

Message #22**I Samuel 9:15-24**

When it came time for God to send out the Apostle Paul and Barnabas for ministry, we learn in Acts 13:1-3 that it was first revealed to the prophets and teachers who were the leaders in the church of Antioch. Many people were in that church, but it was the key leaders who were informed by God that this was His choice.

There is no question that when God has His hand on someone, certain key leaders will realize it and know it. If ever you want to see an illustration of this, it is this passage in I Samuel. **Saul was about to become the first King of Israel and before Saul ever knew anything about it, God revealed the whole matter to Samuel.**

WHEN GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY WORKING IN THE LIFE OF AN INDIVIDUAL, THE KEY LEADERSHIP OF GOD WILL SEE IT, SENSE IT AND KNOW IT.

God always works within the leadership framework that He has established. If the appointed leaders become corrupt, He can and He will remove them. God will certainly permit someone who has served Him for years to understand His word and will. One commentator said those who live in closest fellowship with God always know God's revelation.

By this point in time, Samuel had walked with God for many years. He had been a very faithful leader of God. He was a man of the word and he was a man of prayer. He had been God's choice to replace Eli. Now it certainly stands to reason that if God was going to do something special, such as appoint a king for Israel, He would reveal it to Samuel. This is precisely what God does.

There are four action parts to this interesting narrative:

NARRATIVE ACTION PART #1 – God talks with Samuel. 9:15-17

From Saul's perspective, all he thinks he is doing is going to a city to find Samuel so he can ask him about lost donkeys. However, Samuel had a completely different perspective about it. God "revealed" His whole plan to Samuel concerning Saul. That word "reveal" means that God took the cover off this whole episode so Samuel could see it. He did this in verbal form. He actually did it by saying and speaking to Samuel.

At this point, Samuel did not know Saul. There are three facts about God's revelation to Samuel:

Fact #1 - God revealed this to Samuel at a specific time. 9:15

God revealed this to Samuel "a day before" any of it happened. God knew when Samuel needed to know His plan and He revealed it to him at just the right moment.

God knows when we need to know something and He will let us know when we need to know. God's timing is always right timing. When God wants us to know something, He will surface it.

I know a minister who caught two different men from his church in immoral things by the timing of God. One time he was driving to visit someone in jail and the other time he was driving to a hospital. God let him spot them and catch two different men who were involved in sinful evil. Now how did that minister happen to go to those places at just that time? God.

Years ago, in the Pocatello ministry, a group of disgruntled parishioners decided to create a secret petition to remove us. God let us learn about it so we decided to call a congregational meeting to address it even before the secret group knew we knew. We always believed that was the sovereign hand and timing of God, which became an important part of the survival of the ministry at that time.

God has His ways of revealing things to His people at just the right time. God revealed it to Samuel at just the right time.

Fact #2 - God revealed the specific details to Samuel. **9:16-17**

There are three specific details that God revealed to Samuel:

(Detail #1) - God revealed when this would happen. **9:16a**

God told Samuel that things would happen about the same time the next day. We may remember that Saul was looking for Samuel to find lost donkeys, but we read in **verse 14** that "Samuel was coming out toward them." Samuel was looking for them because God had revealed it to him.

(Detail #2) - God revealed what would happen. **9:16b**

God told Samuel He was going to send him a man from the tribe of Benjamin that he was to anoint as a "prince." I want you to notice the word "prince" because it is not the Hebrew word "king."

This particular word is one that means that He was sending Samuel a man he was to anoint as a ruler and leader for Israel. **God's king would come from the line of Judah, not Benjamin. In God's mind, Saul was a political ruler and leader; he was not the king.**

This is amazing sovereignty. God is using lost donkeys to bring Saul to Samuel. God is the One directing Saul to Samuel and Saul knows nothing about any of this. By the way, Samuel is not traveling here to find Saul; Saul is traveling to find Samuel.

It is important that we faithfully follow through on commitments and responsibilities because no matter how mundane, we never know what God is doing with us and where He is leading us.

(Detail #3) - God revealed why it would happen. **9:16c-17**

God revealed to Samuel why He was bringing Saul to him. He specifically gives him two reasons why He wanted him anointed as a prince:

Reason #1 - To deliver Israel from the Philistines. **9:16c**

Reason #2 - To answer the request of the people. **9:17**

We may recall that the people wanted a king (I Sam. 8:5). Well, God said this is the ruler I am sending them.

The Hebrew verb “rule” (atsar) is intriguing. **It is a word that can mean to govern or rule; however, the majority of uses of the word are negative.** The word has to do with restraining and hindering (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 648). This word is one that does not refer to setting people free, but restraining and retaining (Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 83).

What we may conclude from this is that this will not be a great positive experience. God will use Saul to actually punish His nation for wanting something contrary to His will.

The sovereignty of God is amazing. God’s people want a king which was not the will of God, and God will sovereignly let them have their way and then will use the leader to accomplish His will. Notice God still says that Israel is “My people.” Even when God permits negative things to hit His people, they are still His people.

There is a silent, secret sovereignty of God that is at work in everything at all times, including the political world. God is sovereignly at work in things we see and know and in things we don’t see and don’t know.

Fact #3 - God revealed Saul to Samuel. **9:17**

When Samuel saw Saul, God said this is the man who shall rule over My people. At just the right moment, God brought them Saul.

The Hebrew words indicate that when Samuel actually saw Saul, he was wondering whether or not this was the man. Saul was the most handsome man in Israel and he was the tallest man in Israel and God confirmed this was the man.

Every detail and every action of both the donkeys and the people were sovereignly directed and controlled by God.

Every day we may go forward realizing God is always doing what is sovereignly right. If God’s sovereignty covers a falling sparrow, you may be certain He covers you.

NARRATIVE ACTION PART #2 – Saul meets with Samuel. 9:18-20

This is the first meeting between Saul and Samuel and there are two actions that occur:

Action #1 - Saul approaches Samuel. 9:18

As Saul approached the city, Samuel was in the “gate.” Now this gate was a place where one could find out information. It was not only an entrance area into a city, but it also was a key place connected to worship. This was a logical place to inquire about Samuel.

When you travel and cross into another state, usually there is a welcome center and rest area. You can stop there and talk to people who can give you information and directions. That was what the gate was like. You could stop there and get information and directions.

Saul had no idea who Samuel was or what he looks like. On the other hand, Samuel not only knows who Saul is, but he also knows he is going to be prince of Israel.

Now Saul simply wanted to know where the “seer” lived. Little did he realize that this “seer” saw more than just his lost donkeys.

Action #2 - Samuel answers Saul. 9:19-20

The question that Saul asked was where is the “seer’s” house? Samuel’s answer must have shocked him. He gave him five messages:

Message #1 - Samuel identifies himself as the seer. 9:19a

Samuel says I am the man who sees things from God. Robert Bergen said, “Instead of being given directions to the seer’s house, Saul was given the seer himself” (*I Samuel*, p. 124).

Message #2 - Samuel invites Saul to go to the high place to eat with him. 9:19b

The “high place” was an elevated place of worship and sacrifice that was located on a hill or raised platform. Eating here certainly had worship overtones.

Keep in mind that Samuel knows this whole thing is wrong (I Sam. 8:6-7), but once he knew God was in it, he had a very positive attitude for Saul.

Message #3 - Samuel informs Saul he will tell him everything in the morning. 9:19c

Typically you do not get answers from God this quickly; but this was one time when he would get many answers the next morning.

Message #4 - Samuel informs Saul his donkeys have been found. **9:20a**

This is amazing because at this point, Saul had not even mentioned the donkeys to Samuel. Samuel not only reveals that the donkeys have been missing for three days, but they had been found.

This is interesting because there is a national program for Israel on the line here and yet God still cared about the donkeys and the need for Saul to find them. God's program is worldwide and it is big. But He is still interested in us personally.

Message #5 - Samuel informs Saul he has been selected to be the leader of Israel. **9:20b**

Now Saul was out looking for donkeys and Samuel has just revolutionized his entire life. When God moves, you may end up doing something you never dreamed.

God's will is revealed to his people in steps, not all at once. God reveals things gradually. He reveals things to some at a younger age and some at an older age.

NARRATIVE ACTION PART #3 – Saul responds to Samuel. **9:21**

Saul could not believe it. He could not believe what he was hearing. In fact, he started downplaying the idea to Samuel. He said, "Look, I am a Benjamite from the smallest tribe of Israel." Saul said I am a nobody from a nobody family, so he asked Samuel why he was saying this stuff to him.

Saul was not looking for this job. He was not campaigning or applying for this job. He was not sending resumes. This was all of the sovereignty of God. He could not figure out why Samuel was talking about this.

There is a real honesty and humility that you do see here in Saul.

If God puts you in some leadership position, your job is to stay faithful to God. You may not think you deserve the promotion or the position. Well, your job, if you get the position or promotion, is to stay faithful to God. This, frankly, is where Saul makes a big mistake.

NARRATIVE ACTION PART #4 – Saul is invited to eat with Samuel. **9:22-24**

Saul had asked Samuel "Why" he was selected and Samuel doesn't even answer the question. Truthfully it would have been complicated. He would have to say, well you aren't really the will of God, but you are being chosen as a form of negative chastisement.

Samuel did not do that, he didn't respond and brought Saul to a worship center to have dinner along with 30 other men. These 30 would have been men that Samuel deemed as worthy men.

By virtue of the fact they had been invited seems to indicate that Samuel had begun preparing this when God revealed it the day before **(9:16)**.

The word “hall” **(v. 22)** indicates this was a rectangular room. We may assume that since Samuel specifically sat Saul at the head.

Samuel asked the cook to bring the honorable portion of the cooked meal and bring it to Saul. So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

Samuel knows this whole thing has been a rejection of him and of God and yet he knows this is all God’s will at the present time so he fully supports it. He makes things nice for Saul.

Not only did Samuel give Saul the honorable meal, but he gave him a place to sleep.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1) God is sovereign over every event of our life, and faithfulness or faithlessness is displayed in the events of life.**
- 2) Faithful leaders of God are in a position to sense God’s will.**
- 3) God’s ultimate will for our life may not have even yet been revealed to us.**
- 4) Our responsibility is to faithfully carry out assignments God gives us.**
- 5) God’s ways are not our ways.**