

The Jewish Kingdom - Lesson 9

Saul and Samuel

With the demand by Israel for a king made and then allowed by God, the first king of Israel enters the scene.

23. The Entrance of Saul - I Samuel 9:1-27

- vs. 1 - very little is known about Saul's lineage. It is given in greater detail in I Chronicles 8:29-33 and 9:35-39. His father Kish (means "ensnared") is noted here for being a man of great physical strength.
- vs. 2 - Our first introduction to Saul is a physical description. He was handsome, strong, and tall. His name means "asked for, or prayed for"
- Donkeys, or asses, were a very common mode of transportation in the Old Testament era. They are often associated with peace, and horses were usually reserved for warfare. They also could be seen as a status symbol (I Samuel 8:16, Judges 10:4 and 12:14). Christ Himself would of course ride on one during the Triumphal Entry shortly before His crucifixion (John 12:12-15)
- vs. 4 - Essentially they searched the small region belonging to Benjamin, just north of Judah.
- Zuph - the area around Ramothaimzophim, Samuel's home.
- vs. 6 - I think it is indicative of Saul's character that he attempts his search in his own strength while only reluctantly turning to God in the end.
- vs. 8 - fourth part of a shekel of silver - this would not have been a coin (those wouldn't be invented for about another 400 years), but would have been a small piece of silver of about 3 grams weight. In today market that's about \$1.75 worth of silver but in that ancient economy held much greater value.
- vs. 12-13 - Whatever the sacrifice or feast was that was being celebrated we do not know. Note the use of a "high place" because the Tabernacle is not at this location. Usually this term is used for sites of idol worship, but at this time the worship of God is decentralized after the destruction of Shiloh.
- vs. 15-16 - Even in the mundane tasks of everyday life God has divine appointments for each of us if we listen for His leading!
- vs. 16 - It is worth mentioning that many historians believe one of the major motivations for Israel seeking out a king was that an invasion of the Philistines was imminent.
- vs. 18 - Wait a minute! Samuel is such an important figure and so close to Saul's home but Saul has no clue who he is!
- vs. 20-21 - Samuel hints pretty clearly that Saul would be the desired king, yet Saul is reluctant to believe it.
- vs. 22-24 - Samuel gives Saul the place of highest honor at this feast. He has even conspired with he cook to give Saul the best portion.
- vs. 25 - the roofs of houses in ancient Israel where usually flat. It was very common to have something like a gazebo built atop.