

1 Samuel 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

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?

This enigmatic response 'who is their father?' has generated much scholarly discussion. The question likely redirects attention from Saul's natural parentage to his spiritual calling. Just as the prophets' authority came not from physical descent but from divine calling, so too Saul's new role transcended his family origins. The 'father' of the prophets was God Himself, or perhaps Samuel as their spiritual leader. This response subtly affirms that spiritual gifts derive from God's sovereign bestowal, not hereditary qualification. The phrase becoming a proverb (*mashal*) indicates its enduring significance in Israel's memory. Proverbs crystallize wisdom from experience, and this saying captured the truth that God can radically transform anyone for His purposes. Yet proverbs can carry double meanings: the same phrase later expressed shocked disillusionment when the king-turned-persecutor lay naked and prophesying (19:24).

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, identity was closely tied to lineage. The priestly tribe of Levi inherited their role; prophetic calling, by contrast, came directly from God regardless of family. This distinction became crucial in Israel's understanding of divine sovereignty over human institutions.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the principle that spiritual calling transcends natural lineage apply to the church today?
2. What 'proverbs' might emerge from God's transforming work in your community?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	אֶיֶשׁ	וְאֶחָד	וַיֹּאמֶר	וַיֹּאמֶר
of the same place answered	And one		and said	
H6030	H376	H8033	H559	H4310
אָבִיהֶם	עַל	כֵּן	הָיָה	לְמִשְׁלָל
But who is their father			Therefore it became a proverb	
H1	H5921	H3651	H1961	H1571
וְלִישָׁא	בִּנְבִּיאִים:			
Is Saul	also among the prophets			
H7586	H5030			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 54:13 (Parallel theme): And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

John 6:45 (Prophecy): It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

