

1 Samuel 9

6-20-10

“Tall, Dark, Handsome, & Humble!”

I. **INTRO:**

A. God’s **sovereignty & providence** is seen in His control of *men & events*.

1. He does according to His will among the host of heaven & among the inhabitants of the earth; & none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” Dan 4:35 ESV

B. Illustrations:¹

1. **John Bunyan**: was drafted as a soldier in the civil war in England & was sent to take part in the siege of Leicester (*Les-ter*). As he was about to begin sentry duty 1 night, another requested that they exchange responsibilities. Bunyan agreed. That night the other soldier was shot in the head & died. Bunyan was spared so that in the providence of God he might minister through the written word to generations to come. [*wrote greatest allegory of all time, Pilgrim’s Progress*]
2. **William Cowper**: faced a great crisis. **Tired** of the struggle, he decided to take his own life, he took an overdose of *laudanum* [*low-dinum*] (potent narcotic, high morphine concentration) but his suicide attempt failed. **Then** he tried to drown himself in Thames river, but he was prevented from doing so. **The** next morning he deliberately tried to impale himself on a knife, but the blade broke & he was only slightly injured. **Then** he tried to hang himself - & almost succeeded. Someone found him unconscious & cut him down. In despair he began reading Paul’s letter to the Romans & received strength to believe that God loved him. [*He became one of the most popular poets of the 18th century; Hymn: “There is a Fountain Filled W/Blood”*]
3. **Christopher Columbus**: felt greatly disheartened & discouraged after many attempts to obtain **financing** for a trip to India. While on way back to Italy he stopped 1 day at a convent not far from Granada & asked for **a drink of water**. The monk who gave him the water heard his story was the man who intervened on his behalf with Queen Isabella. Out of that request for a glass of water came the money to equip the vessels that ultimately crossed the Atlantic - *that request led to the discovery of America*.
4. **John Calvin**: was also **on his way to Italy** when he experienced God’s control of his path. In Italy he hoped to find freedom from Roman Catholic oppression & leisure to continue his writing. **The road was closed** because of the war between France & Italy, so he decided to make a detour through Geneva. There he met William Farel (not Will Ferrell), who with fiery eloquence demanded that Calvin stay in Switzerland. Impressed with Farel’s earnestness, Calvin complied, & *the cause of the Reformation owes much to his decision*.

¹ Cyril Barber: The Books of Samuel; Vol. 1, pg.108,109.

5. **Abraham Lincoln**: one day he was rummaging through a barrel of odds & ends, he came across a copy of **Lord Blackstone's Commentaries**(on British jurisprudence). This "chance" discovery awakened his interest in **law & human rights**. **As a result he ran for political office & eventually played a decisive role in the history of our country.**
6. **George Whitefield**: was employed by his brother in the **Bell Inn** but could not get along with his brother's wife, so he gave up his job & went to Bristol. Then step by step he went to Oxford, met with the Wesley's, & developed a ministry that touched countless thousands of lives on both sides of the Atlantic.
Whitefield was perhaps the greatest preacher of his time.
 - a) **Providence happens!** - A shift change at work; suicides overridden; a glass of water; a road detour; The effect of 1 book; dealing with a tough sister in law, each showing again that God's **Sovereignty** is evidenced in His remarkable **Providence!**
 - b) **These seemingly chance contacts & events have literally altered the course of history!**
 - c) How encouraging for each of us to see God's involvement in the seemingly **little things** in **our lives** also!
 - (1) F.B.Meyer, "All these things, if carefully observed, yield their testimony & assurance that God is in all events **permitting, directing, controlling, & causing** all things to work out His perfect plan."
 - (2) The intertwining of events is like "a web of many threads, woven w/ marvelous skill; a network composed of all kinds of materials, great & small, but so arranged that the very smallest of them is as essential as the largest to the completeness of the fabric." William Blaikie

II. **TALL, DARK, HANDSOME, & HUMBLE!**

- A. **TALL, DARK, & HANDSOME!** (1,2)
- B. (1) Saul's dad **Kish** is a **mighty man of power**(wealth, valor). Distinguished for his **affluence & influence**, **yet** no hint of any spiritual aspirations.
- C. (2) **Saul** (Shaw'-ool)- name means "asked for", "desired".
 1. **At the time of our story Saul is 40 years old. He's tall, dark, handsome.**
- D. **RUN AWAY DONKEYS!** (3,4)
- E. (3) **Donkey's lost** - **So!** Donkey's were prized animals & used by royalty.
- F. **Arise, go, look!** - These 3 commands set into motion **a series of events** that will eventually lead **Saul** to **Samuel**, who would anoint him as the **first king** of Israel.
 1. Kind of funny meeting Israel's 1st king out **looking for donkey's**.

G. **TIMING IS EVERYTHING!** (5-14)

H. (6-10) Up to this point Saul had been totally ignorant of Samuel's existence until now.

1. This seems **strange** seeing that Samuel lived so close to Saul's hometown & had been such a blessing o the nation.
2. Saul's lack of awareness indicated that Kish & his family were entirely **irreligious** & totally immersed in their own pursuits.
3. How disappointing that the only reason they visited Samuel was to find their lost animals!
 - a) People often "use" their religion to solve their problems & not to **strengthen their character or overcome their sins**.
 - b) Nevertheless, God uses all of this to bring Saul to Samuel.
 - (1) Faithfulness in a small task led Saul to a **new friend, a new calling, & a new opportunity to serve God**. (Warren Wiersbe)

I. (14) **Perfect timing** - they would have missed Samuel if they came to the gate a minute or 2 later. Lets' talk about the providential hand of God:

J. You don't hear of any cities being named **Providence** anymore.

1. **Providence R.I.** - was 1st settled in June 1636 by Roger Williams, and was 1 of the first cities established in the U.S. & 1 of the original 13 Colonies. He named the area in honor of "**God's merciful Providence**" which he believed was responsible for revealing such a haven for him & his followers to settle.

K. **Providence** = to see in advance or beforehand. It's used to summarize God's ongoing relationship to His creation.

1. **4 common errors** regarding God & His relationship to creation:

- a) [1] **Deism** (God created the world & then essentially abandoned it); [2] **Pantheism** (creation doesn't have a real, distinct existence in itself, but is only part of God); [3] **Chance** (or randomness); [4] **Fate** (impersonal determinism).²

b) Big difference between the Providence of God & fortune, fate, or luck:³

- (1) The key to this difference is found in the **personal character** of God:
 - (a) **Fortune** is blind while God is **all-seeing**.
 - (b) **Fate** is impersonal while God is a **Father**.
 - (c) **Luck** is dumb while God can **speak**.
- (2) There are no blind, impersonal forces at work in human history. All is brought to pass by the invisible hand of Providence.

² Wayne Grudem: Systematic Theology; pg.315

³ R. C. Sproul; Essential Truths of The Christian Faith; pg.62.

- (3) R.C.Sproul, "There is no such thing as chance. Chance does not exist. It is merely a word we use to describe *mathematical possibilities*. But chance itself has no power because it has no being. Chance is not an entity that can influence reality. Chance is not a thing, It is nothing."
- c) Providence teaches: God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that He (1) keeps them existing & maintaining the properties with which he created them (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes. Or, Preservation, Concurrence, & Government.
- (1) **Preservation** - Providence includes God's work of **sustaining** His creation.
- (2) **Concurrence** - We are creatures w/a will of our own. We make things happen. Yet the causal power we exert is **secondary**. God's sovereign providence stands over & above our actions.
- (a) He works out **His will** through the actions of **human wills**, w/o violating the freedom of those human wills.
- (b) **Clear example**: in the case of **Joseph & his brothers**. Though his brothers incurred true guilt through their treachery against him, the providence of God was working even though their sin. Joseph said to his brothers, "**But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.**"
- (3) **Government** - He rules His creation w/absolute sovereignty & authority.
- (a) The earth is His ball, & He can take it & go home when He wants!
- (b) He governs everything that comes to pass, from the greatest to the least.
- (c) He makes the rain to fall & the sun to shine. He raises up kingdoms & brings them down. He numbers the hairs on our heads & the days of our life.
2. **Q:** How does this doctrine increase your **trust** in God?
3. **Q:** How will this changed the way you think about the **future**?
4. **Q:** Do you sometimes think of **luck** or **chance** as **causing events** that happen in your life? Does it increase or decrease your **anxiety** about the **future**?
5. **Q:** Do you see how *little superstitions* won't prevent or **bring** good luck? Like, walking under a ladder; worrying when a black cat walks across your path; stepping on a crack in the sidewalk; or carrying a certain good luck charm?
6. **In him(God) we live, move, & have our being.** Acts 17:28
7. **So God uses here, in our story:** run away donkeys; young women fetching water; hurrying up; & right time/right place...for his glory!

- L. **I AM THE SEER!** (15-20)
- M. (15,16) **Brief flashback** - God had selected the king for his people. The day before he whispered into Samuel's ear...vs.16.
- N. (17) Samuel's godward relationship was **remarkable**. His trust in the Lord **implicit**.
1. After being **rejected** by the people (ch.8) he didn't show any resentment when God told him about the man that would replace him as judge of the nation.
 2. Instead a readiness to further the plan & purpose of God.
 3. Such obedience is both **noteworthy & praiseworthy!**
 4. **Your response to your employer? "I need to let you go, but before you leave I want you to train the new guy!"**
- O. (19,20) **I am the seer** - simple & direct.
1. Without waiting for Saul to tell him of their errand **or** for the servant to offer him any money for his services, Samuel invited Saul to dine w/him & other hand-selected guests.
 - a) He **promised** Saul that he'd *get home soon*;
 - b) He **assured** Saul that he'd tell him *what's on his mind*;
 - c) He **informed** Saul that the *donkeys had been found*.
 - d) Then, he gave him this *strange* statement, "**And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on you and on all your father's house?**"
 - (1) Samuel's words were probably designed to arouse Saul's **curiosity** & lead him into an ever-deepening understanding of himself & God's purpose for him.
- P. **HUMBLE BEGINNINGS!** (21)
- Q. (21) Saul was not only *tall, dark, handsome*, **but also humble!** Humility was evident in his reply...
1. But I'm of the *smallest of tribes? The least significant of families? Why me?*
 2. **No direct response**...giving him time to ponder his words!
- R. **AT THE FEAST - SET APART!** (22-27)
- S. (22-24) **At the Feast** - Saul seated in the place of honor.
1. **The cook brought out the reserved thigh.** (right thigh reserved for priests, so most likely the left thigh) **Josephus** in his *Antiquities of the Jews* identified this piece of meat as the "**royal portion**".

T. Had Saul remained a **humble** servant, things would have been different in his life & in Israel. **Read** 1 Sam.15:17.

1. Good **beginnings** are no guarantee of good **endings**!
2. No man among bible men had **so many chances** thrust upon him to make a success of life, & no man ever *so missed them*!
3. **We'll see he not only missed great opportunities, he deliberately abused them.**
4. His sun **rose** in splendor, but **set** in a tragic night.

He would never have let us get at the matchbox **if He had not known** that the framework of the universe is fireproof. - **James Russell Lowell**, quoted in *Herlooms*.