

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

What Did You Find, Saul?

I Samuel 9:1-10:16

Intro: In **ch8**, the elders of Israel came 2 Samuel & demanded that he appoint them a king “**like all the nations**.” The request in itself wasn’t wrong – **YHWH** had always intended on Israel having a king eventually but he would be a specific kind of king, a king of **YHWH**’s choosing, a king that would be submissive 2 **YHWH**’s word & will. But that’s not the kind of king Israel was demanding. The king that Israel wanted appointed was not 1 who would be a **model** of **YHWH**’s rule over Israel but 1 who would be a **substitute** 4 it! Let’s look & see how **YHWH** answers their request.

1-14- Saul- the man of the hour, these 1st 2 verses inform us that Saul was actually quite a notable fellow in his day. **1)** He was notable b/c he came from a **prestigious family**. His father, Kish, was a wealthy & influential man in Israel w/ a solid Benjamite pedigree. **2)** Saul was also notable 4 his appearance: he had good looks & great stature. People Magazine would’ve voted him Sexiest Man Alive & if Gibeah H.S. had a basketball team, he’d been their star center. Point is: Saul **looked** like a king. If being king over Israel was all about image & appearance, Saul’s the man!

Israel’s rejection of **YHWH** as king over them proved that what they really wanted was just the image of a king b/c **YHWH** gave them the substance of a king better than any man ever could. Saul was exactly the type of king the people wanted. He was the king from central casting. God’s giving Israel the kind of leader they wanted & deserved!

Now, what’s not mentioned in these 1st 2 verses is **YHWH**. Saul came from a wealthy, influential family & was tall & good looking but nothing is said about his relationship w/ the Lord here apparently b/c there was nothing 2 say! So, Saul didn’t just fit the physical part of the king but he also reflected the spiritual state of the whole nation of Israel. There may’ve been some spiritual **image** present but the **heart** of the nation was **far** from where God desired it 2/b!

donkeys- ever had a day like this? Saul’s eating his Wheaties, trying 2 get fortified 4 the day when Dad pops in & says, “**The donkeys got loose & ran off! Want 2 take a man & go find them 4 me?**” Aarrhggg! Then there’s all this tramping around the countryside 2 no avail, when they get 2 Zuph, Saul decides the donkeys can fend 4 themselves, “We’re out of food. Let’s go home.” But, his servant has heard that a man of God is in the city & suggests they go inquire of him concerning the donkeys. He just so happens 2 find some coin in his pocket & off they go. It all seems like just a list of random events but its not. We’re not simply dealing with what **appears** but w/ what is **ordained**!

This is nothing more than **providence**: **YHWH**’s way of providing 4 the needs of His people. That wonderful, strange, mysterious, unfathomable way God has of ruling His world & sustaining His people. More often than not, He’s doing it over, under, around, thru & even in spite of the most common stuff of our lives. This is as common & everyday as anything that happens 2 us. This is simply the thread of **YHWH**’s providence & it’s an interesting process 2 follow. I mean, just look at all God’s timing: they run out of food right next 2 the town where Samuel is. They ask the locals 4 directions & get an earful of information then, as they enter into the city, they literally almost trip over Samuel.

YHWH’s about 2 open 1 of the most important chapters in Israel’s history & it all starts w/ donkeys wandering off! Israel’s 1st king w/b called 2 the throne while searching 4 some lost donkeys! Just goes 2 show that we have no idea how God will use the seemingly **normal** (& **annoying**) circumstances of our lives 2 accomplish His will. There are 2 common mistakes people make regarding God’s guidance thru circumstances. **1)** 2 think that **every** event in life is heavy w/ meaning from God. False, b/c tho nothing happens by accident, not everything happens 4 a great purpose. **2)** To completely **ignore** the moving of God in our live thru circumstances. **YHWH** wanted 2 use **this** particular situation 2 guide Saul toward the throne & God will often use circumstance in our lives the same way. We just need 2 trust in God’s goodness & in His divine ability 2 make “**all things work together for good**” (Rom 8:28)

It’s funny, Saul couldn’t find those donkeys 2 save his life but he’s about 2 find something he wasn’t even looking 4: **a kingdom**! Saul had no idea that he was being guided by **YHWH**, but he was. Now, how do we **know** that losing the donkeys & finding a kingdom was all **YHWH**’s doing? We’re about 2/b let in on the big secret!

15-17- told- Now we hear the secret of what **YHWH** is doing, “**I will send you a man...**” What appeared 2/b run-of-the-mill ranch life is very much under **YHWH**’s direction. This is not another episode of Gibeon “Bonanza” everything that befalls Saul is designed by God. Sometimes it helps 2/b in on the secret. But remember, just like Saul, God might not let you in on the secret. You may see traces of what He was doing when you look back on it much later but as you are going thru it – you may be just as much in the dark as Saul was. If that’s the case, you just have 2 keep looking 4 those donkeys or whatever particular task God’s given you 2 do. Keep on trusting & being faithful 2 His calling.

save- this alerts us 2 the fact that **YHWH**’s providence was at work on behalf of His pity 4 Israel. **YHWH**’s sending Saul 2 Samuel b/c he’s the 1 who will save Israel from the Philistines. They were still crying out 2 God 4 deliverance! Even tho Israel had rejected the Lord as their king, He was still in control. He didn’t step off His throne just b/c Israel asked Him 2. He will give them a king but He’s sending a flawed king 2 a flawed Israel. But even tho there are many problems w/ Saul’s reign we must not think it was a total disaster. Saul will lead Israel 2 many military victories & greater independence from the Philistines. Like flawed Samson, God will use Saul 2 weaken the Philistines & prepare them 4 David’s eventual final conquest of this formidable enemy of the Jews. **A providence moved by pity**

1 last thing: Saul has no relationship w/ **YHWH** so all He can do is speak 2 Saul thru lost donkeys. But Samuel knows & loves the Lord so the Lord can speak 2 Samuel "*in his ear*." Do we limit God's communication w/ us?

18-10:1- I am the Seer! He's talking 2 the exact guy he needed 2 find & boy, did he have quite a story 2 tell Saul! Samuel 1st invited Saul 2 supper, assured him the donkeys had been found & dropped a big hint as 2 what's 2 come.

The **desire** of all Israel was fixed on Saul b/c all of Israel wanted a king & Saul would be the answer 2 that desire. Saul understood Samuel's cryptic statement as implying that he was chosen 2/b king. We know this by Saul's reply:

smallest...least- Saul protests that he's a nobody that belongs 2 an insignificant tribe but Samuel ignores his retort. In the beginning, Saul was a humble man w/ a great attitude. His humility was 1 reason why **YHWH** chose him 2/b king. But it wouldn't last very long. Eventually, stubborn pride would be Saul's downfall. Samuel will even reprimand him in **15:17** – his humility had made him usable but his stubborn pride will disqualify him from his service 2 **YHWH**.

Samuel honors Saul at the supper – he gives him an honorable position at the table & an honorable portion of meat. Perhaps he was trying 2 see how Saul would react 2 being honored – w/ humility or w/ pride, or worse: false humility! Afterwards, Samuel spoke w/ Saul. What did they discuss? Job qualifications? "**Saul, you've got a lot going 4 you. You have the looks, the humility & the support o the people. But if you fail 2 give your heart 2 serving YHWH & submit 2 Him as your king, you'll never be a fit king 4 Israel.**" In the end, Samuel anoints Saul as king over Israel!

2-8- signs- Samuel does the pouring but how is Saul supposed 2 know that this is really **YHWH's** doing? Samuel gives him the assurance of **YHWH's** working by telling him exactly what's going 2 happen 2 him that very day. These aren't vague generalizations (fortune cookie) they're extremely detailed. That's the precision of God's prophecy. If there had only been 1 man 2 meet them or if they had met them someplace else= not of God, anointing is in doubt!

These signs not only served 2 assure Saul of his anointing, they also served 2 encourage him in **YHWH's** service. 1st God could **solve his problems** (He's a control freak). 2nd God could **supply his needs** (depend on Him as king). 3rd God could **empower** him 4 service. This sign's **significant**. B/4 this, Saul never seems 2've been a particularly spiritual man. But, even tho **YHWH** picked Saul **just as he was**, He didn't want 2 **leave** Saul **just as he was**. 4 **YHWH** 2 use Saul 2 the fullest, he had 2/b **turned into another man** thru the work of **the Spirit of the Lord** in his life.

wait- significant! By the nature of their office, kings don't wait 4 people, people wait 4 them. Samuel's command 4 Saul 2 wait 4 him= the prophet of God had more real authority over Israel than this king! Saul still had 2 show that, even tho he was a king, he was still submitted 2 the Lord & the Lord's prophet. Failing 2 wait = troubles 4 Saul later.

9-16- another heart- this isn't NT regeneration, this is a different attitude & outlook. This young farmer would now think & act like a leader, the king of the nation; a warrior-statesman responsible 4 listening 2 God & obeying Him. The Spirit of the Lord would enable Saul 2 serve **YHWH** properly as long as he walked in obedience 2 His will.

Samuel couldn't give Saul this new heart, only the Spirit of the Lord could do that. As proof, God didn't change Saul's heart until he left Samuel's presence. Saul needed 2 honor & respect Samuel but not look 2 him in place of **YHWH**.

Is Saul among the prophets? The people reacted in astonishment 2 Saul's prophesying, so much so that they coined a new proverb: "**Wonders never cease!**" Saul's behavior here was so out of character 2 his normal lifestyle. It was a marvel that seemed beyond explanation. "**But who is their father?**" or "**Consider the source!**" If **YHWH** inspires the prophets in their praises, surely He's able 2 cause Saul 2 do the same? Point is: God frequently defies our expectations & gives the most unlikely people all they need 2 serve Him effectively. Thus, He empowers Saul. No matter how incapable a person may seem, God is able 2 make them more than capable. That's the way He works. He may not choose the most natural, instead He may choose the most unlikely & equip them 2 do what He wills!

If Saul had continued 2 pursue this walk w/ the Lord, his life would have turned out much different than it did.

What...- the story ends w/ a secret. Saul's uncle is in the dark & so is everyone else – except Samuel & Saul.

App: don't complain about your lost donkeys – pray about them! Believe in God's providence over your life & His presence in it. He's working in each of our lives, perhaps even in the most mundane or annoying circumstances.

"**But wait, if Saul's going 2 fail, if his reign will end in disappointment & disaster, why does YHWH choose him 2/b the 1st king of Israel?**" God desired 2 give Israel a king "**after His own heart**" 1 who would pursue God all of his life. That's the kind of king Israel really needed 2 lead them – not just 2 victory over their enemies but in glorious obedience 2 God that testified 2 all the surrounding nations. But, Israel didn't want that kind of king, they'd rather someone who looked the part, had a kingly image, who carried himself well. All they cared about was the appearance of majestic royalty. Since this was the kind of king the wanted (deserved), this was the kind of king they got! God picked Saul!

In the same way, God has picked each of us. Despite the wretched state we were in when God accepted us in Christ, be sure that, just like Saul, God doesn't want 2 **leave** any of us **like we are**. No, He desires 2 make us new, 2 transform us thru the work of the Word in our hearts & His Spirit in our lives. Are we going 2 settle 4 who we are or are we going 2 allow God 2 do His work? God wanted a king after His own heart 2 guide His people & today, He wants husbands /fathers **after His own heart** 2 love our wives & lead our families in following Him; He wants wives /mothers...2 respect husbands & care 4 families; children...2 obey parents & prepare 2 serve Him; employees...;

neighbors... God's still looking 4 a people *after His own heart* 2/b an example 2 the world around us; 2 declare His glory, grace & goodness 2 a lost & dying world! Are we pursuing Him as we should? 😊