

1 Samuel 9:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

The narrative shifts dramatically from Samuel's prophetic ministry to introduce Saul's lineage with careful genealogical precision. The Hebrew phrase gibbor chayil ('mighty man of power') describes Kish as a man of substance, wealth, and social standing, establishing that Israel's first king would emerge from respectable stock. The tribe of Benjamin, though smallest among the tribes (Judges 21:3), held strategic significance, situated between the powerful tribes of Ephraim and Judah. This five-generation genealogy grounds Saul's identity in Israel's covenant community while subtly highlighting that God's choice would not follow human expectations. The detailed lineage serves as literary foreshadowing: just as this genealogy traces back through generations, God's sovereign plan has been unfolding through history toward this pivotal moment when Israel would receive their king.

Historical Context

Benjamin's territory served as a buffer zone between the northern and southern tribes, making it politically advantageous for Israel's first king to come from this neutral tribe. Archaeological evidence from the period (c. 1050 BCE) shows

Benjamite settlements were modest compared to larger tribal centers, confirming the tribe's smaller stature while maintaining strategic importance along major trade routes.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereign choice of leaders often confound human expectations about status and lineage?
2. What does the careful recording of Saul's genealogy teach us about God's providence working through family histories?

Interlinear Text

וְיָהִי	וְיָהִי	אִישׁ	מִבְנֵי	יְהוָה	וְשֵׁם	וְשֵׁם	בֶּן	וְיָהִי
H1961	Now there was a man		H0	of Benjamin	whose name	was Kish	the son	
		H376		H1144	H8034	H7027		H1121
אַבְיָהָל	אַבְיָהָל	וְרֹרֶם	בֶּן	בְּכֹרֶת	בֶּן	אַגְּיָה	אַגְּיָה	בֶּן
of Abiel	the son	of Zeror	the son	of Bechorath	the son	of Aphiah	the son	
H22		H6872	H1121	H1064	H1121	H647		H1121
וְיָהִי	וְיָהִי	אִישׁ	יְמִינֵי	גָּבֶה	וְרֹרֶם	קִילָּה:		
Now there was a man		H3227	a mighty	of power				
H376			H1368	H2428				

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 14:51 (Parallel theme): And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

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.

1 Samuel 25:2 (Parallel theme): And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

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