

9693U

NEW ZEALAND SUMMER SCHOOL -1993

SAMUEL THE SEER

Speaker: Brother Roger Lewis

Study 2: Samuel answered and said, 'I am the seer'

Reading: 1 Samuel 9:15 to 10:8

Thank you brother chairman, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You'll remember then that yesterday when we began the studies on Samuel, we looked at the 8th chapter, wherein the story was given to us, of the people's request before Samuel

for the establishment of a king over them. You'll remember that as we looked at that chapter, we looked at the fact that Samuel received that request from the people; he was not happy with it, he was reluctant to proceed in the matter, he had to be encouraged by God on three separate occasions to hearken to the voice of the people. But once he finally acknowledged that it was God's will, that the LORD would proceed with the matter of appointing a king, then he threw all of his energies behind that matter, and supported the idea of kingship absolutely. When we consider as we did yesterday, the extent of the work that he performed as an old man, in preparing the way, in preparing the nation, that the work of the kings might be fruitful, it would appear in view of his advanced years and the declining of his powers, that God's hands were underneath Samuel to strengthen him to accomplish all of those things. He ought not to have been able to do them, according to the signs of old age that lay upon him, yet he threw himself absolutely behind that work.

Well then, this morning we're going to come to the next episode that we see Samuel in, as an old man, here in chapter 9 verses 15 to 27, where he honours Saul at the feast, and in chapter 10 verses 1 to 8 when he confirms Saul with these three signs that we've read of in the divine record. We're going to take up the story from the 15th verse of chapter 9, because really the first 14 verses are all about Saul in his wanderings in search of his father's asses, and Samuel, as it were, really comes back into the record in the 15th verse of the 9th chapter, and that's where we're going to take up from this morning. We're told in that verse, 'Now Yahweh had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin'. **Yahweh had told Samuel**, you'll notice that the margin says that the word 'told' literally means 'to reveal', in fact, it means in the Hebrew '**to open or uncover the ear**'(1540); Yahweh had uncovered the ear of Samuel, and I think the idea that's being expressed here, is that Samuel was an old man and he was a Nazarite, so he would

have had the long locks of a Nazarite. The idea or word picture that's presented here is that it's almost as if God pulled aside the Nazarite locks of hair so that He might whisper into the ear of the old man. It's a very touching figure that's being employed here, in fact, Rotherham translates it 'Yahweh **had unveiled the ear of Samuel**, and into the ear of the old man, pulling aside his Nazarite locks, it was as it were, as if God whispered His secrets into the ear of this one.

If you come back to chapter 8, you'll notice in the 21st verse of chapter 8, a similar statement about Samuel speaking to God. We're told in chapter 8 verse 21, 'Samuel heard all the words of the people; and **he rehearsed them in the ears of Yahweh**'. So Samuel rehearsed his cares and worries into the ears of the Father, and here in chapter 9 verse 15 God unveils the ear of Samuel that He might whisper secrets in it. These two were friends, b&s, the man and his God whispering secrets into one another's ears, the intimate communication of friends!

What was the secret that was whispered into Samuel's ear on this occasion? Well we're told in the 16th verse of chapter 9, 'Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over My people Israel, that he may save My people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon My people, because their cry is come unto Me'. Good bible study begins with good bible reading, let me put a question to you! You know, I believe when God said those words in the 16th verse, that Samuel would have immediately known, that this king was **not** suitable, can you tell me why? As soon as God said what He did in the 16th verse, Samuel knew he was not a man of Judah! Remember the promise of Genesis 49 and the blessings of Jacob, when it was said concerning the tribe of Judah, 'that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, in that Shiloh shall come'. In the AV, by the way, it says 'the sceptre shall not depart from Judah **until Shiloh come**', but really in the Hebrew it means **in that Shiloh shall come**, in other words, it shall never depart from Judah, because Shiloh Himself is from Judah, and because He's going to live and reign eternally, then the sceptre shall always be with Judah. But this was a man out of the land of Benjamin! There's going to be an interesting story that develops here in the next few chapters, that although it says of Saul, that he was the man that Yahweh chose, he's really going to appear in the record, as the people's choice. I believe, that what we're being told when we put those two ideas together, is that Yahweh chose whom the people wanted!

The people received **exactly** what they wanted, and what did they want? Well, you'll notice in chapter 9 verse 16, that it says, 'thou shalt anoint him to be **captain over My people**', so he was to be a military man; he was to be a warrior; he was to be in charge of the army, he was to be a captain. If you come back to chapter 8 verse 20, that's exactly what the people wanted because we're told there, 'That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles'. That's what they wanted! They wanted a military man, a warrior-king they asked for, and a warrior-king they received, and God gave them exactly what they wanted; a man to fight their battles, the people's ideal of a king, and to Samuel he came therefore, out

of the land of Benjamin on this occasion.

So in verse 17 we're told, 'And when Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of; this same shall reign over my people.' Actually, when it says that Yahweh **said unto him**, the word 'said' there is the Hebrew word 'anah' (6030) and it's generally translated 'answered', God answered Samuel, and I think the idea behind the word here is that Samuel had been praying to God about the matter of the king. Who is the man, LORD? is he suitable? who is the one whom Thou hast chosen? how will I know in order to recognize him? and so verse 17 says, 'When Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh answered Samuel and said, 'behold, the man whom I spake to thee of'. So what a dramatic occasion we have here in the 17th verse! we have now, **the last of the judges about to come face to face with the first of the kings**. You'll notice at the end of the verse, by the way, when it says 'this same shall reign over My people', the margin says, 'he shall **restrain** My people' (6113); so you see, whereas Samuel as a judge had had simply civil powers, the king would have judicial powers, military powers above and beyond that which Samuel had enjoyed as a judge. A king would have much stronger control over the nation, he would **restrain** My people! was the promise about this future king.

So verse 18 says, 'Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate'. Now you've got to stop and picture this scene for a moment. You see, this is an epoch of change, isn't it? the **last of the judges** is about to greet the **first of the kings**; this is going to be an era of wonderful change for the nation. A whole new statement of government is to be established, and it all hangs here now, for the moment, on this first meeting between these two men. Now what do you think Samuel would have looked like on this occasion? Well, first of all, we know that he's in Ramah; we know that because we're told in verse 25, later on in the chapter that they're going to come down and go into the house. We're told in verse 17 of chapter 7 that Samuel's house was in Ramah, we believe that this episode took place in Samuel's own city. So we're in Ramah and Samuel is an old man, and he's got the whiteness of hair and he's going to talk about that in a couple of chapters later on, he refers to the fact that he's white haired and he's a Nazarite, so he's got Nazarite locks streaming all over his shoulders and cascading down his back. He's got the rough garb of a prophet hanging upon him and over the rough garb of the prophet, he's got the mantle of the prophet, the mantle for which Samuel was famous throughout all of his life. There he is standing at the gate, verse 18, of Ramah his home city. You would have known who he was! This man, in that place, with those locks and that garment and that mantle? So Saul comes up in the 18th verse and says, 'Excuse me, do you know where the seer lives?'

Behold the man! The first wonderful king of Israel, what spiritual intellect do we have here?

What great sensitivity! It should have really been obvious, shouldn't it? to anyone with any particular brains, that this **was the man!** Do you know how far Saul lived away from Ramah? He came from a place called Gibeah, a whole **2 miles to the south**, and we're told in verse 19, 'And Samuel answered Saul and said, (and you can almost hear, can't

you? just a gentle tone of reproof perhaps as the old man turns and looks at the young man who's lumbered up to him to ask the question), he says simply, **I am the seer**', and so Saul ought to have known, if he'd looked closely at the old man with Nazarite locks and a prophet's garb upon him, that stood before him.

So we're told in verse 19, 'Samuel said, 'Go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart'. It's pretty clear who's in control here, isn't it? It's the old man! King he might be, king designate Saul might be, but the situation here is very much in control of the old prophet at this time. So he says in verse 20, 'As for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found'. Now why do you think that Samuel reverted to something pretty commonplace such as the matter of the asses? He says, 'as for thine asses that were lost 3 days ago, set not thy mind on them, for they are found'. Well, I think that Samuel said that because he wanted to inspire Saul with confidence that **he was the medium of divine communication**. Now Samuel's not doing this for himself, he's not making a prediction concerning the asses so that Saul can look up to him and think what a wonderful man Samuel the prophet was! I believe that the reason why he did it was that he wanted Saul to listen to the words that would follow and to recognize that the words that Samuel was about to speak **truly came from God**. The proof of it is, I know where your asses are, Saul! I am the channel of divine communication, and so he mentions the asses an apparently commonplace thing, in order that Saul might set his heart on the words of the prophet and believe him to be the channel of divine communication, as in verse 19 we are told that Samuel promised to tell him all that was in his heart.

Then in verse 20 he says in the second half of the verse, 'And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?' On whom is all the desire of Israel, actually Rotherham's translation translates it slightly differently and so for that matter does the Amplified bible, Septuagint, RSV and a number of others; but Rotherham says, 'To whom belongeth all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not to thee and to all the house of thy father'. **To whom belongeth all that is desirable in Israel?** in other words, what the phrase is saying is that it is speaking about the privileges of royalty. The advantages of kingship, so what Samuel is saying here to Saul is, 'to whom will belong all that is desirable in the Land? Why, Saul, to you! these will be the advantages that you will enjoy as the king. Now, by the way, we've just had a summary of all that's desirable in Israel back in chapter 8, haven't we? remember? when Samuel told the people the manner of the king, **the rights of the king**, in chapter 8 verses 10 to 18 we have a summary of all that was desirable! You know, the fact that he would be able to take men for military service, and that he would have labourers in the royal arsenals, and he would be able to take lands as he pleased and give them to others; the fact that he could have ladies preparing royal cookies in the kitchen, the fact that he would be able to raise taxes for other things - these were all the advantages that Saul would enjoy as the king. We believe it is to these things that Samuel is referring when he tells Saul in the 20th verse, 'And to whom belongeth all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not to thee and to all thy father's house?' as a result of Saul ascending to the kingship.

So now in verse 21, we have the response of Saul to these gracious words from Samuel the prophet. Saul answered and said, 'Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?' Question! Was that a humble reply? or was there something more behind it? Any thoughts on that? do you think Saul was genuinely humble here? or was there something more behind the words? you personally think he was humble! I personally do too! so that's good! There's a reason, by the way, and the reason always needs to be a scriptural one, doesn't it? If you come to chapter 15 just for a moment to the 17th verse, yes, I think we can assume in the first instance, that there was a measure of genuine humility at this stage, in how Saul gives his reply, because in chapter 15 verse 17 Samuel is going to say later on, 'When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and Yahweh anointed thee king over Israel?' So at the beginning of this story, we're told that he was little in his own sight, there was a measure of **genuine humility**. Scripture compares with scripture and we're given a proper answer with regard to Saul's attitude at this time; but I think there was something more to it as well.

I'll tell you why! If you just put your finger in Samuel for a moment, and come back to Judges 6, I think that Saul was actually quoting from somebody else, and he was quoting from the man, whom he took as his hero. His hero was Gideon from the days of the judges, and we're told in verse 14 that, 'And Yahweh looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh, Yahweh, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house'. Do you hear an echo there of Saul's words? you see, Gideon was Saul's hero and just as Gideon had delivered Israel out of the hand of the Midianites, so Saul dreamed of the day when he would be able to recover Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, the great enemy of his own day. We haven't got time to deal with it, but there's a whole series of parallels between Gideon and Saul, in fact, Saul ends his life finally, in the very spot where Gideon won his greatest victory. Saul dies on Mount Gilboa in the very place where Gideon wins his greatest victory. Gideon was Saul's hero, and so I think, although there was a measure of humility in what Saul said here, Saul already has in mind perhaps, great things to which one day he might aspire, that he also might be a hero for his nation, in delivering them out of the hand of the enemy of his own time.

So we're told back in 1 Samuel 9 and verse 22, 'And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about 30 persons'. He took them into the **parlour**, well, actually that's an old English word, isn't it? We don't all have parlours in our houses today, the word actually means 'a chamber' (3957); it's a word used concerning the rooms down the side of the temple later on, Rotherham in fact, translates the phrase, 'he brought them into the guest chamber', obviously it was a room where a number that were bidden to this special feast, were about to sit down, with Samuel the seer in the high place of Ramah. So in comes now Samuel leading Saul and his servant. So first of

all, they're lead into the chamber and then it says, 'he made them to sit down in the **chiefest place**'. Actually, the word 'chiefest' is the Hebrew word 'rosh'(7225+7218), he made Saul to sit in the **rosh place**'. Now what does 'rosh' mean? Head! so what it really means is that Saul was brought into the chamber and made to sit down at the **head** of the table. In fact, that's how Rotherham translates it, he says, 'he brought them into the guest chamber and gave them a place at the head of them'. So down to the end of the table and to the **head** position. with the largest chair and the most important place, and Saul now is seated. You know, (and we're going to show this by means of a parable later on), you know I think actually Saul secretly loved that! That's one of the problems of Saul, you see, it would be something that would grow, and so he secretly loved the power and the prestige and the position that would come with kingship. In the words of Matthew 23, he was one of those men who loved 'the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in synagogues, and greetings in the market place and to be called of men, Rabbi, or Master, or King; how Saul would have loved this position! It says that he was there at the head of them all, amongst the others that were bidden, which were about 30 persons, says the record, although interestingly enough, the Septuagint says '70 persons'. If it was 70 persons, then it seems to follow from the spirit of Moses' day, when he appointed 70 elders or men, to share responsibility with him. It's like the great 70 that formed the Sanhedrin in the days of Ezra and in days of the New Testament record. So, irrespective of whether it was 30 or 70, we have here a very important gathering, no doubt, of all the dignitaries of the city of Ramah who are all about to sit down to this meal with Samuel, and now into the head position of the table, Samuel brings Saul and sits him down, **in the chiefest place**'.

Verse 23 says, 'Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee'. **Bring the portion**, the word means 'a division of food' (4490), so there was a piece of food, a special piece of food set aside especially on Samuel's instructions, everyone else, by the way, was there waiting at the meal. You can imagine the sense of what this might have been like! Samuel's down by the gate waiting to meet the man that God had spoken to him of, he brings him into the room, everyone else is already seated there, they've already got there places and their meals; Samuel says to the cook, can you bring that piece out that I asked you to set aside. Now when Samuel asked the cook to set it aside, he didn't even know who is was being set aside for! He didn't even know the name of the person, he just said I want you to set it aside. Now he says to the cook, I want you to bring that portion which I gave thee!

In verse 24 we're told what the portion was! It says, 'And the cook took up **the shoulder**'; ah, the portion that was set aside by the cook was actually the **shoulder**. Now that's interesting because we're told in Ezekiel 24 verse 4, that the shoulder was considered to be one of the choicest parts; it was one of the finest parts to be given to anybody, Ezekiel 24 verse 4, but interestingly enough, we're told in Leviticus 7 verses 32 and 34, that more specifically, the shoulder was the portion **given to the priest**. The shoulder rightfully belonged to the priest, Leviticus 7 verses 32 to 34, in fact, do you know what it was called? It was known as, not just the shoulder, but **the heave shoulder**, and it was the portion that belonged to **the priest** and you know, when it

says in verse 24 that the cook **took up the shoulder**, the word 'took up' (7311) here is one of the two words used concerning the **heaving** of the shoulder; it's the word used in Numbers 18 verses 30 to 32, and the cook 'heaved up the shoulder', that's the literal meaning of the Hebrew word, and having heaved up the shoulder, he set it before Saul. Now question! who did the shoulder belong to at that meal rightfully in the first instance? It belonged to Samuel! why? because Samuel was acting as the officiating priest. Samuel builds **altars**, Samuel makes **offerings**, in fact, there's good evidence to suggest that with the rupture of the house of Eli and the overthrow of Eli's sons, that there was a long period of time in the history of the nation, where there was no high priest, and Samuel although he was not a high priest, he certainly acted in a priestly capacity for a considerable part of his labours as a judge. So really the shoulder was probably the portion that belonged to Samuel as the officiating priest. And now it's given instead to Saul, Samuel **forfeits** his portion, and gives it instead to Saul, do you know why? To show in the words of Isaiah 9 verse 6, that from now on, the government shall be upon **his** shoulder. So here was a moment for the transfer of responsibility from the old judge to the king designate. Samuel was going to give up that which once was his and in accepting the shoulder, Saul really accepts now the responsibilities of kingship that come with it and the transfer of the government, that it might lie now, upon his shoulder. Josephus in commenting upon this verse, calls the shoulder 'the royal portion'.

So we're told the cook heaved it up and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul, and Samuel said, 'Behold that which is left' (7604) (now that's not a good translation because he doesn't mean that this is simply the leftovers, does he?) He doesn't say, 'well, look there's a bit left over, would you like to have some?' this, in fact, was the **choicest part**. Do you notice what the margin says, and incidentally the margin's quite right, 'behold, that which is **reserved**. It wasn't just the leftovers, it was the **best piece of all!** and it had been specifically reserved for Saul on this occasion. That's how Rotherham translates it, 'Lo, the part reserved' or as the verse goes on to say, 'for unto this time hath it been kept for thee', and that's the idea of the reserving here! In fact, the Septuagint adds another phrase to this verse when it says, 'behold, that which is left; set it before thee and eat', the Septuagint adds, 'for it is set thee a testimony in preference to the others'. It is set thee a testimony in preference to the others, so down in front of Saul is placed the shoulder of responsibility and the meal begins with Saul at the head of the table in the chiefest place.

So at the end of verse 24 it says, (and you can almost see the importance of these words), 'So Saul did eat with Samuel that day', and the **first of the kings** sat down to a meal with the **last of the judges**. This is an epoch of great change that's about to take place here in the nation.

Verse 25 says, 'When they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house', we've already mentioned that we believe it was Samuel's own house to which they came; we're told in chapter 7 verse 17, 'His return was to Ramah for there was his house'. So they come now down from

the high place into the city, and so Samuel communed with Saul, it says, upon the top of the house. If they did commune, then, of course, there would be much for them to talk about indeed; as Samuel endeavoured to prepare the mind of this young man for the responsibilities of government that laid before him.

But most other translations tend to follow the Septuagint version of this verse, which does in fact, show a slightly different translation. I'm reading from the Jerusalem bible here, which is drawn from the Septuagint! It says, ' On the house-top they spread out coverlets for Saul and he lay down'. This is the second part of verse 25, 'When they had come down from the high place into the city, (and now the Jerusalem bible says), **on the house-top they spread out coverlets for Saul and he lay down**'. Rotherham says, 'he spread a couch for Saul upon the house-top and he lay down'. Who's the 'he' by the way? He spread a couch for Saul, in other words, it was Samuel. Samuel made the bed for Saul upon the top of the house, you see, it was night time! Do you know how we know it was night time? If you come back to verse 11, we are told in verse 11 that when Saul first arrived in Ramah on this occasion, it says, 'That as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water', so it was night time, wasn't it? Do you know how we know that? because in the margin there's a cross reference to Genesis 24 verse 11 ( which you don't need to look up but I'll just read to you), it says, 'And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water'. So the women went down to the well at evening time, and when Saul arrived at Ramah, it was already evening time, and I believe the feast that was held was an evening meal, and after the evening meal they came down from the high place into the house. It was time, after discussion, for bed, and that's part of the reason why the Septuagint translation, following from a particular manuscript says that the record should read, 'he (that is Samuel) spread a couch for Saul upon the housetop and he lay down'.

You know there was great honour done to Saul here, by this action of Samuel; when you put someone upon the housetop, was it to make something private, or to make something public? Yes, it was to make something public, wasn't it? They didn't go up in order to have privacy, from a scriptural point of view, it was to make something public. We might just look at one of these references, Matthew 10 and verse 27, I think this gives us the idea of the publicity that was associated with this action of Samuel; I'm sure Samuel did this quite deliberately when he invited Saul to the top of the house. Verse 26 for connection, 'Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops'. So you see how the idea of the housetops here, is that place from which public proclamation is made, from which public acknowledgement is made, as opposed to the **private** speaking in the ear, the converse is on the top of the house, in order that things can be made **public**. I believe that when Samuel came down from the high place and invited Saul to the top of his house, it was that he might do honour before all the nation, that here was the man that God has selected! He hasn't been **formally elected yet**, that's going to come later on in 1 Samuel 10, but there's an acknowledgement here by



Samuel in elevating Saul publicly to the top of his house, and then preparing a bed for him to sleep on.

Where do you think Samuel slept, by the way, that night? upstairs or downstairs? Well, let's go back to the record and see if we can work that out. Good bible reading, remember, is good bible study! where did Samuel sleep, upstairs or downstairs? Well, it's a little bit of a hard question, because I'm first going to tell you in verse 26 that in 1 Samuel 9 verse 26, 'they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day (actually that is quite early really, isn't it? the spring of day! not sure if someone really feels like springing up at that time of day, but it's called the spring of day) 'that Samuel called Saul **to the top of the house**', but the NIV, Moffatts, the NASV, Amplified, RSV, Rotherham's, Jerusalem bible, Septuagint, in other words, quite a few translations, all say, '**Samuel called to Saul upon the housetop**'. Now why would he call to Saul upon the housetop? and the answer is that Saul was up there sleeping. He was actually going to call him down in order that he might send him away, which makes more sense when you think about it, because otherwise, verse 26 is a bit of a puzzle! why would you call a man up to the top of the house so that you could send him away out of the house? NO, Saul was already up there, why? because Samuel had spread a bed for him, so therefore, where was Samuel sleeping that night? Answer! he must have been sleeping in the house, so he slept beneath the king designate that night. He arose early in the morning, he comes out of the door of the house and calls up to the top of the house, 'Saul'; he calls **to Saul upon the housetop** in order that he might now send him away, and send him away, he was going to do!

So we're told at the end of verse 26, 'Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. And as they were going', now you notice that we really did read the end of verse 26 a little bit too fast. Really, there's something here that we would have to say is what is called superfluous words; some of these words aren't needed! let's test that final phrase. 'And Saul arose, and they went out abroad', would that tell us what we need to know? Yes, that would tell us exactly everything we need to know! How about this one - 'and Saul arose and both of them went abroad', would that tell us what we need to know? Yes, that would tell us what we need to know! How about this one - 'and Saul arose, and he and Samuel went abroad'. Now there's something extra here in this verse, isn't there? we could actually translate that 3 different ways and have exactly the same message, but what the record actually says is, 'and Saul arose and **they went out, both of them, he and Samuel, abroad**'. Good bible reading! So what does that mean? what does that tell us about Samuel and Saul, as this first meeting between the two is brought to an end? what conclusion do we draw from this piling up of unnecessary phrases at the end of verse 26? sorry! Samuel followed Saul in respect, yes, that could be right, but I don't think that's the main intent of those phrases. Yes, **they were obviously at one**, weren't they? Could you stress that anymore? in fact, perhaps there's an echo here! What famous echo does that take us back to in the book of Genesis? Abraham and Isaac, and they went both of them together! remember that phrase in Genesis 22, well, this is very like it; **they went, both of them, he and Samuel, abroad**. They were obviously knit together at this time,

and whatever problems Saul may have had in later life, he obviously was heart and mind bound to Samuel at this time.

So we're told in verse 27, 'That as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on), but stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because Yahweh hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance?' Edersheim tells us that the **vial** here was a narrow necked vessel, so narrow that the oil would come out sort of like a drop at a time. So the vial was up-ended and the oil would **drop, drop, drop**, a little bit at a time, upon the neck and upon the head of Saul as Samuel anointed him at this time. This anointing is actually very significant because, you see, what it does is **it now places kingship on the same footing as priesthood**. Because there was an anointing of priests to office as part of their ceremony of consecration and now there is going to be **an anointing of the king to his office**. So it places kingship, you see, on the same level now as the priesthood itself, in a different capacity, of course. But it shows how there's going to be now, this change in the nation that whereas there had simply been priest and judge, now there was going to be priest and king and prophet, and Samuel the great preparer of these remarkable changes. In fact, he didn't just anoint him, we're told in the record, that he **kissed** him; in Exodus 18 verse 7 tells us that **kissing is the sign of obeisance!** Psalm 2 and verse 12 tells us that **to kiss is a sign of homage!** So when Samuel kissed Saul on this occasion, I don't believe that he was doing it to greet him as a friend, as to show a mark of respect to Saul, as the king designate. It was a sign of homage that Samuel was paying to the king.

Then he says, 'is it not because Yahweh hath anointed thee to be captain of His inheritance?' Now, you see, he pours the oil on his head and says, 'is it not because Yahweh hath anointed thee', so the pouring of the oil was to be indicative of the spirit that would now outpour upon Saul, in the context of these 3 unusual signs, that Samuel now gives Saul to confirm his appointment to the kingship. I don't know if you've ever looked at these signs before, but the first thing I'm going to say is, don't try and work out the geography, because I don't know of anyone who has, it's very difficult to follow how he could pass by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah on the way back from Ramah to Gibeah; it's all very complicated and I haven't seen an expositor yet that has given a satisfactory explanation. I don't think the real import of the signs here, rests on the particular geography of the region. So what we're going to do now is to look at these signs and see what was the purpose of these signs? what was the teaching of them as far as Saul was concerned?

Well, here's the first one, verse 2! 'When thou art departed from me today, then shalt thou find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?' So the first of these signs involves meeting two men, what sort of men were they? well, the answer is, probably what we might call, just ordinary men. Probably actually

the servants of Saul's father, weren't they? just two ordinary men. You might think that's not important but it is really, as we come through these signs. Just two ordinary men and where were they going to be met by Saul? the answer is by Rachel's sepulchre. What does **Rachel** stand for in the divine narrative? Rachel is a type, of course, of natural Israel; she stands as a type of natural Israel in the record, and what were the two ordinary men going to say to Saul? They're going to tell him that the asses which thou wentest to seek are found; and what do the asses represent here? Well, the **asses** represent the matters and the cares of daily life, the ordinary mundane things of everyday life, searching for lost asses. They're already found! So the lesson of the first sign was, that God would be with Saul provided he learnt to put the truth first and to relegate the natural cares of life, to second place. You don't have to worry about those any more; God will be with you so long as you put the cares of ordinary daily life back into second place! It's a little bit like the spirit, by the way, of Matthew 6, remember? 'seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you'. So the first sign was, God will be with you, Saul, but you must learn to relegate the natural cares and worries of life, back into second place! That's the first thing!

Now let's have a look at the second sign. Verse 3, 'Then thou shalt go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands'. So how many men have we got this time? We've gone from 2 men to 3 men, are they 3 ordinary men? NO, they're not ordinary men, we have to say really that they're 3 spiritual men, because they're going up to God, and they're carrying the emblems of sacrifice, the symbols of dedication and of worship - kids, bread, wine. These are **spiritual men, these 3**, and they're going up to the house of God.

Now I believe that the spirit of the sign actually comes from Genesis 35, come back to Genesis 35 for a moment. I think this is where the idea of the sign comes from; we're told in Genesis 35 verse 1, 'God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el (that's where these 3 men are going, by the way, they are going up to God to Beth-el). Well, what do you have to do before you can go to God to Beth-el? Verse 2 of Genesis 35, 'Jacob said to his household, put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, change your garments; Let us arise and go up to Beth-el. Verse 4, 'They gave unto Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities round about them'. Then we're told in verse 6, 'So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Beth-el, he and all the people.....' He built an altar. Verse 8, 'Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Beth-el under an **oak**; and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth'. So in order that the journey to Beth-el might be made, the lesson that Jacob had to learn was that everything associated with his past way of life, had to be repudiated; strange gods, earrings and, in fact, even his nurse, Deborah, in verse 8, which represented his

last link with his mother concerning the connection of Syria of old. Everything associated with Jacob's past way of life, had to be repudiated and left behind, if he was going to successfully come to God in Beth-el; and all those things that were repudiated were buried under oaks, you'll notice.

Now come back to 1 Samuel 10 verse 3, 'Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor', now the word 'plain' here doesn't actually mean 'plain' it means 'oak' (436), thou shalt come to the **oak** of Tabor, and thou shalt meet there 3 men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying 3 kids, another carrying 3 loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine', and I think it's the same journey, you see, it's the same journey to Beth-el, they have to go past the **oak**! The lesson for Saul was, God will be with you, provided you are prepared to repudiate your past way of life and to commit yourself to an involvement in the truth! How do we know the last bit? Verse 4, ' They will salute thee, and they will give thee two loaves of bread; and Saul, you receive them; I want you to take them. You've got to commit yourself to an involvement in the activities of the truth; God will be with you on that basis! as long as you repudiate your past way of life, the journey to Beth-el, the oak of Tabor, and commit yourself to an involvement in the things of the truth.

Here's the third sign! Verse 5, 'After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: And the Spirit of Yahweh will come upon **thee**, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man'. Now we've gone from 2 ordinary men in the first sign , to 3 spiritual men in the second sign, what have we got in the third sign? We have now got a **whole and entire company of prophets**, so you see, there's a strengthening of ideas here. Whereas the first meeting was at Rachel's sepulchre (natural Israel), and the second was going to Beth-el by the oak of Tabor (where the gods of the past had been buried), now we're coming to Gibeah Elohim. Gibeah Elohim (1389) is the words in verse 5, **the hill of God**, I think, by the way, it was Saul's own city that he was going to here! Gibeah, was Saul's home town, he was going to the high place, Gibeah Elohim, speaking of the heights of spirituality, and the musical instruments here are instruments of music and prophecy concerning the fervour and zeal of the truth. So I think the third sign is saying in brief, God would be with him provided he would dedicate himself so completely to the truth, so as to be transformed in character into a new and different person. Do you see the end of verse 6, 'thou shalt be turned into another man'.

Now let me just put that up by means of overheads, because I think you will see it now more clearly, if we can read all of that quickly and see the force of the signs. In other words, I believe, that the signs all teach the same thing! GOD WILL BE WITH YOU, GOD WILL BE WITH YOU, **GOD WILL BE WITH YOU!**

Now here are the terms of the signs:

1. God will be with you if you learn to put the truth first and to relegate the cares of

natural life into second place.

2. God will be with you if you are prepared to repudiate your past way of life, and commit yourself to an involvement in the truth.

3. God will be with you if you dedicate yourself so completely to the truth, as to be transformed into a new and different person.

Now do you see what verse 7 says, 'And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee: for (and here's the point of the signs) **God is with thee**'. There's the lesson of the signs. They were all to encourage Saul that God would be with him but that there were conditions associated with the way in which God would support him, in his work and his responsibility as a king. By the way, you'll notice at the end of verse 9, that we're told, 'all those signs came to pass **in one day**, which must have really added force to their impact, as he walked out from Ramah, he goes down the road, and immediately bumps into two men by Rachel's sepulchre, and he says, 'oh', (this is the first sign)' and they say, 'oh, the asses; you don't have to be worried about them, they've all been taken care of'. He goes past the oak of Tabor, he sees the tree and three men coming up and they give him two loaves, 'oh, thanks'; you've got to become involved in the truth, Saul. Then as he's coming into his own city, he sees this company of prophets coming down from the hillside with their instruments of music and he finds the Spirit of God come upon him, so that he might be **transformed into another man**. He sees all of those signs in the sweep of one day! **God will be with you, Saul!** provided you're prepared to accept those conditions upon which God is pleased to add His support to your labours.

Now I want by way of conclusion, just to show a couple of things that I think are interesting in this particular story, and one is by means of a parable, and the final one is then to bring forth what I think, anyway, is probably the most outstanding exhortation in this chapter concerning the life of Samuel himself. The first thing is a parable! You know, this story of Saul going to have a meal with Samuel, does that ring any bible echoes for you? Made him to sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden! does that ring any echoes? 'When thou art bidden to a feast', you are absolutely right! Now just have a look at this as an interesting example, I think the Lord draws a parable out of this particular episode of the feast that occurred when Saul and Samuel met together.

We're told in Luke 14 verse 8, 'When thou art bidden of any man', says the Lord, as He opens a little parable that He's going to speak concerning a feast that was held; it's very similar to the phrase used here in Samuel; 'and Samuel took Saul and they sat down amongst those that were bidden', says the record in Samuel. And Jesus goes on to say in Luke 14, 'when you are bidden, **sit not down in the highest room**', and in the Greek the literal meaning of the phrase 'the highest room' is '**in the first place**' (4411). Of Saul, it's recorded in chapter 9 here in verse 22, that 'he sat in the **'head place**', the rosh of the table'. Don't do that! says the Lord, and the Lord explains why you shouldn't do that. He says because, 'lest a **more honourable man** than thou', remember this little parable in Luke? 'lest a more honourable man than thou', and later on in the record of

Samuel, Samuel's going to turn to Saul and speak about '**an neighbour of thine that is better than thou**'. This other man, this more honourable man that was going to be found, was **also bidden to the same feast**, and Luke says 'lest a more honourable be bidden of him', and in 1 Samuel 16 verse 11, we're told that Samuel said, 'fetch him' (bid him, in other words) and David also was invited, in fact, Samuel invited both Saul and David to a sacrificial feast and the Lord says in Luke, 'and he that bade thee, and him, come and say to thee'. Well, you know what the parable says, don't you? The parable says, 'lest he come and say to thee, **give this man place**, 'give' this man place; and in Samuel we're going to be told that 'Yahweh hath **given it to a neighbour of thine** that is better than thou'. Saul, who had at first sat down at the chiefest place, was going to suffer the embarrassment of being told that there was a more honourable man at the feast than him, and that he would have to give up his place to another. We're told in 1 Samuel 18 verse 8, 'The LORD said, 'thou begin with shame to take the **lowest** room', and you'll remember the brooding spirit of Saul later on, 'what can he have more but the kingdom?' and Saul brooded on the humiliation and the shame of being displaced by a neighbour that was better than him. I think the Lord took that parable out of the circumstances of Saul and David, who both came before Samuel to keep a feast. Interesting, isn't it? What was the lesson that the Lord gives in the story, '**he that humbleth himself shall be exalted**', and I think that's where Saul's problem was, you see. There was always secret pride in Saul right from the very beginning! That's the lesson that the Lord is going to draw out of the parable later on, 'he that humbleth himself shall be exalted'. Interesting the way in which the Lord had such an insight! and by the way, that parable is also drawn from a proverb in Proverbs 25, so there is actually more than one passage that the Lord draws on in terms of that parable.

Now, what I'd like to close with is, the tremendous spirit of Samuel again here, as we see him in this particular episode. What was Samuel actually asked to do? Well, back in chapter 9 and verse 16, we are told what it was that he was told to do! 'Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt **anoint** him', that's all! Just anoint him! Now Samuel knew, I believe, after probably one meeting with Saul that he wasn't the ideal choice; he might have been the people's ideal, but he wasn't a spiritual ideal. He was from the wrong tribe, he didn't have a great deal of spiritual ability, he might have been close to Samuel as a result of this first discussion, but in Samuel's heart of hearts, he must have known from the beginning that there were difficulties with this man, but just look at Samuel's attitude as this great lumbering clod-hopper comes up to him.

Now just think about this! There's a tremendous spirit in Samuel here, he's **Samuel the humble** in this story, in the matter of anointing Saul. God simply says, 'I want you to anoint him', but look at what he really does! In chapter 9 verse 20, he **honours** Saul with the promise of royal benefits; he explains for Saul the wonderful advantages that would accrue to him, having assumed the position of the kingship. In chapter 9 and verse 22, he **respects** Saul by giving him, the head seat at the feast, which by the way, was no doubt where Samuel normally himself sat, and he goes and sits in some other place, in order that Saul might be given that chiefest place. Wasn't that a singular mark

of honour for the old man to give to this young fellow. In chapter 9 verse 24, we're told that he not only gives him the best place in terms of the seating, but he **elevates** Saul with the reserved and choicest portion of the meal, the shoulder, the heave shoulder itself, the finest of the cuts. In chapter 9 verse 25, we're told that he **exalts** Saul by humbly preparing the bed for him on the top of the house. In chapter 10 verse 1, we're told that he **esteemed** Saul with the kiss of loyal homage, can you just see that, b&s, an old man full of days and full of wisdom, stepping forward to kiss the cheek of this young uncultured man as a mark of homage? And in chapter 10 verses 2 to 7, he **encourages** Saul with all the signs of divine support, God will be with thee. He didn't need to do all that, b&s! He really didn't need to do all that, but because it was **Yahweh's choice** in the matter, Samuel was glad to do that.

You see, whatever he did, he did with all his heart and with all his soul; Samuel believed in burnt offerings, and he gave himself absolutely to the support of this young man in every possible way; he certainly understood the lesson of humility that the Lord was going to draw out of the parable. Do you know why he did it? Chapter 10 verse 1, 'Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because Yahweh **hath anointed thee**?' and that was Samuel's motive, wasn't it? If it's good enough for God, then that's what I shall do! and there's a tremendous lesson there that comes out of the life of the old man here, as he gives above and beyond that which he really was required of God to do, on this occasion and he honours Saul in every possible way, reluctant though he might have been, because he saw it as **God's will** and the **advancing of God's truth**.

Well, b&s, we leave our study at that point there, this morning, and we look forward on the occasion of our next study, to another episode in the life of the old prophet, when having formally crowned Saul to the kingship, and Saul having been presented to the people, we shall come at our next study to hear the old man give his final farewell speech, to the nation.