

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 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

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

וַיְהִי	אָ יֵשׁ	מִבֶּן	יָמָיו	וּ שְׁמוֹ	קִישׁ	בֶּן		
H1961	Now there was a man	H0	of Benjamin	whose name	was Kish	the son		
	H376		H1144	H8034	H7027	H1121		
ל	אֲבִיָּא	בֶּן	צֶרֶר וֹר	בְּכוֹרֹת	בֶּן	אֶפְיָח	בֶּן	
	of Abiel	the son	of Zeror	the son	of Bechorath	the son	of Aphiah	the son
	H22	H1121	H6872	H1121	H1064	H1121	H647	H1121
	אָ יֵשׁ	יָמִינוּ י	גִּבּוֹר	חֵיל:				
	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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