**Saul meets the prophet Samuel**

**I Samuel 9:3-6, 10, 18-20**

3 And the asses of Kish Saul’s father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

**KISH** (Heb. *qîš*)

A Benjaminite from Gibeah, the son of Abiel and father of Saul (1 Sam. 9:1). A wealthy man (cf. 1 Sam. 9:3), Kish is described as a *gibbôr ḥayîl,* a “man of standing” (NJPSV) or “substance” (NIV), apparently, a person of privileged military or material status” (Erdman’s Bible Dictionary).

**SAUL** (Heb. *šāʾûl*)

A Benjaminite, the son of Kish from the town of Gibeah, who became the first king of Israel. His story begins with his anointing by the prophet Samuel in 1 Sam. 9 and ends with his death by his own hand in 2 Sam. 1. (Erdman’s Bible Dictionary).

**SAMUEL** (Heb. *šĕmûʾēl*)

Samuel gave leadership to Israel in the critical period of transition from tribal existence under the judges to the establishment of monarchy. He is the central character of the first half of 1 Samuel, which bears his name. In these stories, he appears in multiple roles of authority: priest, prophet, judge, military leader. Samuel occupies a unique role in Israel’s story. He is the representative and defender of an older tribal covenant order in Israel, yet he is God’s prophetic agent for ushering in the new day of kingship” (Erdman’s Bible Dictionary).

“*The asses of Kish were lost —*Asses were there of great price, because of the scarcity of horses, and therefore were not thought unworthy to be sought by Saul, especially in these ancient times, when simplicity, humility, and industry were in fashion among persons of quality” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).

“*the asses*] In the East asses are valuable property, indispensable for farm-work and travelling. The possession of a drove of asses, and several servants, indicates that Kish was a man of some substance” (Cambridge Bible Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

“Saul’s route cannot be traced with any certainty. He started from his home at Gibeah apparently in a N.W. direction (1) through “Mount Ephraim” (2) through “the land of Shalisha,” perhaps the district round Baal-shalisha, which lay about 12 miles N. of Lydda (3) then turning S. he traversed “the land of Shalim” perhaps in the neighbourhood of Shaalabbin in Dan; (4) then striking E. he searched the western part of the “land of Benjamin,” till he reached (5) “the land of Zuph,” in which lay Samuel’s city Ramah. The search occupied parts of three days” (Cambridge Bible Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

5 *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us.

“**The land of Zuph.**—This was believed to be in the south-west of Benjamin.

**“Lest my father . . . take thought for us.**—“Saul’s tender regard for his father’s feelings here is a favourable indication of character.” (Ellicott’s commentary, www.biblehub.com).

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

“Saul readily went to seek his father’s asses. His obedience to his father was praise-worthy. His servant proposed, that since they were now at Ramah, they should call on Samuel, and take his advice. Wherever we are, we should use our opportunities of acquainting ourselves with those who are wise and good. Many will consult a man of God, if he comes in their way, that would not go a step out of their way to get wisdom” (Expositor’s Bible, www.accordance).

“**A man of God.**—When Saul determined to give up the search for his father’s asses, he was in the neighborhood of the city of Samuel the seer—“Raman of the Watchers.” The servant points out to him the tower of the then famous residence of the seer and judge, Samuel. “Will you not ask him,” suggests the servant, “about the missing beasts?”—the young countryman, in the simplicity of his heart, thinking the occasion of the loss of his master’s asses a sufficient one to warrant an intrusion upon the prophet-judge of Israel” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Ellicott’s Commentary).

“**A man of God;**a prophet, as that phrase is used, [1 Samuel 2:27](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/2-27.htm) [Joshua 14:6](http://biblehub.com/joshua/14-6.htm) [Judges 13:6](http://biblehub.com/judges/13-6.htm).   
  
**An honourable man;**one of great reputation for his skill and faithfulness.   
  
**All that he saith cometh surely to pass;**his declaration of things secret or future are always certain, and confirmed by the event.   
  
**Our way that we should go;**the course we should take to find the asses. He saith   
  
**peradventure,**because be doubted whether so great a prophet, would seek, or God would grant him, a revelation concerning such mean matters; although sometimes God was pleased herein to condescend to his people, to cut off all pretense or occasion of seeking to witches or heathenish divination. See [1 Kings 14:2](http://biblehub.com/1_kings/14-2.htm) [2 Kings 1:3](http://biblehub.com/2_kings/1-3.htm)” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*.

“come, let us go: to the city, and to the man of God there, and hear what he will say to us, and what information he will give us:

“so they went unto the city where the man of God was; to Ramah, where Samuel dwelt” (Gill’s Exposition, www.biblehub.com).

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer’s house *is*.

“Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is—Satisfying the stranger's inquiry, Samuel invited him to the feast, as well as to sojourn till the morrow; and, in order to reconcile him to the delay, he assured him that the strayed asses had been recovered” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to-day, and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

“Samuel, that good prophet, was so far from envying Saul, or bearing him any ill-will, that he was the first and most forward to do him honor. Both that evening and early the next morning, Samuel communed with Saul upon the flat roof of the house. We may suppose Samuel now convinced Saul that he was the person God had fixed upon for the government, and of his own willingness to resign” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Matthew Henry’s Commentary).

“Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is—Satisfying the stranger's inquiry, Samuel invited him to the feast, as well as to sojourn till the morrow; and, in order to reconcile him to the delay, he assured him that the strayed asses had been recovered” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

“and tomorrow I will let thee go; for it being in the evening when this feast was, he could not depart that night, but must stay till morning, and then he promised to dismiss him:

“and will tell thee all that is in thine heart; answer all questions he had in his mind to ask him, for which he came into the city, and inquired for his house. The Jews (l) have a tradition that it was in the heart of Saul that he should be a king, having in a vision seen himself placed on the top of a palm tree, which was a sign of royalty, and this Samuel told him” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Gill’s Exposition of Bible).

20And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father’s house?

“*As for thine asses that were lost* — This must have satisfied Saul that he was a prophet, as he hereby showed that he knew for what Saul came to him, though he had not told him. *And on whom is all the desire of Israel? —*That is, all Israel desire a king, and there is no one more fit for such an office than thyself. *On all thy father’s house —*That honor is designed for thee, and after thy death for thy family and posterity, if by thy sin thou dost not cut off the entail” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).

“When they went into the town, Samuel met them on his way out to go to the high place of sacrifice. Before the meeting itself is described, the statement is introduced in [1 Samuel 9:15-17](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/9-15.htm), that the day before Jehovah had foretold to Samuel that the man was coming to him whom he was to anoint as captain over his people) [www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary).

“and on whom is all the desire of Israel? which was to have a king; in this they were unanimous, and who so fit and proper as Saul, it is intimated, whom Samuel knew God had chosen and appointed to be king over them?

“is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? not that the Israelites had their eye on Saul, and their desire after him to be their king, though he was such an one as they wished for; but that as this desire of theirs was granted, it would issue and terminate in him and his family; he should be advanced to the throne, which would be attended with the promotion of his father's house, as Abner particularly, who was his uncle's son, and was made the general of the army (Gill’s Exposition of the Bible), [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).