
1SAMUEL 10: 1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it on his head, and kissed him, and said, "Isn't it that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his inheritance?"

Samuel anoints Saul captain of the Lord's inheritance, 1Sam 10:1. Instructs him concerning his return home, whom he should meet, and what he should do, 1Sam 10:2-8. Saul meets a company of prophets, the Spirit of the Lord comes on him, and he prophesies among them, 1Sam 10:9-13. He meets his uncle, and converses with him, 1Sam 10:14-16. Samuel calls the people together to Mizpeh, and upbraids them for having rejected the Lord as their king, 1Sam 10:17-19. Lots are cast to find out the person proper to be appointed king; Saul is chosen, 1Sam 10:20-24. Samuel shows the manner of the king, and writes it in a book, 1Sam 10:25. Saul goes to Gibeah; and certain persons refuse to acknowledge him as king, 1Sam 10:26, 1Sam 10:27.

Verse 1

Took a vial of oil - The reasons of this rite the reader will find largely stated in the note on Exo 29:7. The anointing mentioned here took place in the open field. See the preceding chapter, 1Sam 9:26-27 (note). How simple was the ancient ceremony of consecrating a king! A prophet or priest poured oil upon his head, and kissed him; and said, Thus the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance. This was the whole of the ceremony. Even in this anointing, Saul is not acknowledged as king, but simply נגיד *nagid*, a captain - one who goes before and leads the people.

1SAMUEL 10: 2 When you have departed from me today, then you shall find two men by Rachel's tomb, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will tell you, 'The donkeys which you went to seek have been found; and behold, your father has stopped caring about the donkeys, and is anxious for you, saying, "What shall I do for my son?"'

Verse 2

Rachel's sepulcher - This was nigh to Bethlehem. See Gen 35:19.

At Zelzah - If this be the name of a place, nothing is known of it.

The Hebrew בצלצח *betseltsach* is translated by the Septuagint ἀλλομενους μεγαλα, dancing greatly: now this may refer to the joy they felt and expressed on finding the asses, or it may refer to those religious exultations, or playing on instruments of music, mentioned in the succeeding verses.

1SAMUEL 10: 3 "Then you shall go on forward from there, and you shall come to the oak of Tabor; and three men shall meet you there going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three young goats, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

Verse 3

Three men going up to God to Bethel - Jacob's altar was probably there still, Gen 28:19. However this might be, it was still considered, as its name implies, the house of God; and to it they were now going, to offer sacrifice.

The three kids were for sacrifice; the three loaves of bread to be offered probably as a thank-offering; and the bottle or skin full of wine, for a libation. When the blood was poured out before the Lord, then they feasted on the flesh and on the bread; and probably had a sufficiency of the wine left for their own drinking.

1SAMUEL 10: 4 and they will greet you, and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive of their hand.

Verse 4

And they will salute thee - וְשָׁאוּ לְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם vashaalu lecha leshalom, "And they will inquire of thee concerning peace," i.e., welfare. In the East, if this salutation be given, then the person or persons giving it may be reckoned friends; if the others return it, then there is friendship on both sides. Salaam alicum, Peace to you! is the mode of compellation: Alicum essalaam, To you be peace! is the return. If you give the former and receive not the latter, you may expect hostility. The meaning of the prophet is, When you come to the plain of Tabor, ye shall meet three men; you need not be afraid of them, for they are friends; and they will show this friendship, not only by bidding you good speed, but by giving you two loaves of bread, a provision which you will need for the remaining part of your journey.

1SAMUEL 10: 5 "After that you shall come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall happen, when you have come there to the city, that you shall meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tambourine, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying:

Verse 5

The hill of God - The Targum says, "The hill on which the ark of the Lord was. Calmet supposes it to be a height near Gibeah.

The garrison of the Philistines - Probably they kept a watch on the top of this hill, with a company of soldiers to keep the country in check.

A company of prophets - A company of scribes, says the Targum. Probably the scholars of the prophets; for the prophets seem to have been the only accredited teachers, at particular times, in Israel; and at this time there does not appear to have been any other prophet besides Samuel in this quarter. Probably the teacher of this school was not an inspired man, but one acting under the direction of Samuel. Mr. Harmer thinks that the following custom among the Mohammedans greatly illustrates this obscure place: "When the children have gone through the Koran, their relations borrow a fine horse and furniture, and carry them about the town in procession, with the book in their hand, the rest of their companions following, and all sorts of music of the country going before. Dr. Shaw, in p. 195, mentions the same custom; adding the acclamations of their school-fellows, but

taking no notice of the music. We have no reason, however, to doubt the fact on account of the doctor's silence; especially as it relates to another part of Barbary, and is given us by those who resided some years in that country. The doctor makes no use of this circumstance relating to the education of youth in Barbary; but the account of the procession above given seems to be a lively comment on that ancient Jewish custom mentioned in these verses. That the word prophet often signifies sons or scholars of the prophets, and that prophesying often implies singing, has been already remarked; but no author that I know of has given any account of the nature of this procession, or its design. We are sometimes told that high places were used for sacrifices; and in one case music, it is certain, played before them when they went up to worship, Isa 30:29. But did they not also return from sacrifice with it? We are told that music was used by the prophets to calm and compose them, and to invite the Divine influences; which is indeed very true. But is it to the purpose? Did they go forth in this manner from their college into the noise and interruptions of the world, to call down the prophetic impulse? But if we consider them as a company of the sons of the prophets, going in procession with songs of praise and music playing before them, and recollect that it is usual in this day for young scholars to go in procession with acclamations and music, the whole mystery seems to be unravelled. To which may be added, that Saul was to meet them, and find himself turned into another man; into a man, perhaps, who is instantaneously made as knowing in the law of God as the youth to whom they were doing the above honors, or any of his convoy; which acquaintance with the law of God was very necessary for one who was to judge among his brethren as their king. For this reason the Jewish kings were to write out a copy of the law of God, and read it continually, that they might be perfect masters of it, Deu 17:18, Deu 17:20, which accomplishment some youth had gained whom Saul met with, and who was honored with the solemnity the sacred historian speaks of, if the customs of South Barbary may be supposed to be explanatory of those of Judea."

On the word prophet, and the general account given here, I shall introduce the following illustrations from another work: - "The word prophet generally conveys the idea of a person so far acquainted with futurity as to discern some purpose of the Divine Being relative to his government of the natural and moral world, but which is not sufficiently matured by the economy of Providence to make, as yet, its public appearance among men, and to prophesy is usually understood to imply the foretelling such an event, the time of its appearance, and the place of its operation, with some preceding and subsequent circumstances. But that this was the original and only meaning of the word prophet or prophesy, is very far from being clear. The first place the word occurs in is Gen 20:7, where the Lord says of Abraham to Abimelech, He is a prophet, (נביא הוא nabi hu), and will pray (ויתפלל veyith-pallel, will make earnest intercession) for thee. In the common acceptance of the word it is certain Abraham was no prophet; but here it seems to signify a man well acquainted with the Supreme Being, capable of teaching others in Divine things, and especially a man of prayer - one who had great influence with the God he worshipped, and whose intercessions were available in the behalf of others. And in this sense the original word נביא nabi is used in several places in the Old Testament. "It was through inattention to this meaning of the word, which appears to me to be the true, original, and ideal one, that all the commentators and critics that I have met with have been so sadly puzzled with that part of the history of Saul which is related 1Sam 10:9-13; 1Sam 19:20-24. In these passages the sacred historian represents Saul, who was neither a prophet nor the son of one, associating with the prophets, and prophesying among them, to which he was led by the Spirit of the Lord which came upon him. "That this can mean no more here than prayer and supplication to God, accompanied probably with edifying hymns of praise and thanksgiving, (for they had instruments of music, 1Sam 10:5), needs, in my opinion, little proof. If Saul had prophesied in the common acceptance of the word, it is not likely that we should have been kept absolutely in the dark

concerning the subject and design of his predictions, of which, by the way, not one syllable is spoken in the oracles of God. The simple fact seems to have been this: God, who had chosen this man to govern Israel, designed to teach him that the Most High alone is the fountain of power, and that by him only kings could reign so as to execute justice properly, and be his ministers for good to the people. To accomplish this gracious purpose, he gave him another heart (1Sam 10:9)-a disposition totally different from what he had ever before possessed, and taught him to pray. "Coming among the sons of the prophets, on whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, and who were under the instruction of Samuel, (1Sam 19:20), while they worshipped God with music and supplication, Saul also was made a partaker of the same Divine influence, and prophesied, i.e., made prayer and supplication among them. To see one who did not belong to the prophetic school thus incorporated with the prophets, pouring out his soul in prayer and supplication, was an unusual sight, which could not pass unnoticed, especially by those of Saul's acquaintance who probably knew him in times past to have been as careless and ungodly as themselves, (for it was only now he got that other good Spirit from God, a sufficient proof that he had it not before). These companions of his, being unacquainted with that grace which can in a moment influence and change the heart, would, according to an invariable custom, express their astonishment with a sneer: Is Saul also among the prophets? That is, in modern language, 'Can this man pray or preach? He whose education has been the same as our own, employed in the same secular offices, and formerly companion with us in what he now affects to call folly and sin? Can such a person be among the prophets?' Yes, for God may have given him a new heart; and the Spirit of God, whose inspiration alone can give sound understanding in sacred things, may have come upon him for this very purpose, that he might announce unto you the righteousness of the Lord, and speak unto your ruined souls to edification, and to exhortation, and to comfort. "The history of Elijah and the priests of Baal, mentioned in 1 Kings 18:17-40, throws farther light on this subject. In 1Kgs 18:26 it is said, 'They (the priests of Baal) took a bullock and dressed it, and called on the name of Baal, from morning to noon, saying, O Baal, hear us! And they leaped upon the altar, and cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and they prophesied (וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ va'yithnabbeu, and they made supplication) until the time of the evening sacrifice.' From the whole context it is plain that earnest, importunate prayer, is alone what is meant by prophesying in this text. See also 1Cor 14:3 (note). "And as all the prophets of God, whose principal business it was to instruct the people in the way of righteousness, were men of prayer, who were continually interceding with God in behalf of those to whom they ministered, the term נָבִיא nabi became their proper appellation; and thus a part of their office, intercessors for the people, might have given rise to that name by which the Spirit of God thought proper in after times to distinguish those whom he sent, not only to pray for and instruct the people, but also to predict those future events which concerned the punishment of the incorrigible and the comfort and exaltation of his own servants." See a sermon which I have printed on 1Cor 14:3, entitled, "The Christian Prophet and his Work;" and see the note on Gen 20:7.

A psaltery - נֶבֶל nebel. As the word signifies in other places a bottle or flagon, it was probably something like the utricularia tibia or Bag-Pipe. It often occurs both with the Greeks and Romans, and was evidently borrowed from the Hebrews.

A tabret - תֹּפֵיף toph; a sort of drum or cymbal.

A pipe - חָלִיל chalil, from חָלַל chal, to make a hole or opening; a sort of pipe, flute, hautboy, clarinet, or the like.

A harp - כִּנּוֹר kinnor; a stringed instrument similar to our harp, or that on the model of which a harp was formed. On these different instruments I shall have occasion to speak more at large when I come to the Psalms.

1SAMUEL 10: 6 and the Spirit of the LORD will come mightily on you, and you shall prophesy with them, and shall be turned into another man.

1SAMUEL 10: 7 Let it be, when these signs have come to you, that you do as occasion shall serve you; for God is with you.

Verse 7

Thou do as occasion serve thee - After God has shown thee all these signs that thou art under his especial guidance, fear not to undertake any thing that belongs to thy office, for God is with thee.

What a number of circumstances thus precisely foretold! Does not this prove that Samuel was under the continual inspiration of the Almighty?

1SAMUEL 10: 8 "You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: you shall wait seven days, until I come to you, and show you what you shall do."

Verse 8

Seven days shalt thou tarry - I will come to thee within seven days, offer sacrifices, receive directions from the Lord, and deliver them to thee. It is likely that these seven days referred to the time in which Samuel came to Saul to Gilgal, offered sacrifices, and confirmed the kingdom to him, after he had defeated the Ammonites. See 1Sam 11:14, 1Sam 11:15.

1SAMUEL 10: 9 It was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs happened that day.

1SAMUEL 10: 10 When they came there to the hill, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came mightily on him, and he prophesied among them.

Verse 10

Behold, a company of prophets - See on 1Sam 10:5 (note), etc.

1SAMUEL 10: 11 When all who knew him before saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, "What is this that has come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

1SAMUEL 10: 12 One of the same place answered, "Who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Verse 12

But who is their father? - The Septuagint, in its principal editions, adds *ou Κεις*; is it not Kish? This makes the sense more complete.

1SAMUEL 10: 13 When he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

Verse 13

He came to the high place - I suppose this to mean the place where Saul's father lived; as it is evident the next verse shows him to be at home.

1SAMUEL 10: 14 Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" He said, "To seek the donkeys. When we saw that they were not found, we came to Samuel."

Verse 14

Saul's uncle - The word *τιτ* *dod* signifies a beloved one, love, a lover, friend, etc.; and is the same as David. It is supposed to mean uncle here; but I think it means some familiar friend.

1SAMUEL 10: 15 Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

1SAMUEL 10: 16 Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys were found." But concerning the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel spoke, he didn't tell him.

1SAMUEL 10: 17 Samuel called the people together to the LORD to Mizpah;

1SAMUEL 10: 18 and he said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you:'"

Verse 18

I brought up Israel out of Egypt - These are similar to the upbraidings in 1Sam 8:7, etc.

1SAMUEL 10: 19 but you have this day rejected your God, who himself saves you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and you have said to him, 'No! Set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands."

Verse 19

Present yourselves - by your tribes - It appears that, in order to find out the proper person who should be made their king, they must determine by lot:

1. The tribe.
2. The thousands or grand divisions by families.
3. The smaller divisions by families. And,
4. The individual.

When the lot was cast for the tribe, Benjamin was taken; when for the thousand, the division of Matri was taken; when for the family, the family of Kish was taken; when for the individual, Saul, the son of Kish, was taken.

1SAMUEL 10: 20 So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

1SAMUEL 10: 21 He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be found.

Verse 21

When they sought him, he could not be found - Through modesty or fear he had secreted himself.

1SAMUEL 10: 22 Therefore they asked of the LORD further, "Is there yet a man to come here?" The LORD answered, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

Verse 22

The Lord answered - What a continual access to God! and what condescension in his attention to all their requests!

The stuff among which he had secreted himself may mean the carts, baggage, etc., brought by the people to Mizpeh.

1SAMUEL 10: 23 They ran and fetched him there; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

1SAMUEL 10: 24 Samuel said to all the people, "You see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?" All the people shouted, and said, "Let the king live!"

Verse 24

God save the king - There is no such word here; no, nor in the whole Bible; nor is it countenanced by any of the versions. The words which we thus translate here and elsewhere are simply יחי המלך

yechi hammelech, "May the king live;" and so all the versions, the Targum excepted, which says, May the king prosper! The French Vive le roi! is a proper version of the Hebrew.

1SAMUEL 10: 25 Then Samuel told the people the regulations of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

Verse 25

The manner of the kingdom - It is the same word as in 1Sam 8:9; and doubtless the same thing is implied as is there related. But possibly there was some kind of compact or covenant between them and Saul; and this was the thing that was written in a book, and laid up before the Lord, probably near the ark.

1SAMUEL 10: 26 Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the army, whose hearts God had touched.

Verse 26

A band of men - Not a military band, as I imagine, but some secret friends, or companions, who were personally attached to him. Others think that all the men fit to bear arms are intended; but this seems inconsistent with the life that Saul led for some time afterwards; for he appears to have gone into his agricultural concerns, and waited for a call from the Divine providence. See 1Sam 11:5.

1SAMUEL 10: 27 But certain worthless fellows said, "How shall this man save us?" They despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

Verse 27

Brought him no presents - They gave him no proofs that they acknowledged either the Divine appointment or his authority. The Arab chiefs are, to this day, when on a march or excursion of any kind, supplied with every necessary by the free-will offerings or presents of the people in the villages or places where they encamp. Saul was now a public character, and had a right to support from the public. These sons of Belial refused to bear their part; they brought him no presents. He marked it, but at present held his peace; he was as if he were deaf: so says the text. He was prudent, and did not immediately assume all the consequence to which his office entitled him. It is probable, however, that tribute is meant by the word present. The people in general finding they had now a king, took it for granted that they must pay tribute or taxes to him. This was a part of the manner of the king which Samuel had shown them; the great majority had done so, but certain refractory people refused to pay any thing, on the pretense that such a person as Saul could not be a deliverer of Israel. How, say they, shall this man save us?