

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 10

In this chapter we read of Saul's being anointed king by Samuel, (1 Samuel 10:1), and of certain signs given as confirming the same, which should come to pass, and did, before Saul got to his father's house, (1 Samuel 10:2-13), of his arrival at his father's house, and of what passed between him and his uncle there, (1 Samuel 10:14-16), of Samuel's calling all Israel together at Mizpeh, and of the election of Saul by lot to be king, and of his being declared such, (1 Samuel 10:17-25), and of his return to his city, being respected by some, and despised by others, (1 Samuel 10:26,27).

**Ver. 1.** *Then Samuel took a vial of oil*, etc.] Out of his pocket very probably, which he brought along with him on purpose for the use he made of it: this, as the Jews<sup>f195</sup> say, was not the anointing oil that was in the tabernacle, which was at another and distant place, and with which only the kings of the house of David were anointed; but common oil, or, as they say, oil of balsam; and this was not an horn, but a vial, which held a small quantity, and was brittle; and they observe that Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with a vial, their reigns were short, whereas David and Solomon, who were anointed with a horn, their reigns were long; and as oil is a symbol of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, it may denote a smaller measure conferred on Saul than on David and Solomon:

*and kissed him*; congratulating him on the dignity he was raised to, and in reverence and respect to him, because of the high office he was arrived to; and as a token of subjection and homage, and to testify his well pleased in his being king, and that he readily, willingly, and with pleasure resigned the government to him:

*and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?* the people of Israel, so called, (Deuteronomy 32:9) and which is observed here to show, that though Saul was anointed king over them, they were the Lord's possession still, and he was accountable to him for his government and usage of them, over whom he was to be a

captain, leader, and commander, to go before them, and fight their battles for them, of which his being anointed with oil was a token; and therefore it is said, “is it not?” or dost thou not see by this? or knowest thou not, as R. Isaiah supplies it, that this is of the Lord? for it was the Lord that anointed him, or Samuel by his orders; and such questions as these, as Kimchi observes, are for the greater confirmation of what is spoken; and if Saul had any doubt upon his mind, as perhaps he might because of his meanness, and the high honour designed hereby, not only this question is put, but three following signs are given him, whereby he might be assured of the truth of it.

**Ver. 2.** *When thou art departed from me today*, etc.] Not as soon as he was departed, for he had some few miles to go from Ramah to Rachel’s grave near Bethlehem:

*thou shalt find two men by Rachel’s sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah*; the Jews move a difficulty here, that Rachel’s sepulchre should be said to be in the border of Benjamin, when it was by Bethlehemephath, in the tribe of Judah, (<sup><013519></sup>Genesis 35:19 <sup><3812></sup>Micah 5:2) and which they solve by observing, that these men were now, at the time Samuel was speaking, by the grave of Rachel, but as they were coming on he would meet them at Zelzah, in the border of Benjamin <sup>f196</sup>; but there is no need of this, Rachel’s grave was not at Bethlehem, but in, the way to it; and besides, as these two tribes were contiguous, and this city being on the borders of both, it might be said at one time to be in the border of Benjamin, and at another in the border of Judah, or in Judah, without any contradiction. Of Zelzah we nowhere else read, but it is plain it was near the sepulchre of Rachel, and perhaps nearer than Bethlehem. The Arabic geographer <sup>f197</sup> speaks of Rachel’s grave as in the midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; and says there were twelve stones upon it, and a stone arched vault over it; and the same is affirmed by Benjamin of Tudela <sup>f198</sup>, who makes it to be but half a mile from Bethlehem. Jarchi would have Zelzah to be the same with Jerusalem, which is not probable:

*and they will say unto thee, the asses which thou wentest to seek are found*; as Samuel had before told Saul they were, (<sup><0020></sup>1 Samuel 9:20)

*and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses*; or had left all thoughts about them, and concern for them, not minding whether he heard of them or not, and this before they were found; or otherwise it would have been no strange thing to drop all thoughts about them, when they were found:

*and sorroweth for you*; for Saul, and his servant; such was the anxiety and distress of his mind lest any evil should befall them, having been gone so long in quest of the asses, that he had as it were forgot them, and lost all care and concern about them, in comparison of his son and servant; but especially his sorrow rose high for his son, as follows:

*saying, what shall I do for my son?* though he was concerned for his servant, yet most for his son; he might have another servant, and not another son, and Saul seems to be his only one, which made his grief for him the greater, (see <sup><1383></sup>1 Chronicles 8:33 9:39). Now as these were contingent events here foretold, as meeting with two men at a certain place described, the words related expressly they should say to him when he met them, and these exactly coming to pass, would most clearly prove Samuel to be a true prophet, and confirm Saul in the belief of what he had said and done to him concerning the kingdom. Another sign follows.

**Ver. 3.** *Then shall thou go on forward from thence*, etc.] From Zelzah and Rachel's sepulchre there:

*and thou shall come to the plain of Tabor*; not that which lay at the bottom of the famous and well known mountain Tabor; for that was in the tribe of Zebulun, at a great distance from hence: but a plain, so called perhaps from the name of the owner of it:

*and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel*: the same with Luz, where Jacob built an altar, and called upon God; and so Elohimbethel here is the same with Elbethel, (<sup><1386></sup>Genesis 35:6,7). Here was an high place as at Ramah, whither in those times, when there was no fixed place for worship, the tabernacle at one place, and the ark at another, the people went up to worship; and they might the rather choose this, because it was a place devoted to the worship and service of God by their father Jacob; so the Targum paraphrases it, "going up to worship God in Bethel;"

so Josephus <sup>f199</sup>, they were going thither to pray, and, as it seems by what follows, to sacrifice: one carrying three kids; which were used in sacrifice, and were a pretty heavy load if carried far; though, according to Josephus <sup>f200</sup>, it was but one kid:

*and another carrying three loaves of bread*; for the minchah, the meat offering, or rather bread offering, (<sup><1388></sup>Leviticus 2:4)

*and another carrying a bottle of wine*; for the drink offering, the fourth part of an hin of wine being required for each kid, (<sup><Q153></sup>Numbers 15:5,11). This bottle, Ben Melech says, was a bottle made of skin, a leathern bottle or bag, or a potter's vessel or pitcher; the Targum renders it, a flagon of wine.

**Ver. 4.** *And they will salute thee*, etc.] Not as king, of which they knew nothing, but in a common way; and though a stranger and unknown to them, yet finding their hearts disposed and affected towards him, would inquire of his welfare, and wish him all happiness, peace, and prosperity:

*and give thee two [loaves] of bread*; which was pretty much that they should give him two out of three, and leave but one for themselves, and especially if they were going to sacrifice; but perhaps they knew they could buy more bread at Bethel, and so were disposed to give two of their loaves to Saul, one for himself and another for his servant; though Kimchi thinks that these are not the same before called loaves; and indeed the word "loaves" is not in the text, but cakes of bread, which were lesser than loaves, and which they carried for their own use, besides three loaves of bread:

*which thou shall receive of their hands*; being sent out by Samuel early that morning without eating any food, and having travelled some miles, might become weary and faint, and which the three men might discern, and so had compassion on them, and relieved them; and Saul was not to refuse the offer of them, but take them at their hands, though he was anointed to be king; and this was to teach him humility, and to be kind to the poor and needy, and relieve them when he was in more elevated circumstances. All these actions also were contingent, and when they came to pass, as they did, must be still more confirming than the former sign.

**Ver. 5.** *After that thou shall come to the hill of God*, etc.] The Targum is, the hill in which was the ark of the Lord, and that was in the house of Abinadab, on a hill in the city of Kirjathjearim, (<sup><Q101></sup>1 Samuel 7:1) and so the Jewish commentators generally interpret this hill of God of Kirjathjearim; but rather it was Geba, a city of Benjamin, partly because by this time he must have got out of the tribe of Judah into the tribe of Benjamin, and even almost to the end of his journey, and among those that were his relations, (<sup><Q101></sup>1 Samuel 10:11,14) and partly because it is certain there was a garrison of the Philistines at Geba, (<sup><Q103></sup>1 Samuel 13:3) as there was at this place, as follows:

*where is the garrison of the Philistines*; which they were allowed by the terms of peace made between Israel and them; or which through their growing power over them in the latter days of Samuel they placed there, and which yet they kept, without giving the people any molestation in their worship and service:

*and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city*; to the city Geba, or near it:

*that thou shall meet a company of prophets*; of Scribes, as the Targum; which were, as Kimchi observes, disciples; for the disciples of the wise men were called Scribes, and these were the disciples of prophets, the same with the sons of the prophets; and the prophets that were at this time, as he says, from Eli to David, were Elkanah, Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun; here was a school or college of young prophets, where they were trained up, under the care and tuition of one or other of the above prophets, in the knowledge of the word of God, in psalmody, and other religious exercises; for though the word of the Lord was scarce and precious in the beginning of Samuel's time, yet through his industry, influence, and encouragement, divine knowledge was greatly promoted, and many were trained up and qualified to instruct the people; who, though they had not the gift of foretelling future events, or of the vision of prophecy, yet had gifts qualifying for the edification of the people; and out of these schools and colleges God sometimes raised up prophets in the highest sense, who foretold things to come, and to whom the Lord appeared in dreams and visions. And this company Saul would meet

*coming down from the high place*; where they had been to worship, to sacrifice, or to pray, for here was an high place for such service, as well as at Ramah:

*with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them*; which were several instruments of "music" used in singing praises to God in those times:

*and they shall prophesy*; or praise, as the Targum, sing praises at the same time they played on their instruments of music; and singing praises is one sort of prophesying, (see <sup><1320></sup>1 Chronicles 25:1-3), and in which sense it seems to be used in (<sup><410></sup>1 Corinthians 11:4,5).

**Ver. 6.** *And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee*, etc.] As a spirit of prophecy, so the Targum; whereby he would be enabled at once to

compose psalms and hymns of praise, and sing them in a proper manner, though he had not been trained up in this exercise in the school of the prophets; which made it more wonderful to those that knew him:

*and thou shalt prophesy with them:* or “praise” with them, as the same Targum; join with them in singing praises, and perform this service in an orderly manner, as if he had been instructed in it, and used to it:

*and shall be turned into another man;* for the Spirit of God would not only operate on him in that way, as to fit him for composing and singing psalms and hymns, but inspire him with wisdom, and prudence, and greatness of mind, and with every qualification necessary for a king; so that he would appear quite another man than he was before, in his outward behaviour, as well as in the endowments of his mind; and from a rustic, an husbandman, a farmer’s son, would appear with the air of a prince, and in the majesty of a king; and, as Procopius Gazaeus, have a royal mind or heart given him.

**Ver. 7.** *And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee,* etc.] And are all fulfilled, especially the last:

*that thou do as occasion shall serve thee:* as his circumstances would require, and as he in his great wisdom and prudence, with which he should now be furnished, would see necessary to prepare for his taking upon him the kingdom he was anointed to, and would be in a little time openly chosen to, and invested with. Some understand this of royal ornaments befitting a king, or of preparing arms for the defence of the kingdom:

*for God is with thee;* or the Word of the Lord is thy help, as the Targum, and therefore he need not fear engaging in any enterprise that might be for the glory of God, and good of the kingdom.

**Ver. 8.** *And thou shall go down before me to Gilgal,* etc.] Not immediately; for the first summons of the people, and of Saul, and the first meeting of them by Samuel, were at Mizpeh, where Saul was chosen by lot; nor the first time of Saul’s being at Gilgal, when the kingdom was renewed; for Saul had no need to wait seven days there, since he and Samuel went together, (<sup>49114</sup>1 Samuel 11:14) rather at the second time of his being there, where not staying the time quite up, was reprov’d for it, which was two years after this, (<sup>49113</sup>1 Samuel 13:1,8,13), though it may be this was a general rule to be observed by Saul, that whenever anything turned up of importance to the children of Israel, and was a difficulty with him, he should go to Gilgal, and there wait seven days for Samuel, from

the time he gave him notice of it, who would come at the appointed time, and would give him what advice and instructions were necessary; and this place was the rather appointed, because it was the place where the Israelites first pitched their camp when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle first was; and where prayer and sacrifices were wont to be made; and where the kingdom of Saul was renewed; and which lay convenient for all the tribes, both on the one and the other side of Jordan:

*and, behold, I will come down to thee to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings*; so he did when the kingdom was renewed, and Saul was confirmed in it, (<sup>9115</sup>1 Samuel 11:15) but two years after, Saul not staying the full time, he offered them himself by another, for which he was reprov'd, (<sup>9133</sup>1 Samuel 13:9-13)

*seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee*; either from the time of the notice he should give to Samuel of his going thither, or from the time of his arrival there; for it can by no means be understood as from the time of his present departure from him, for the reasons before given:

*and show thee what thou shalt do*; in the then present emergency or difficulty on his hands; and this he said to encourage him under the weight and burden of government laid upon him.

**Ver. 9.** *And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel*, etc.] When he had taken his leave of him, and set forward on his journey:

*God gave him another heart*; not in a moral or spiritual sense, not a new heart, and a new spirit, as in conversion, but in a civil sense, a right heart, a heart fit for government; filled with wisdom and prudence to rule a people; with courage and magnanimity to protect and defend them against their enemies, and fight for them; a heart not taken up with the affairs of husbandry, with care for his father's asses, and looking after his herds, but filled with concern for the civil welfare of Israel, and with schemes and contrivances for their good, and with warm resolutions to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies:

*and all these signs came to pass that day*; the two first, which are not particularly mentioned as fulfilled, being more private, as finding two men at Rachel's sepulchre, and meeting with three others going to Bethel, which came to pass just as they were described; and the third, which was

more public, and gave Saul more reverence and respect among the people, is next particularly observed.

**Ver. 10.** *When they came thither to the hill*, etc.] Or, to Gibeah, as the Targum, and so Josephus <sup>f201</sup>:

*behold, a company of prophets met him*; as foretold, (~~4005~~1 Samuel 10:5), *and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied among them*; the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, and he sung praises among them; he joined with them in their psalmody, and performed it as regularly as if he had been brought up with them. The Jews say <sup>f202</sup> he prophesied of the world to come, of Gog and Magog, and of the rewards of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked.

**Ver. 11.** *And it came to pass, that when all that knew him before time*, etc.] As there must be many that personally knew him, and were acquainted with him, since Gibeah, the place he was near to, was his native place:

*saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets*; or praised among them, as the Targum, sung psalms and hymns with them:

*what is this that is come unto the son of Kish?* a rustic, a plebeian, that never was in the school of the prophets, or learned music, and yet is as dexterous at it as any of them:

*is Saul also among the prophets?* an husbandman, an herdsman that looked after his father's farms, fields, and cattle, and now among the prophets of the Lord, bearing his part with them, and performing it as well as any of them: this was matter of wonder to those who knew his person, family, and education; and so it was equally matter of admiration that Saul the persecutor, one of the same tribe, should be among the preachers of the Gospel, (~~4000~~Acts 9:20,21).

**Ver. 12.** *And one of the same place answered, and said*, etc.] One of the same city, and in the same company, that expressed their admiration at what was come to Saul, and at what he did, and wondering how he came into such company, and to have such a gift, who was of so mean an education:

*but who is their father? the father of the prophets*; their fathers were not prophets, no more than Saul's was; their Father that taught them is the



Lord, and he was able to teach Saul, and bestow on him the gift of prophecy, as well as on them; and so the Targum, who is their master or teacher; for though they might have an undermaster or teacher, as Samuel, or another prophet, yet their chief teacher was God; who could and did give men the gift of prophecy, and even in the highest sense, who had neither prophets for their fathers, nor were indeed trained up in any of the schools of the prophets, which was the case of Amos:

*therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets?* that when a person of a mean parentage, and of a low life and education, was raised up to any degree of dignity in sacred and civil things, they used to apply this proverbial expression to him, or speak of him in this manner, is Saul among the prophets?

**Ver. 13.** *And when he had made an end of prophesying,* etc.] For, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, he had not the gift of prophecy always; it did not continue with him, but, like that of the seventy elders in the times of Moses, it was designed to make him respectable among the people, and to be taken notice of as a person that God had honoured with a peculiar gift, that so, when he should be chosen king, they would the more readily receive him:

*he came to the high place;* to return thanks to God for the gift bestowed on him, and for that high honour and dignity he was raised unto, of which he had private knowledge; and to pray God to fit him more and more for government, and to, assist him in it, and help him to discharge his office in a wise and faithful manner.

**Ver. 14.** *And Saul's uncle said unto him, and to his servant, whither went ye?* etc.] Since they had been absent so long a time. This was his father's brother, as the Targum, and so Aquila; whose name was Ner, the father of Abner, (<sup>Q460</sup>1 Samuel 14:50,51) who met with him at the high place, or found him in the city, in his father's house it may be. Josephus <sup>f203</sup> says, Saul went into the house of his kinsman Abner, whom he loved above all his relations, and that it was he that discoursed with Saul, and asked him, the questions before and after related:

*and he said, to seek the asses:* he first observes the end of their going, the business they went upon, in which not succeeding, then he answers more directly to the question:

*and when we saw that [they were] nowhere*; could not see them, nor find them any where, or hear of them where they went:

*we came to Samuel*; at Ramah, to inquire of him, if he could direct us which way to go, and what methods to take, to find the asses.

**Ver. 15.** *And Saul's uncle said*, etc. | On hearing he had been with Samuel, and perceiving so great an alteration in Saul, perhaps he began to suspect something about the kingdom; it being what everyone was talking of, and expecting every day to hear from Samuel who should be king, according to the Lord's appointment:

*tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you*; the earnestness with which he put this question seems to confirm the above conjecture.

**Ver. 16.** *And Saul said unto his uncle*, etc.] In answer to his question:

*he told us plainly the asses were found*; or "in telling told us"<sup>f204</sup>; not only plainly in so many words, but he affirmed it with the greatest certainty that the asses were found, and we need not give ourselves further trouble about them:

*but of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not*; he said not one word about that, which is commonly ascribed to his modesty; or he might conceal it, as Josephus<sup>f205</sup> observes, because he thought it would not be believed by his relations, or might create in them envy to him; and besides, he knew it was the pleasure of Samuel that it should be kept a secret until the election by lot was over, lest it should be thought to proceed from Samuel himself; and Saul chose it should remain so, that it might not be thought to be of his own seeking; and by keeping it from his relations and friends, it would be a clear case that he did not make interest for it.

**Ver. 17.** *And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord at Mizpeh.*] Not that in Gilead, but in the tribe of Benjamin, where the people had been before convened on a certain occasion, (<sup>CHAP</sup>1 Samuel 7:5) and the people called together could not be every individual of the nation, but the heads and elders of the people, their representatives, and who were summoned by the orders of Samuel; perhaps by an herald making proclamation and cry of the same, as the word signifies; and these were gathered together to the Lord, to have the following affair transacted before him, and under his guidance and direction; the priest perhaps being here with the Urim and

Thummim, as Kimchi thinks, and who also conjectures that the ark might be brought hither at this time, the symbol of the divine Presence; though wherever the church and people of God were gathered together in his name, in a solemn manner, there the Lord was.

**Ver. 18.** *And said unto the children of Israel*, etc.] In the name of the Lord, using the phrase which the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord:

*thus saith the Lord God of Israel*; the great Jehovah, the Being of beings, the covenant God of his people Israel:

*I brought up Israel out of Egypt*; when in bondage there, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, by means of signs and wonders done by the hands of Moses and Aaron; the Lord working mightily with them, and thereby inclining Pharaoh and his people to let them go:

*and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians*; at the Red sea, drowning them in it, when they threatened Israel with an utter destruction:

*and out of the hand of all kingdoms, [and] of them that oppressed you*; as the Arabic writers, the kingdoms of Og and Bashan in their way to Canaan, and the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines, in the times of the judges; all which is observed to show their ingratitude, and aggravate their guilt.

**Ver. 19.** *And ye have this day rejected your God*, etc.] As their king, by desiring another to be set over them;

*who himself saved you out of all your adversity and your tribulations*; that they had been in at any time in Egypt, in their passage through the wilderness to Canaan, and after they were settled there:

*ye have said unto him, [nay], but set a king over us*: they did as good as say God should not be their King, but they would have one set over them like the kings of the nations about them; Samuel reminds them of this their request and resolution to have a king, which they had expressed some time ago, that it might appear to them that this was wholly of their own seeking; the motion came from themselves, and not from the Lord, nor from Samuel, and therefore, whatever ill consequences might follow upon it, they had none to blame but themselves:

*now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands*; by the heads of their tribes, and by the rulers of the thousands into which their tribes were divided, that it might be known either by Urim and Thummim, or rather by casting lots, out of which tribe, and out of which thousand, house, and family in it, their king was to be chosen; which method, an it would clearly appear to be a choice directed by the Lord, so it would prevent all contention and discord among themselves.

**Ver. 20.** *And when Samuel had caused all the tribes to come near*, etc.] The heads and representatives of them, to the place where the lots were cast:

*the tribe of Benjamin was taken*; the lot fell upon that tribe for the choice of a king out of it; not the tribe of, Reuben, who was the firstborn, nor the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom was promised, but the tribe of Benjamin, the least of all the tribes, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, contrary, as it were probable, to the expectation of all.

**Ver. 21.** *And when he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families*, etc.] By the heads of them, to have lots cast for them, out of which of the families the king should be chosen:

*the family of Matri was taken*; that is, by lot; the lot fell upon that family for the choice of a king out of them: in the account of the families of the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup>ERROR</sup>1 Chronicles 8:1-40) no mention is made of this family, nor any where else, and yet no doubt there was such a family, and Saul was of it; it seems to have its name from the butt or mark arrows were shot at; some of the Benjamites being famous for their skill in darting and slinging, and perhaps this family might be so:

*and Saul the son of Kish was taken*; the lot being cast upon the men in the family of Matri, though it is not expressed, fell upon Saul; for though he was not there, as Jarchi observes, the lot fell upon him; for their names were written on a piece of paper, and put into a box, and the prophet put in his hand and took out one, and on that was the name of Saul, and this was the manner of the lot:

*and when they sought him, he could not be found*; because he had hid himself, as in the next verse; it is very probable, and indeed plain, that he was in this assembly at the first opening of it; and knowing what Samuel had said and done to him, and perceiving in what way the lot was going

concerning the same, the tribe of Benjamin being taken, he concluded how it would issue, and therefore left the assembly, and hid himself, as follows.

**Ver. 22.** *Therefore they inquired of the Lord further*, etc.] Or again, by lot, by which they knew who the person was the was chosen king, but they did not know where he was, and therefore inquire further how they must come at him; and this inquiry was made either before the high priest by Urim and Thummim, or by Samuel the prophet of the Lord: and the inquiry was,

*if the man should yet come thither*; whether he was already come, or would come there, and if not, what methods they must take to find him:

*and the Lord answered, behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff* the word signifies household stuff, vessels, utensils, arms, etc. which the people had brought along with them for their use, and were laid up in some one place; and among these baggages Saul hid himself, hoping that if he was not found they would proceed to another choice, so free from ambition was he, and such was his modesty; nor does this seem to be affected and dissembled, but real; though afterwards, when he was settled in the kingdom, he did not care to part with it, and sought to kill David, whom he looked upon as his rival: there were many things which now concurred, that made him uneasy and unwilling to assume the government of the people; partly the envy and ill will of some of them, which he must expect; chiefly the sense he had of his own unfitness for such an office, being of a mean family, and having had so mean an education, and so little knowledge of the maxims of government; and besides, must at once, as soon as on the throne, enter into a war with the Ammonites; but what might most of all distress him, he perceived by Samuel's speech to the people, that the affair of a king was displeasing to the Lord, though he condescended to grant the people's request; and therefore what comfort and happiness could he expect in such a situation?

**Ver. 23.** *And they ran and fetched him thence*, etc.] Being in haste to see their king elect, and proclaim him:

*and when he stood among the people*; being brought among them, and presented to them:

*he was higher than any of the people, from the shoulders, and upwards*; which made him look very graceful and majestic; height of stature, and a comely form, as Kimchi observes, recommend to royal dignity; and make the people stand more in awe of a prince, and have always been reckoned

among all other nations to make a prince venerable, (see Gill on “<sup>(BBD-1)</sup>1 Samuel 9:2”).

**Ver. 24.** *And Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen*, etc.] For the choice being made by lot, the disposal of which is of the Lord, it is properly attributed to him, and the people could not object to it, but must allow it was the Lord’s doing. Eupolemus<sup>f206</sup>, an Heathen writer, says, that Saul was made king by Samuel by the counsel or will of God; and Samuel appeals to their eyes for the goodness of the choice, a better could not have been made:

*that there is none like him among the people?* so graceful, so stately, so prince like and majestic; they wanted to have a king like such the nations had; and Saul was such an one, had all the outward appearance of grandeur that could be wished for, and which in other nations recommended persons to the imperial dignity:

*and all the people shouted*; made a general ado:

*and said, God save the king*; or “let the king live”<sup>f207</sup>; they owned and saluted him as their king, and prayed he might live long to reign over them; the Targum is, “let the king prosper”; let his reign be prosperous and glorious, and let him enjoy all health and happiness, peace and prosperity.

**Ver. 25.** *Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, &c.*] According to Ben Gersom, he laid before them the power a king had over his people, and the punishment he might inflict upon them, if they rebelled against him; and some think this is the same he delivered in (<sup>(BBD-1)</sup>1 Samuel 8:10-17) concerning the arbitrary power of their kings, and how they would be used by them; and which he here repeated, and then wrote it, that it might be a testimony against them hereafter; with which what Josephus<sup>f208</sup> says pretty much agrees, that in the hearing of the king he foretold what would befall them, and then wrote it, and laid it up, that it might be a witness of his predictions; but that in <sup>(BBD-1)</sup>1 Samuel 8:10-17. Samuel said, was the manner of their king, or how he would use them, but this the manner of the kingdom, and how the government of it was to be managed and submitted to, what was the office of a king, and what the duties of the subject; and yet was different from, at least not the same with that in (<sup>(BBD-1)</sup>Deuteronomy 17:15-17), for that had been written and laid up already:

*and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord*; in the ark of the Lord; as Kimchi; or rather by the ark of the Lord, on one side of it, as Ben

Gersom; or best of all, as Josephus<sup>f209</sup>, in the tabernacle of the Lord, where recourse might be had to it, at any time, at least by a priest, and where it would be safe, and be preserved to future times:

*and Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house*; for though Saul was chosen king, he did not take upon him the exercise of government directly, but left it to Samuel to dismiss the people, who had been for many years their chief magistrate.

**Ver. 26.** *And Saul also went home to Gibeah*, etc.] His native place, where was his father's house, to which he retired; where were no royal palace, or princely court, nor any of the ensigns of kingly majesty; and whither it does not appear that he was followed by the nobility or princes of the tribes, only accompanied by a few men, as next observed:

*and there went with him a band of men*; an army, or part of one they seem to be military men, at least men of strength, valour, and courage; gallant men, who, in honour to their king elect, freely offered themselves to be his body guard, however, until he was come to his house at Gibeah; the Targum is only, "some of the people"

*whose heart God had touched*; and inclined to show honour and respect to their king; the Targum describes them,

"men that feared to sin, and in whose hearts the fear of God was put."

**Ver. 27.** *But the children of Belial said*, etc.] Wicked, dissolute, lawless persons; men without a yoke, as the word signifies, who did not care to be under the yoke of government, at least not under the yoke of Saul; and these might be men of wealth, and of larger tribes, and better families than Saul was of, and therefore envied him, and thought themselves better for government than he was; and in a jeering scornful manner said,

*how shall this man save us?* whose family is so mean, and whose tribe is so small, that they can give but little assistance to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, the Philistines and Ammonites; intimating, that a king ought to have been of a rich family, and a large tribe, and a prince in it, whose interest and influence were great, not only in his own tribe, but in others, which would enable him to engage in war with an enemy, and protect the people; but what, as if they should say, can be expected from "this man?", this mean contemptible man, of no birth nor fortune, brought

up in an obscure manner, and altogether inexpert in things civil and military?

*and they despised him*; on account of the above things, not only in their hearts, but spared not to speak out, and use opprobrious language, and with which their actions and conduct agreed:

*and brought him no presents*; as others did, and as it was usual when a king came to the throne; nor were any visits made unto him, in token of their subjection to him, and complacency in him, and by way of congratulation of him, (see <sup><102></sup>1 Kings 4:21 <sup><475></sup>2 Chronicles 17:5) the Targum is, they did not salute him, or ask of his welfare:

*but he held his peace*, or “was as one that is deaf and dumb”<sup>f210</sup>; took no notice of what they said, as if he was deaf and heard it not, and was as silent as if he had been a dumb man, which showed his wisdom and prudence; for had he taken notice of them, he must have punished them, and he judged it more advisable to use lenity and mildness, and not begin his reign with contention and bloodshed.