

1 Samuel 10:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

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The Hebrew word for 'vial' (pak) denotes a small flask, distinguishing this private anointing from the later public ceremony. The term 'anointed' (mashach) carries profound theological weight, as it designates one set apart for divine service. Notably, Samuel calls Saul 'captain' (nagid) rather than 'king' (melek), emphasizing that the true King remains Yahweh Himself. The anointing oil symbolized the Spirit's empowerment for leadership, a practice later applied to priests and prophets. Samuel's kiss represented covenantal blessing and recognition of divine appointment. This moment foreshadows the ultimate Anointed One (Messiah/Christ), who would be prophet, priest, and king. The phrase 'his inheritance' (nachalah) reminds us that Israel belongs to God alone; Saul is merely a steward over what remains God's possession.

Historical Context

Anointing with oil was practiced throughout the ancient Near East for consecrating kings. However, Israel's understanding differed significantly: the king was not divine but served under Yahweh's authority. This private anointing at

Ramah preceded the public selection at Mizpah, demonstrating God's sovereign choice before human confirmation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that God's people are 'His inheritance' shape how leaders should exercise authority?
2. In what ways does Saul's anointing point forward to Christ as the ultimate Anointed One?

Interlinear Text

לְתִיכְזֹב: תִּחְלֹת וְעַל H5921 over his inheritance H5159 thee to be captain H5057

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 16:13 (References Lord): Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Psalms 78:71 (Parallel theme): From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

1 Samuel 9:16 (Parallel theme): To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt 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.

Psalms 2:12 (Parallel theme): Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Acts 13:21 (Parallel theme): And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

Deuteronomy 32:9 (References Lord): For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

1 Samuel 26:11 (References Lord): The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

2 Kings 9:1 (Parallel theme): And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead:

2 Kings 20:5 (References Lord): Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.