FIRST SAMUEL

Chapter 10

**Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance? 2 When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, ‘The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, “What shall I do about my son?” ’ 3 “Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. 4 They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them. 5 “After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. 6 The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. 7 Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. 8 “Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do.”**

**10:1** *oil.* Perhaps spiced olive oil (see Ex 30:22–33). (CSB)

*Has not the Lord anointed you … .?* See note on 9:16. (CSB)

*leader.* See 9:16 and note. (CSB)

*his inheritance.* “My people Israel” (9:16). The Lord’s inheritance includes both the people (see Ex 34:9) and the land (see Ex 15:17). After departing from Samuel, Saul is to receive three signs (see vv. 2–7) to authenticate Samuel’s words and to assure him that the Lord has indeed chosen him to be king. (CSB)

**10:5** *Gibeah of God.* Gibeah was Saul’s hometown (see v. 26; 11:4), located in the tribal area of Benjamin (Jos 18:28; Jdg 19:12–14). It was usually called “Gibeah” or “Gibeah of Benjamin” (as in 13:2, 15), but twice “Gibeah of Saul” (15:34; 2Sa 21:6). The present designation (used only here) may have been Samuel’s way of reminding Saul that the land of Canaan belonged to God and not to the Philistines (see Dt 32:43; Isa 14:2; Hos 9:3). (CSB)

*prophets.* The bands of prophets with which Samuel was associated (as also the “sons of the prophets” with whom Elijah and Elisha were associated; see note on 1Ki 20:35) appear to have been small communities of men who banded together in spiritually decadent times for mutual cultivation of their religious zeal. (CSB)

*prophesying.* Here (and in vv. 6, 10–11, 13) appears to designate an enthusiastic praising of God inspired by the Holy Spirit (see Nu 11:24–30 for similar use of the term). (CSB)

**10:7** *do whatever your hand finds to do.* Saul is to take whatever action is appropriate when the situation presents itself to manifest publicly his royal leadership (see 11:4–11). (CSB)

**10:8** *Go down ahead of me to Gilgal.* At some unspecified future time, perhaps previously discussed (see 9:25), Saul is to go to Gilgal and wait seven days for Samuel’s arrival (see 13:7–14). (CSB)

*Saul Made King*

**9 As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. 10 When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying. 11 When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, “What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” 12 A man who lived there answered, “And who is their father?” So it became a saying: “Is Saul also among the prophets?” 13 After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place. 14 Now Saul’s uncle asked him and his servant, “Where have you been?” “Looking for the donkeys,” he said. “But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.” 15 Saul’s uncle said, “Tell me what Samuel said to you.” 16 Saul replied, “He assured us that the donkeys had been found.” But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship. 17 Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah 18 and said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.’ 19 But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, ‘No, set a king over us.’ So now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans.” 20 When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21 Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri’s clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. 22 So they inquired further of the Lord, “Has the man come here yet?” And the Lord said, “Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage.” 23 They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. 24 Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.” Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!” 25 Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the Lord. Then Samuel dismissed the people, each to his own home. 26 Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. 27 But some troublemakers said, “How can this fellow save us?” They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.**

**10:11** *Is Saul also among the prophets?* An expression of surprise at Saul’s behavior (see note on v. 5) by those who had known him previously—another subtle indication of his character (see notes on 9:3, 6). (CSB)

**10:12** *who is their father?* Some understand the question as an expression of contempt for prophets generally, others as implying the recognition that prophetic inspiration comes from God and therefore could be imparted to whomever God chose. However, since leading prophets were sometimes called “father” (2Ki 2:12; 6:21; 13:14), the speaker may have intended a disdainful reference to Samuel or an ironical gibe at Saul. (CSB)

**10:17** *Samuel summoned the people.* After the private designation and anointing of Saul to be king (9:1–10:16), an assembly is called by Samuel to make the Lord’s choice known to the people (v. 21) and to define the king’s task (v. 25). (CSB)

*Mizpah.* See note on 7:5. (CSB)

**10:18** *I delivered you.* Speaking through Samuel, the Lord emphasizes to the people that he has been their deliverer throughout their history. He brought them out of Egypt and delivered them from all their enemies during the time of the judges. Although the judges themselves are sometimes referred to as Israel’s deliverers (see Jdg 3:9, 15, 31; 6:14; 10:1; 13:5), this was true only in a secondary sense, for they were instruments of the Lord’s deliverance (see Jdg 2:18). It was the Lord who sent them (see 12:11; Jdg 6:14). (CSB)

**10:19** *rejected your God.* See note on 8:7. (CSB)

**10:20** *tribe of Benjamin was chosen.* Probably by casting lots (see 14:41–42; Jos 7:15–18). The Urim and Thummim were used for this purpose (see notes on 2:28; Ex 28:30). (CSB)

**10:24** *Long live the king!* See 2Sa 16:16. (CSB)

**10:25** *regulations of the kingship.* Samuel here takes the first step toward resolving the tension that existed between Israel’s misdirected desire for a king (and their misconceived notion of what the king’s role and function should be) and the Lord’s intent to give them one (see Introduction: Contents and Theme). This description of the duties and prerogatives of the Israelite king was given for the benefit of both the people and the king-designate. It was intended to clearly distinguish Israelite kingship from that of the surrounding nations and to ensure that the king’s role in Israel was compatible with the continued rule of the Lord over Israel as her Great King (see Dt 17:14–20). *deposited it before the Lord*. The written constitutional-legal document defining the role of the king in governing God’s covenant people was preserved at the sanctuary (the tabernacle, later the temple). Other written documents defining Israel’s covenant relationship with the Lord are referred to in Ex 24:7; Dt 31:26; Jos 24:26. (CSB)

**10:27** *troublemakers.* See note on Dt 13:13. *How can this fellow save us?* Reflects the people’s continued apostate idea that national security was to be sought in the person of the human king (see note on v. 18; cf. 8:20). (CSB)