *the day before*, so that he could “watch Yahweh work.” Samuel is even in on the mundaneness of it all, delivering to Saul the message about the donkeys of v20. And you and I. We are let in on all of this by the Word of the Holy Spirit, not just v15–16 but the mundaneness that shines a bright light on those verses.

The real message is the unsurprising (humanly speaking) choice for king, and the surprising purpose for that king. Saul is a “king like the other nations have.” Powerful wealthy family, handsome, good stature. He would be the people's pick for sure. Except that he has most definitely not been picked by the people. “Tomorrow about this time, I will send you a man.” And how does Yahweh do it? By a tame-donkey-chase. Vintage Yahweh!

We expected a selection like Saul, because the Lord had said to heed the people's voice. What we didn't expect is the merciful purpose in v16, “that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me.” Saul would end up being the kind of king that God had warned them about. But first, he would be God's method of mercy and deliverance.

The Lord is just and holy, and Saul is a punishment for rejecting Him. But even in the midst of justice He remembers mercy. For the sake of His love, and the Son whom He would give in that love, He actually responds to the cries of the very people who are rejecting Him. How great is this extraordinary mercy! Indeed, this kingship that begins with Saul will fall next to David, to whom the promise will be made that the Christ will come from him.

It was not just Israel's cries for mercy that Yahweh was answering in this chapter. It was ours. Cries of repentance that we had not even made yet. Cries that we would not even make, until He mercifully and powerfully enabled us to see our sin. And what would we see along with that sin?

His salvation. Through lost donkeys, and village girls drawing water, and a cook who sets apart the upper thigh of the sacrifice. Because the One who determined to give sinners an inheritance through His Son is the one who works *all things* according to the counsel of His will. Even the things in your mundane life and mine. Hallelujah!

What circumstances have you found unimpressive or even difficult? What is the Lord doing in them?

Suggested Songs: ARP72A “God, Give Your Judgments to the King” or TPH417 “Jesus Shall Reign Where'er Sun”