



1 Samuel 9-11

Tape #7082
By Chuck Smith

1 Samuel **CHAPTER 9**

Shall we turn in our Bibles to the ninth chapter of I Samuel? Samuel was a judge in Israel. As he was getting up in years, his sons had been judging in the area of Beersheba. They were taking bribes, not being true to their office. The people were fearful that when Samuel died, his sons might take over. So they came to Samuel and demanded that Samuel might anoint them a king over them so that they might be like the other nations.

This desire of the people was heart breaking to Samuel. For he took it as a personal affront against his ministry to them. And he seemed to take it very deeply and personally. At the end of his career, he called the people together and said, *“Now I want you to witness against me. Who have I defrauded? Who have I taken a bribe from?”* He was sensitive in this issue: feeling that the people had rejected his ministry to them. He went to the LORD about it. The LORD said, *“Samuel, they haven’t really rejected you, they have rejected me from being King over them. Appoint them this king that they desire.”*

So, in chapter 9, we begin to get a profile of a man who was appointed to be the first king over Israel.

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. [Or of substance, or wealth]

So Kish of the tribe of Benjamin was a wealthy man. Now if you’ll remember, it wasn’t too long ago that the tribe of Benjamin was almost wiped out during the period of civil, internal strife. When they had wiped out all of men of Benjamin with the exception of 600 who had gone down to the rock of Rimmon, and hid down there. So the tribe of Benjamin was just about destroyed, so it was still rather small at this point. Kish was from this small tribe of Benjamin and was a wealthy man, a man of sustenance.

He had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and goodly: [The word “choice” refers to his size, he was good sized. The word “goodly” is the word for handsome. So he was a big, handsome guy] there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier [or a more handsome] person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was taller than any of the people.

He was quite tall. When he would stand in a crowd, the rest of the people’s heads would be at the shoulder height. From the shoulder upward, he was taller than any of them. Besides that, he was good looking. So he had these marvelous, natural advantages.

Now it is true that size and looks aren’t everything. Isaac Watts was a genius of a man who wrote some of the hymns that we sing. In fact, Isaac Watts rewrote most of the songs in English rhyme, which was no little task. He was a brilliant man, a genius. He was only about 4’10” tall. He was a little sensitive about being a little short. And he wrote one day, “Were I so tall to reach the poles, or span the oceans with my hand; I must be measured by my soul: for the mind is the standard of man.” In other words, you can be a big, strong, good looking - idiot. And your strength and looks wouldn’t be much. You would just go around saying, “duh..-” The mind is the standard of a man. I must be measured by my soul. The mind is the standard of a man. And yet, if you are playing sports, never underestimate the advantage of size. There are natural advantages.

Now the donkeys of Kish Saul's father were lost. Kish said to his son Saul, take now one of your servants with you, and arise, go see if you can find the donkeys. So 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 they were not there: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them. But when they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, Come, let us return; lest my father leave caring about the donkeys, and starts worrying about us.

Now it gives, secondly, an insight into the family. Saul came from a good home where he knew that a prolonged absence would cause his father to begin to worry about him. It shows that there was some kind of loving atmosphere and relationship within the home. If you have come from a good home, loving parents, a home of a lot of security, and love; in your list of blessings, put that at the top. It is a tremendous blessing to come from a good home with a loving environment. Saul had that advantage, a good home life.

Now, before we start in our minds to get a little bit of a misconception, we must remember that we are dealing with a patriarch type of society. Though Saul is still under his father, a wealthy man, and he is out on a mission, he probably was close to thirty seven years old. As soon as he was anointed king, he conscripts an army. He takes 2000 men under his leadership, and to his son Jonathan, 1000 men under his leadership. So just shortly after his becoming king, his son Jonathan was old enough to take leadership of a 1000 men army. So Jonathan would have to be at least 20 years old, making Saul around thirty seven years old.

I sort of like that kind of society and culture where you have the extended family. I wish that we had it here. I like the idea where if a son gets married, you just add an apartment onto the house. To me, the ideal for my family would be to have about an acre or two of ground with each of the kids owning their own house, sharing the backyard. When the grandkids go in the house, and mom is cooking broccoli, they can come over to grandpa's place and eat candy! To me, that would be rather ideal. They can just sort of shop around and find out where they want to eat tonight, according to what's being served. That, to me, would be great.

This is sort of the kind of family tie that they had. Even though he was thirty seven years old, there was still a strong family tie. The strength of the family and its ties is a very healthy situation.

He said, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he says surely comes to pass: now let us go to him; and maybe he can direct how we can find our donkeys. Then Saul said to his servant, But, look, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is all gone, and we don't have any present to bring the man of God: what do we have? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: I will give that to the man of God, to tell us our way. [And here is a commentary that was added later by a writer of a later date. If you notice, it's in brackets] (Before time in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was in the older days called a Seer.)

A "Seer" was a man who could see into the spiritual realm. So the word, 'seer' was a man who had perception above the ordinary: a man who would see things in a spiritual kind of perception. And Saul was worried because the custom was that when you went to a prophet of God to get advice or guidance, you would use an honorarium, a present. Saul didn't have anything. They had spent all their bread, but the servant fortunately had a fourth part of a shekel.

Then Saul said to his servant, well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man

of God was. And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came today to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place: [‘You are in luck. He is here. He just came to the city and the people are going to sacrifice today. If you hurry, you can catch him’] as soon as you be come into the city, you shall immediately find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he comes, because he does bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that which is bidden. Now therefore get up; for about this time you will find him.

So, it’s just about the right time to catch him before he goes up to the sacrifice. The people are waiting, and they won’t eat until he blesses the sacrifice. Here, interestingly enough, is where the custom began of blessing your food before you eat it. So for you who follow this excellent custom, here is the beginning of it. Jesus also followed the custom: when He took bread, and blessed it before He broke it. Of course, the Jews have a little prayer of blessing before the meal. I think that it is a very good idea to stop and just give thanks to God for His provision. To bless God: for He has been great in His provision for us. So the people would wait for Samuel to bless the sacrifices.

Saul and his servant went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place. [They just sort of ran into each other] Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

So Samuel was expecting to find the leader for Israel the next day because the day before the LORD had spoken to his ear, saying, *"Tomorrow about this time you are going to meet the man that I have chosen to be the captain over the people, to lead them against the Philistines."*

Now, I think that this story is interesting, in that, it shows us how God often works in very common, natural ways in our lives. I imagine that when those donkeys ran away that there was quite a bit of consternation: ‘Those dumb donkeys! Where did they go now?’ It was a hardship and an inconvenience. It must have been an irritating thing to go look for those donkeys. The longer they looked, they could not find them. The real story or issue isn’t the lost donkeys. The real issue is to bring Saul to this man of God, Samuel, that he might anoint him as the captain of God’s people. But Saul, looking for the donkeys, probably being upset, getting a little worried about it: ‘We better go home: dad’s not going to be worried about the donkeys, he’s going to worry about us.’ This whole thing was probably very irritating and upsetting. He didn’t realize that God’s hand was in the whole situation as they were looking for these donkeys. The real issue was that God was working behind the scenes to bring him to Samuel in order that he might be declared the man that God had chosen to be king over Israel.

I have found that God so often works in very natural ways in our lives. We think that to be led by the Spirit is some kind of trance experience. "I have to go into some kind of a trance." People just sort of close their eyes and follow the vibrations. ‘It’s very mystical-because God is now leading you.’ We get all excited, but it isn’t that way at all. God leads us in very natural ways: in what seems to be very natural circumstances. Often, it’s just an impression, a wish, or a desire. We often just pass it off. Sometimes we may even be irritated that we are doing it: “Why did those donkeys have to run off anyhow?” And yet God is able, in very natural ways, to guide our lives in the fulfilling of His plan and purpose. The Bible says that, *“The steps of a good man are ordered of the LORD: and he delights in his ways.”* The Bible says, *“Commit your ways to the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not into your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will*

direct your paths.” So a man whose life is committed to God is a man who is being led by God, even in the daily apparent mundane things in life. Yet, God’s hand is there and guiding him.

So Saul was searching for these donkeys in a random way. Yet God was leading him all the way, bringing him to the place where the prophet just so happened to come there today. It was just yesterday that God spoke to Samuel, and said, *"Tomorrow you are going to meet the man that I have chosen to be captain over Israel, to lead them against the Philistines."*

And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spoke to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

I sort of envy Samuel in this sort of situation. I think that it would be exciting to have God speak to you like that. On one day God might say, “Hey, tomorrow about this time, you are going to meet the man.” The next day when you see this tall, good looking guy coming, the LORD says, “Hey, that’s the one I was talking about.”

And Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer’s house is. [He didn’t know Samuel; he was just asking for directions to the prophet’s house] And Samuel answered Saul, I am the seer: go up before unto the high place; for you shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let you go, and will tell thee all that is in the heart. As for the donkeys that were that were lost three days ago, don’t worry about them; for they have already been found.

This was probably to assure Saul that he was a true prophet of God. Saul didn’t mention anything about having lost donkeys. And yet, the prophet of God speaks the very thing that is on his heart: what he was worried about. “As for those donkeys, don’t worry about it; they have already gone home.” But then he said to him:

On whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on thy father’s house? [Saul says, ‘Hey, wait a minute! What kind of a trip are you laying on me, man?’ “Who is the desire of Israel on, is it not for you and your father’s house?”] *And Saul answered and said, Look I am a Benjamite, the smallest of the tribes of Israel--[They had almost been exterminated] and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin. What are you talking about?*

Here we see that Saul, in the beginning, was a man of great humility. When he is told by Samuel, *“You are the one for whom Israel is looking, you and your father’s house.”* He replied, “Hey, you’ve made a mistake: *I’m from the tribe of Benjamin, and my dad’s one of the least families within the tribe of Benjamin. What do you mean people are desiring me?*”

Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among those that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. [A healthy, worthy portion had been given to him: the shoulder. A place of honor and dignity at the table of the bidden guest] And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

The tops of the houses in Israel were flat. It was like a patio. You’ll see them today as patios. You can see women’s clothes hanging on the tops of the houses. You can see women scrubbing the roofs of their houses like you would scrub a tile patio. So don’t think of it as some kind of weird thing for them to perch

on the eaves and talking. The flat roofs were part of the living quarters for the house. Peter was on the house praying when he received the vision. If you ever go to Jerusalem, Israel: walking along the walls, you can walk along the tops of the houses, and you see how they have their patios and clothes hanging. There are also activities: such as kids playing on the tops of houses.

They rose early: and it came to pass that about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send you away.

The next morning, the spring of the day: that is, just as the day is beginning. Saul was still sleeping. Samuel woke him up, and called him up to the top of the house that he might commune with him, and send him on his way.

And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (an he passed on,) but I want you to stand here for a while, that I might show you the word of God.

CHAPTER 10

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD has anointed you to be captain over his inheritance?

So this anointing with oil is a symbolic gesture: it was because God had anointed him to be the captain over Israel. The anointing was not really accomplished by Samuel pouring the oil on him. The anointing was confirmed by Samuel pouring the oil. The anointing had come by God earlier.

Baptism is something that God does in a person's heart. The new life is that of the "old man reckoned to be dead." The new life that we have now is the resurrected life in Christ: of which, the outward baptism is just the symbol acknowledging what God has done. Baptism itself does not save, not the washing away of the filth of the flesh. It is a work that God has done within the conscience of a man. The outward is just a representative symbol. This pouring of this oil was only the acknowledging that God had anointed Him. It was the recognition of what God had done in his life. Even as baptism becomes the recognition of what God has done in our lives.

When you are departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's sepulcher --

Now this is a little confusing because we are told that Rachel was buried near Bethlehem. Yet there is another passage that refers to it in the area of Ramah -- where they are. If you remember, Jeremiah prophesied how that Rachel's children would be weeping in Ramah because of the loss of her children. So Rachel's sepulcher here is referred to as, "in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah."

"And these two men are going to tell you, Hey, the donkeys have been found: and your dad's worried about you." So here's Samuel laying out the date for him. "When you leave here, when you get near Rachel's tomb; there are going to be a couple of men telling you that the donkeys have gone home: and your father's been worried about you." He has quit worrying about the donkeys, and now, he's sorrowing for Saul, saying, "What should I do for my son."

Then as you go forward from there, and you will come to the plain of Tabor, and there you will meet three men going up to God to Bethel, one is carrying three goats, and another is carrying three loaves of bread, and the other is carrying a bottle of wine: and they will greet you, and give you two loaves of bread; which you shall receive of their hands. After that you will come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: [And this is Gilgal, his home town] and it shall come to pass, when you

have come thither to the city, that you shall meet a company of prophets coming down from a high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: --

Now, these prophets would go around in a group and would sing praises unto God. These were, in those days, the educated men. They did not have a public education system. The normal person was pretty much an uneducated person. Saul was probably illiterate. These men in the schools of the prophets were the only schools in those days. They were the men who were schooled by the prophets; and they would join together singing praises unto God.

They were accompanied by these instruments, and it lists them here: first of all, there was the psaltery, which was sort of a harp. A tabret - which is a tambourine, with the little noisy things on it that you would strike with your hand. The pipe was sort of like a flute or Piccolo: which had little holes drilled into it to play tunes on it. And a harp was sort of like a guitar, and strummed like a guitar. The psaltery had ten strings and was strummed more like a harp, where as the harp was more like a guitar.

--and they shall prophesy: [singing their songs] and the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them, and will be turned into another man. [So there is promise of a new life when God's Spirit comes upon you: "you are to join with them and prophesy; as you do, there is going to be changes. You will be turned into a new man."] And let it be, when these signs are come upon you, that you do as the occasion serves you; for God is with you.

Here we see God taking men who have certain natural endowments: a man who was big, good looking, from a good family, and who was humble. Now God calls him to be the captain over his people. God continues to work in his life. *"When the Spirit of God comes upon you, you will be turned in to another man. God is with you."* Can you imagine the potential of such a man? As you look at what he is and what God is doing, we really can get excited about the potentials that are here.

And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto you, and offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice offerings of peace offerings: seven days shall you wait, till I come to you, and show you what you shall do. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: [God began to work. Saul's whole attitude and heart was changed] and it came to pass that day. And when they came near the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

He had joined in with their dancing and singing, yet he had not really learned their songs at the school of the prophets. David went to one of these schools, which is why he composed so many songs. As David would write these songs, he would tell them which instruments they should use to accompany many of the Psalms. It was just a whole idea of the singing of the Psalms that was greatly developed during the period of Samuel. This was something that they had in Moses' time: the singing with the tabrets and harps, the dances, and the worshipping of the LORD with song - such as in the song of Moses. Also, there was the song of Deborah later on in the book of Judges. This was something really developed by Samuel and David, and was an intricate part of this whole ministry in the LORD: in song.

We were doing much the same in ministering to the LORD in song. We worship Him in our singing accompanied by the harp: guitar, and the tabret: drums and percussion. So it was a way of worshipping God.

So *"God gave to Saul a new heart."*

And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the

prophets, [they were shocked] then the people said one to another, What is this that has happened unto the son of Kish? Is Saul one of the prophets? [Did he go to school?] And when he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. And Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, Where did you go? And he said, we went to look for the donkeys: and when we sat that they were no where, we came to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said to you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the donkeys were found.

But he didn't tell him anything about God choosing him to be the captain. This is probably a part of the humility of the fellow in the beginning. Rather than laying out the whole thing, and telling all the exciting things, he just said, "*The donkeys were found.*" And he didn't go on to elaborate.

Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: --

He, again, he is going to rebuke them for their demand of a king. It stunned and hurt Samuel. So again, he is going to preach to them a sermon: and rebuke them for their request.

God brought Israel out of Egypt, God delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and all of the kingdoms, of those who had oppressed you: you have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and tribulations; and you have said unto Him, No, set a king over us. [Samuel told the people, "You have demanded a king, and rejected God, so present yourselves now before God." This was in order that they might choose publicly, by the drawing of lots, to show the choice of God for their king.] Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: [So they narrowed it down and came to Saul] but when they sought him, he could not be found. So they inquired of the LORD further, if they should seek for another man. And the LORD answered, Behold, he has hid himself among the stuff.

He was over by the carriages, where all the luggage was. When the people would gather for these great feasts, they would come a long distance with carts, and so forth. They would set them up as a defense, like the people who would travel cross country in their covered wagons. They would set them up in a circle as a defense against the enemy. The Philistines were out there. So they set the carts as a barrier against them, and here's this guy who is hiding: this big 6 foot guy is hiding among the stuff.

This was the first sign of weakness in Saul's character. I know that you might think, "Hey, wait a minute. This could be another sign of the man's humility." No, when God has called you to a task or mission, for you to try to hide from that call of God - is not a sign of humility, it is a sign of folly, or weakness. So this hiding from the call of God to be the chosen is a sign of weakness.

And they ran and fetched him from there: and when he stood among the people, he was taller than all of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said unto all the people, See him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

"*God save the king*" was the English translation. This was the typical English saying. Literally, in the Hebrew, it follows more the French saying, "Viva la Roy" which means, "Let the king live." The English translated it and used their typical phrase, "*God save the king.*" Both mean the same.

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in the book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. [They had this great meeting in Mizpeh. Their king has now been selected and presented to them. They also had a celebration] And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a host of men, whose hearts God had touched.

So again, of all of the things that God is doing in preparing him for this ministry and mission, God surrounds him with a host of men whose hearts have been touched by God. That is, to me, one of the most exciting Scriptures in the Bible as far as potential is concerned. I know of no more exciting an environment than being with a group of people whose hearts have been touched by God. I know of no more of an explosive kind of situation than to be around people whose hearts have been touched by God. I mean, you get a bunch of people whose hearts have been touched by God and you can turn a world upside down. When Jesus had touched the hearts of the disciples, they went out and turned the world upside down. Oh, how we need to have our hearts touched by God. How glorious it is to gather together with people whose hearts have been touched by God, and are ready for whatever the LORD has planned: "Let's go for it, and turn our world upside down." When you get together with these kinds of people, it is always a thrilling, exciting experience because anything can happen.

But the children of Belial said, [that is, "the sons of Satan: said,"] How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace. [Saul, using great wisdom, rather than creating a schism, just held his peace and let them go. He didn't make any to do over it.]

CHAPTER 11

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you.

Now Jabesh-gilead was on the other side of the Jordan river: the area of the tribe of Gath. Ammon, [the Ammonites], came from the area of the capital of Jordan today. The capital is called Amon, which comes from the ancient name 'Ammon.'

The Ammonites had been severely defeated by the Israelites during the period of the Judges. But now, about a hundred years later, they are rising up in power again. Nahash gathers together an army and comes against this Israelite city of Jabesh-gilead. The men there offered to surrender because they did not want to suffer: "Let's make a treaty. We will pay your tribute, we will be your servants. We don't want to fight you." They realized that they weren't able to meet and fight against the army of Nahash. Rather than to be wiped out, they took a "better red - than dead" concept, and offered to make a treaty.

But Nahash, the Ammonite, perhaps remembering still the history of their defeat by Israel, said: --

On this condition I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all of your right eyes, and lay them as a reproach on all Israel. [So they were willing to make a deal with them: but they were going to thrust out their right eyes as a reproach to show their hatred for Israel] And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers to all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there is no man to save us, then we will come out to you. ["We will let you put out our eyes, and serve you."] So the messengers came to Gibeah where Saul was, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and were weeping.

In other words, when they came to Gibeah with a message that they would make a treaty, but they had to put out their right eyes, the people began to wail. This was horrible. The thought of it was something that

was repulsive.

And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; --

He had been plowing out in the field with the yoke of oxen. Saul had been called, anointed, and proclaimed as king. But he goes back and begins to plow again out in the field. Saul is not pushing himself into the position. He is willing to go out and do the normal, menial things of plowing in the field. When Saul came out of the field, and heard all of the people weeping, he said, -

Why are they crying? Then they told him the tidings from the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. [Saul was the kind of man that could plow, and be satisfied to plow, until the call of God comes. Then he becomes the kind of man that rises to the challenge: leading the armies of God against the enemy.] And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them into pieces, and sent them throughout all of the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. [As one man.] And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. [So he had a sizable army.] And they said unto the messengers that came, Go back and tell the men of Jabesh-gilead, Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you will have help. And the messengers came and showed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you can do to us all that seems good to you. [He said that they could put their eyes out. They were stalling for one more day.] And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, --

He probably had a forced march, and it was about twenty miles from Bezek to Jabesh-gilead. So Saul probably had a forced march until the end of the evening, and then bedded the men for the night. In the morning he got them up early to come against the men of Ammon for an early morning attack. Saul took them by surprise.

They came in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: [It was about a five hour battle] and it came to pass, that they which remained of the Ammonites were so scattered, so that not two of them were left together. And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring out those men, that we might put them to death. [So Saul is pretty much now established in the eyes of the people as the true leader. Now they are looking for these sons of Belial, who said, "Who is Saul, that he should reign over us? Bring those guys out here, we will kill them."] And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today the LORD has wrought salvation in Israel.

Again, Saul shows good judgment here. He is cool, rather than creating a downer. Saul keeps them exhilarated. He has led them to victory and they have begun to recognize him as an obvious leader. Rather than having a slaughter of their own people, bringing division, he says, "No, let them go. God has been with us, and He brought us victory." He has acknowledged the LORD's hand in their victory.

Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and we will renew the kingdom there. [This is the Gilgal that was just inside of the border down near Jordan where the people first camped when they crossed the Jordan river. He brought the armies there to renew the kingdom.] And all of the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. [There was a great celebration as they received and accepted Saul as their king. Now

is a time of sacrifice and great rejoicing.]