

## 1 Samuel 10:1-27

### Saul Anointed as King

**1 Samuel 10:1** - "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

There is no specific commandment concerning anointing a king with oil. We have only the examples of Samuel here of Saul, and later kings. The parable of Jotham (Judges 9:8) 200 years previously seems to assume it was a tradition to anoint a king.

The High Priest was anointed with oil on his accession to his post. Even the furniture and vessels of the Tabernacle were anointed. It represents a setting apart for a sacred purpose, and was also used to anoint the king.

- **Exodus 29:7** - "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him."

- **Psalm 133:1-3** - "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!. It is like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down on the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts (peh = mouth, or collar) of his garments, As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for ever more."

While the garments of all the priests were sprinkled with oil (**Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30**), the oil was poured on the head of Aaron (**Exodus 29:7; Leviticus 8:12; Leviticus 21:10**).

In the psalm, Mt. Hermon stood at the northern border with Lebanon and served as the "head" of the land of Israel.

As a Psalm of Ascent, **Psalm 133** points to the pilgrimage feasts. The picture combines the act of being "set apart" with joy, blessing, refreshment and life descending from God, resulting in unity and love among a community of priests, which believers constitute. Early Christian commentators saw in this oil the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost on the disciples.

One interesting warning:

- **Exodus 30:32** - "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you."

"man" = the natural man in his worldly pursuits. When someone was anointed, in effect that person died to his own concerns and was fully given over to the demands of his office, whether high priest or possibly the king. The same happens when the Spirit of God comes upon a believer - we are part of a royal priesthood. We "die" to our concerns

with self.

### **Anointing of the Messiah**

- **Isaiah 61:1-3** - "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

(Jesus quotes this about Himself: **Luke 4:18**)

The Holy Spirit descending on Jesus at his baptism is described as an anointing:

- **Acts 10:37-38** - "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

A similar anointing is promised for Christian believers:

- **1 John 2:27** - "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

Myrrh was an ingredient in the Anointing Oil and also used to prepare the dead for burial. As one of the gifts of the Magi for the baby Jesus, it prefigured His death.

The rabbis say the oil Samuel used here was not the special holy anointing oil, which was retained with the Tabernacle in Gilgal, but simply common olive oil or "oil of balsam." Later, the kings of the house of David would be anointed with the holy oil used in the Tabernacle/Temple.

Saul was anointed with only a "vial" of oil, and his reign was short. The Davidic kings were anointed with a larger "horn" full of the sacred oil, and their dynasties lasted longer. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit "without measure" (**John 3:34**) and His kingdom is eternal.

The rabbis assume Samuel consulted with the Sanhedrin or council of elders before anointing Saul, since this is a rabbinical requirement (Hil. Melachim 3).

Oil represents humility (Be'or Moshe), a trait that a righteous king must possess. It expresses the prayer that the king would also rise to the highest heights, just as oil does not mix but rises to the top of other liquids.

The oil would then be smeared across his forehead, in a representation of a crown upon his head.

The anointing here represents Samuel relinquishing his position as a judge, as the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution, standing on a par with the priesthood.

All this points to the Messiah (which means "anointed one"), and Jesus as king of kings but also as our High Priest:

- **Psalm 45:6-7** - "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

(**Hebrews 1:9** specifically says this passage refers to Jesus)

Oil also points to the Holy Spirit in other metaphors that don't involve anointing, like the oil burning in a lamp that gives light, or the parable of the foolish virgins who lacked oil in their lamps (Matthew 25).

"And he kissed him" - this let Saul know that although Samuel had opposed Israel's request for a king, that now he was accepted and trusted and found worthy of the position.

### **Three Signs for Confirmation**

Samuel had first instructed Saul in the importance of humility. Now he had to convince him about the high position that he was being called to assume. Each occurred at a location rich in Israel's history.

### **The Lost Asses Found**

**1 Samuel 10:2** - "When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?"

Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, the ancestor of Saul's tribe, who died in childbirth. Seeing her sepulchre would remind Saul of his own mortality. Hearing the lost asses were found emphasized that Saul's personal concerns were to be left behind, and he would take up the higher duties of governing the whole nation.

Benjamin was the only son of Jacob to be born in Promised Land.

### **A Gift of Two Loaves of Bread**

**1 Samuel 10:3-4** - "Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to

the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands."

"The plain of Tabor" - possibly rather the oak or palm tree of Deborah, who sat under it teaching while she judged Israel.

"going up to God to Bethel" - In the absence of a functioning Tabernacle, they were going to offer the bread and wine as a sacrifice at Bethel, where the patriarch Jacob had established an altar. Bethel was a place of great inspiration, which Jacob called "the gate of heaven" (**Genesis 28:17**). It was at Bethel that Jacob had been told that kings would descend from him (**Genesis 35:11**).

The wine was for a drink offering: **Numbers 15:5**.

Saul and his servant would by this time be hungry and tired. By receiving the bread, Saul would put himself in the position of those in his kingdom who were needy. This would emphasize the need for humility and a reminder to relieve the poor when he was installed as king. Also, by offering Saul bread meant for a meal offering, the men were acknowledging a form of homage to the Lord's anointed, without realizing it.

### Joining a Company of Prophets

**1 Samuel 10:5-6** - "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."

A person can prophecy only in an atmosphere of joy,, which music induces. Similarly, in the case of Elisha i later years, as the musician played, the hand of the Lord cam upon him (**2 Kings 3:15**).

"come upon you" = will leap or rush on thee, suddenly

"turned into another man" - This is a remarkable expression, and occurs nowhere else. Like Samson receiving great strength, Saul would receive courage, wisdom, and a capacity for ruling and leadership which he lacked. From a rustic farmer's son, Saul would now bear himself as a prince.

The "hill of God" is probably Gibeah (hill), Saul's hometown. The actual hill was probably a high place where sacrifices were conducted and where a school of prophets based. Also, Saul's uncle is mentioned there later.

"A company of prophets" - Despite the falling away of spirituality in the time of the

judges, Samuel probably had fostered "schools" where the teaching of Torah was carried on by a teacher and his young disciples - more for forth-telling rather than predicting the future, which was rare at this time and apparently limited to Samuel. In this case, these prophets were trained in singing praises as the Levites would do if the Tabernacle had been functioning. The Targum calls them "scribes" rather than prophets, because students and disciples were called scribes.

Schools of the prophets are also mentioned later, in the days of Elijah and Elisha (**2 Kings 2:3**).

Combining prophecy with music was not unusual, apparently.

- **1 Chronicles 25:1** - "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals..."

Psalms 39, Psalm 62 and Psalm 77 are attributed to Jeduthun, "who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD."

A similar outpouring of prophecy as praise happened with the 70 elders in the wilderness:

- **Numbers 11:25** - "Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and He took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and placed that Spirit on the seventy elders. As the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied — but they never did so again."

The "sign" here was that the Spirit came upon Saul, and he was moved to join in, although untrained in music or in the sacred texts. Possibly he was gripped by an ecstatic trance, uttering unrehearsed songs of praise on his own. He appeared to be "turned into another man."

The lesson for Saul was that just as the Spirit could transform him in a moment, blessing him with unlearned gifts and skills, he could also depart should Saul stray from obedience to the Lord.

It's interesting that this spirit of prophecy fell on Saul again later while he was pursuing David - perhaps to remind him of this initial sign, and to draw him back to humility and the kingly values Samuel had tried to instill in him:

**1 Samuel 19:22-24** - "Finally, Saul himself left for Ramah and came to the large cistern at Secu, where he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" "At Naioth in Ramah," he was told. So Saul went to Naioth in Ramah. But the Spirit of God came upon even Saul, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth in Ramah. Then Saul stripped off his robes and also prophesied before Samuel. And he collapsed and lay naked all that day and night. That is why it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

**1 Samuel 10:7** - "And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as

occasion serve thee; for God is with thee."

### Go to Gilgal

**1 Samuel 10:8** - "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do."

Gilgal was selected as the place where Saul would assemble Israel for the war against the occupying force of Philistines (so Rashi and other Jewish interpreters). When the time came, Samuel directs Saul to wait for him to arrive. Because war with the Philistines must be preceded by sacrifice and agreement between Prophet and King.

Gilgal was the place where the Israelites first pitched their camp when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle first was.

[When this actually happened two years later (**1 Samuel 13:1-13**), Saul waited seven days for Samuel, but Samuel did not show up. So Saul went ahead and offered sacrifices. Because of this, Samuel tells him his reign will not last.]

All these instructions remind us of Jesus telling his disciples to "Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither" (**Luke 19:30**). And telling the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem, awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Almost every recorded act or miracle of Jesus is tied in some way to previous acts of the prophets, except that Jesus fulfilled and surpassed them.

**1 Samuel 10:9** - "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day."

Rashi - "another heart": a spirit of regal power.

- **Proverbs 21:1** - "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Saul's experience is a pale shadow of what happens to believers in Jesus, when the Holy Spirit indwells and baptizes us, bestowing gifts and fruits for the benefit of His church.

### Saul Meets the Prophets

**1 Samuel 10: 10** - "And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them."

Probably he joined in with their psalms of praise. But Jewish tradition says he also

prophesied of the world to come, of Gog and Magog, and of the rewards of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked. of the world to come, of Gog and Magog, and of the rewards of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked. (Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 75. H.)

**1 Samuel 10:11-12** - "And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Targum: "who is their master or teacher" Could even Samuel's teaching or any other rabbi transformed Saul so greatly? No - this was a miracle, and another sign to Saul of God's choosing him to be king.

It was normally believed that prophecy would require an intense time of isolation, meditation and study, which they knew Saul had not engaged in.

Saul's sudden reception of the gift of prophecy became a proverb pointing to the fact that God can bestow prophecy on anyone according to His will. As Moses said:

- **Numbers 11:29** - "Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them."

**1 Samuel 10:16** - "And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not."

He kept it secret because he doubted he would be believed, but also he knew it was the pleasure of Samuel that it should be kept a secret until the election by lot was over.

The rabbis note that Saul's ancestor Rachel also was able to keep secrets, as well as his descendant Esther.

### **Samuel Calls the Tribes Together**

**1 Samuel 10:17-19** - "And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; And 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 kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands."

Mizpah was the site of Joshua's miraculous victory (**Joshua 11:1-8**). They were gathered "unto the Lord" because (even in the absence of the Ark and the Tabernacle) whenever a majority of the populace gathers together, God's presence rests there according to the rabbis. Jesus expanded this to "where two or three are gathered

together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (**Matthew 18:20**).

This would be a process of discovery similar to the one by Joshua at the sin of Achan (**Joshua 7**) in which he used the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest's breastplate to determine the tribe, and then cast lots to narrow the search (**Joshua 7**).

Also, when Joshua divided the Promised Land among the tribes (**Joshua 14**) he consulted the Urim and Thummim, and then drew lots to confirm the decision.

Recall that the disciples also cast lots to determine a replacement for Judas after the crucifixion (**Acts 1:12-26**).

Casting lots was supposed to be impartial and also determined by God:

- **Proverbs 16:33** - "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."

- **Proverbs 18:18** - "Casting lots causes contentions to cease, And keeps the mighty apart."

**1 Samuel 10:21** - "When he had 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: and when they sought him, he could not be found."

First the tribe was chosen, and then each clan or family, and from the names of each male family member, and finally Saul's name was chosen.

**1 Samuel 10:22** - "Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff."

Probably God revealed this to Samuel, or possibly the Urim and Thummim..

Saul possibly hid among the baggage from humbleness, or because after Samuel's speech he realized that, not only was he unfit for rule, but even God was displeased by establishing a monarchy. It seemed like an impossible situation.

But the modesty of Saul here reflects the proverb:

- **Proverbs 29:23** - "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit." By fleeing personal honor, Saul became king.

Rashi - He said, 'Perhaps I am not worthy of this high position. (I shall not assume it) until they ask of the Urim and Tummim.' Thereupon they asked, and he achieved it.

According to one Jewish tradition, Samuel asked the crowd, "Did any other one of you hide lest he be chosen as king? This man's modesty makes him fit for the throne." (Me'am Loez)

**1 Samuel 10:23-24** - "And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king."

The Targum is, "Let the king prosper"

**1 Samuel 10:25** - "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house."

Possibly this was similar to the account in **1 Samuel 8:10** of Samuel's warning about the dangers of a king. It included not only the possible illicit abuses but also the legal authorities and powers of the king. The scroll was placed in the Tabernacle, where it would be preserved but also available.

**1 Samuel 10:26-27** - "And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace."

The Targum describes Saul's companions as, "men that feared to sin, and in whose hearts the fear of God was put."

The "children of Belial" - those "without yoke of the Law" - could be jealous men perhaps from larger and more prominent tribes, who resented or envied Saul's selection as king. By rejecting Saul's kingship, now they were in the position of also rejecting God, since God had chosen him. These were some of the same people who had previously rejected Samuel and demanded a king.

According to Malbim, they had hoped a new king would legitimize their own corrupt ways and come to an "understanding" through bribes, like the other nations. Now they were wondering "How can this person help us?"

The Targum is, "they did not salute him, or ask of his welfare," i.e. they snubbed him publicly.

Saul - now anointed, chosen by lot and accepted by the people - "held his peace" and wisely ignored their actions. He judged it more advisable to use lenience and mildness, and not begin his reign with contention and bloodshed.

**Note** - Jewish scholars argue whether Saul should have responded to this disrespect. Was he too lenient? Being overly humble here was what later caused his downfall. The Talmud says that even though revenge is prohibited in **Leviticus 19:18**, one is still expected to keep it in his heart and not object if someone else avenges his honor.

Jesus overturned this idea, saying to even love your enemies:

- **Matthew 5:21-22** - "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother [without a cause] shall be in danger of the judgment."

Next - Saul goes to war