

10111U

NEW ZEALAND SUMMER SCHOOL - 1993

SAMUEL THE SEER

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study 6: Samuel standing as appointed over them.

Reading: 1 Samuel 19:18-24

Well, thank you brother chairman, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my dear young people.

Well, we come this morning to 1 Samuel 19, we're running out of passages really on the life of Samuel, in fact, this is the last one, on which we have anything of substance concerning the man, until he finally dies in 1 Samuel 25. There's a lot of interesting material in these final few verses in 1 Samuel 19, that we hope to get through by way of exhortation this morning.

I just want to make a couple of comments about the last study. You might just come back to chapter 16 for a moment, I ran out of time just at the end and therefore, wasn't able to make a final comment upon the anointing of David. But it might be appropriate in the context of where the story is going to take us today. In 1 Samuel 16 verse 13, you'll remember, the record said that 'Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him **in the midst of his brethren**; and the Spirit of Yahweh came upon David'; it came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah'. We made the point, that David was therefore anointed in the midst of his brethren in conformity to the requirements of Deuteronomy, and yet for all of that, we believe that, although David was anointed in the midst of his brethren, that his brethren **had no understanding** of what the anointing was for. None but Samuel and David, at this stage, knew it to be an anointing for the kingship itself. In fact, in the very next chapter, in chapter 17, we have a story of Eliab the eldest son, for telling off David for being a naughty boy; 'for I know the naughtiness of your heart', he says, which would be somewhat uncharacteristic if he knew that his brother had been anointed by Samuel to the kingship. You see, it was important that that matter be kept secret at this stage, because if it was made publicly known that David was now anointed to be king, then Saul would have searched him out and killed him. That was the whole reason for secrecy in the matter of Samuel's visit to Beth-lehem in the first place. So although David was anointed in the midst of his brethren, we believe that what probably happened was, that Samuel had simply said to Jesse, 'that I have a commission from God to anoint one of your sons to some office, that your son will perform on behalf of God'. But he didn't reveal what it was, in fact, I would suggest, that the most likely thing that the house of Jesse and the other sons

probably imagined was that Samuel had come to anoint David to join the college of the prophets that Samuel was running at Ramah; to anoint him to join the sons of the prophets, and maybe even there was a period of time, because there is some missing years in the text here, over the next few chapters, maybe there was some opportunity for David to go and visit Samuel in Ramah and to spend some time with him. Can you imagine how that would satisfy all of the questions? Because there would be questions, wouldn't there? of others in Beth-lehem later on: what was Samuel doing here and why did he come? and what went on in your house at the feast? 'Ah, he came to anoint David to the sons of the prophets, in fact, he's up there in Ramah now with him'. Everyone would be satisfied as to what the purpose of Samuel's visit was; it was still important that the matter of David's kingship be kept secret and, of course, when David comes before Saul in the next chapter, Saul has **absolutely no idea whatsoever**, that David had been anointed to be king! No one knew that! I believe, apart from Samuel himself and probably David, with whom he had had some private words before he went on his way to Ramah, on that occasion.

Well, we come then to chapter 19, and that context now, and we notice these interesting words then, in the 18th verse of the 19th chapter, because what has happened now is that David has been brought into the court of king Saul, and the murderous rage of king Saul has already grown against the young man. Saul's obsession concerning the kingship has now reached the stage where he wishes to lay hands on David and to take away his life. So we're told in verse 18, 'So David fled and escaped', you see, the word 'escaped' is really one of the key words in this section. You notice at the end of verse 10, 'so David fled and escaped'; at the end of verse 12, 'so he went, and fled, and escaped'; middle of verse 17, 'thou hast sent away my enemy that he is escaped'; verse 18, 'So David fled and escaped. You see, this was the spirit of the moment, David now realized that he was in danger of his life, and so he needed to get away from Saul; he **needed to escape** that was the prime thing on his mind at this time. You know, in the Hebrew, the word 'escape' means (quite interesting) it means 'to escape **by slipperiness**' (4422), almost as if you've got someone with hands reaching out to clutch you and you slip out from under, just in the nick of time! to escape by slipperiness. One can almost see the hands of Saul reaching out to grab hold upon the young man and David just escapes in the nick of time! It says that 'he fled' in verse 18, and the word means 'to bolt' (1272), he struck out for freedom!

So he escaped, says the record, and 'came to Samuel to Ramah'. Isn't it remarkable? Now there was an episode later on in the times of David, when a man rebelled against David, later on in his kingship, and then, of course, the man who rebelled against David grew worried and, well, he tried to escape from David, and the record says he went right up to the north of the country because, reasonably, he wanted to put as many miles between himself and David as he possibly could, and one can imagine that David would have this spirit on that occasion; 3 times already now, Saul has thrown a javelin at David! Times have become very dangerous! and one could imagine in escaping at this time, he would want to put as many miles as possible between himself and the

murderous king who was already 'clutching' as it were, to end his life. So isn't it remarkable in this context, that what we're told in this verse is that David fled from Saul's house in Gibeah, and went to Samuel **a whole two miles to the north**, that's some escape, isn't it? It's interesting, isn't it? he fled all of two miles to Samuel to Ramah. I think there's a lesson there, you see, that obviously David saw a spiritual dimension to danger and to safety, as well as a physical one. David thought that if he could find comfort and sanctuary with Samuel, that he truly would be safe from Saul even though the distance between them was, in fact, relatively close. So he comes to Samuel!

Perhaps the record is already giving us a hint, that David already has that feeling, that oneness of feeling with Samuel, that he turns to Samuel on this occasion. Maybe David had already spent some time with Samuel in Ramah, and so when the crisis comes upon David at this time, it's to Samuel that he turns, instinctively in this moment of crisis. Do you see what the verse says, it's interesting, you know, it's all part of good bible reading, isn't it? 'So David fled and escaped and came to Samuel in Ramah, and told him **all** that Saul had done unto him'. Oh, can you just see what's going on there? So you see, here's Samuel as a faithful friend and as an advisor, and David obviously felt enough confidence in Samuel to be able to pour out all his heart for the old man! Can you see that in those words? He comes to Samuel and all his worries are poured out now into the hearing ears of the old prophet, with whom he felt that he could find comfort and consolation.

You know, it's remarkable really that he fled to Samuel given this other circumstance; you see, there was an age difference wasn't there between David and Jonathan; Jonathan was probably some 20 possibly 30 years older than David, so there's quite a gap between David and Jonathan. So if there's a gap of 20 or 30 years between David and Jonathan, then there would be an even bigger gap going back from David to Saul who was Jonathan's father. Yet we're told that Samuel was **an old man** at the time he anointed Saul; so what's the gap between David and Samuel? and the answer is about 60 to 70 years of age. There's an age gap of about 60 to 70 years between these two men, b&s, and yet they **locked together spiritually** just like that! Just like that! and one of the beauties of this story in this chapter, is the way in which **the old man and the young king designate** were absolutely at one in matters of things divine, it's a wonderful thing! It's a marvellous thing that we can see the way in which those two come together in this story.

So we're told that 'he came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done', and the end of verse 18 says, 'and he and Samuel went and dwelled in Naioth'. Now we believe the decision to dwell in Naioth was a decision no doubt taken by Samuel on behalf of the two of them. The word 'Naioth' (5121) here is an interesting one! Strong's says that it means '**residence or dwellings**'; it means 'residence or dwellings'; the Jewish Targum says that 'Naioth' means 'the house of learning'; there's an Arabic word

which is cognate to Naioth, 'Noioth' which means 'the place of study'; Edersheim says in his 'Old Testament History', page 103, he says, 'Naioth seems to be a block of dwellings within a compound, occupied by an order of prophets'. Dellich says, 'that the word 'Naioth' is a proper name, applied to the common dwelling of the pupils of the prophets, who had gathered around Samuel in the neighbourhood of Ramah'. So **Naioth** really tells us, it was a suburb of Ramah, by the way, because if you come over the page, you'll notice in verse 19 it says, 'It was told Saul saying, behold, David is at Naioth **in** Ramah'. So Naioth was part of Ramah, it was a suburb of Ramah; but it wasn't any suburb, it was a suburb especially set aside for the study of the prophets that had gathered around Samuel. It was the suburb in which the school of the prophets was held in that particular place.

Now let's just have a look then, at a bit of information with regard to these schools of the prophets, because it's actually quite interesting, what we can find out in the bible narrative about these schools. First of all, we find in 2 Kings 6 verse 32, that these schools of the prophets had **an established organizational structure of authority**. There were lines of authority within the system of the school. In addition, we find in 2 King 6 verses 1 to 4, that those in the schools **shared their food and had communal accommodation**; so they cooperated together in the matter of living, they lived together, they ate together, and they slept in a common facility, and did their work in a common facility. We're told in 1 Samuel 10 verse 5 and in 2 Kings 3 verse 15, that **worship and music and song** formed an important part of the spiritual activities that took place in these schools of the prophets, so they were involved in matters of music, in fact, we're told in 2 Kings 4 verse 27 that **there were regular meetings**, so regular, in fact, that they were scheduled on both a weekly and monthly basis at the schools, so they were well organized. We're told in 1 Chronicles 29 verse 9 and 2 Chronicles 34 verse 22, that there was also **a diligent application to the study of the scriptures, to writing of scriptural material, and the copying of scriptural texts**. So not only were they involved in matters of singing and of worship and of praise, but also in the matters of bible study itself; and we find that these schools of which really, this is the first mention here, in 1 Samuel 19, in the dwellings of Naioth, that these schools began a spirit that was to last down throughout the times of the kings; because when we come to the reign of Ahab in 1 Kings 18 verse 4, we find that there are prophets that are hidden by Obadiah in a cave, and that organized group of prophets that Obadiah succoured in his day, is part of the legacy of the schools of the prophets that Samuel first organized.

When we come to the reign of Uzziah, quite a lot later on in the record, we find that there prophets as mentioned in Amos 7 verse 14 here, **as an organized force in the land**. When we come to the time of Josiah, in 2Chronicles 34 verse 22, we read of Huldah the prophetess; it says of Huldah the prophetess, that she **dwelt in the college**. So there was a college in Jerusalem again for the prophets in the time of Josiah. When we come to the return in the days of Nehemiah we read in Nehemiah 6 verse 7, of

prophets being ordained in Jerusalem in order that they might teach. All of that began from the work of Samuel here at the first school of the prophets, we believe, in Naioth in Ramah in 1 Samuel 19 verse 18. This is a remarkable beginning of things, and that spirit was going to last throughout the whole of the era of the kings, from the time of Saul and David through to Ahab, through to Uzziah, through to Josiah, through to the return after the captivity itself. That all began with Samuel, isn't that remarkable?

As far as where the schools were, as far as what the scriptures tell us, there were schools in several different places! Well obvious, there was one in Ramah here, we know that! but there were also schools in Gilgal, in Beth-el, in Jericho, in Carmel, and from 2 Chronicles 34 we know there was one later on in Jerusalem. There probably could have been schools elsewhere as well. No doubt there were, these are simply the ones that we appear to have some knowledge of from the biblical record itself. So Samuel had begun a remarkable movement here, that was destined to have far reaching consequences down throughout the era of the kings. Into this first school of the prophets, we're told now, in 1 Samuel 19 and verse 18 at the end of that verse, 'And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth', says the verse. So what we're being told, is that Samuel took David with him into the school of the prophets that was in that place.

Now why did he do that do you think? Well, maybe because it was a suburb itself of Ramah, maybe in some way, he felt that it offered better protection; I think the real reason is that, Samuel wanted to take opportunity here, to better prepare for the challenges that lay ahead of him! There were certain spiritual things that Samuel wanted to instil into David's mind, and so he takes him into the school of the prophets here, in order that he might spend time with him. If you come over the page, we're told in the 19th verse, 'And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. Actually that's interesting, that phrase 'that it was told Saul', you wouldn't think that you could make something of that, do you? 'It was told Saul', but just come and have a look at these passages: in 1 Samuel 22, you see, that phrase 'it was told Saul', marks the beginning of a series of passages, in which gossiping tongues, betrayed the whereabouts of David. In chapter 22 and verse 9 we're told, 'Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob', and a gossiping tongue passed information onto Saul, as to the whereabouts of David. In chapter 23 and verse 7, 'And it was **told** Saul, that David was come to Keilah'; chapter 24 verse 1, 'And it came to pass when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was **told** him, saying, 'behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi'; in chapter 26 verse 1, 'And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah saying, 'Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon'; in chapter 27 verse 4, 'And it was **told** Saul that David was fled to Gath'. So you see, we have here back in chapter 19 verse 19, when it says, 'it was **told** Saul saying, behold David is at Naioth', here is the first of a whole series of passages here, where gossiping tongues betrayed the whereabouts of David to Saul; as one person has rightly said concerning the 'ecclesial grapevine', **it badly needs pruning**'. It's true, isn't it? lots of

things go on in ecclesial life where things are said about other people, that ought not to be said. Do you know one of the tragedies of that verse? no doubt, many of the people that gossiped about David were also the first to support him when he became king! But, they were quite happy to betray his whereabouts to Saul on an earlier occasion.

One thing we can be sure about in verse 19 is this, b&s, the thing that **David was sure about**, the very reason, no doubt, why David had fled to Samuel on this occasion was, that David knew absolutely that Samuel would never be that whisperer! David fled to Samuel because he knew that Samuel was a man that could be trusted to keep counsel! Here was an old man, the prophet, who was eloquent in his instruction of the nation, a man who wouldn't shirk from responsibility to speak out, when occasion demanded; a man that was impassioned in prayer but who also knew the virtue of when to keep silence. I think David felt that, you see, about Samuel, he fled to Samuel because he knew that he could trust Samuel to keep counsel, whereas others obviously couldn't be; Proverbs 11 verse 13 says, 'a talebearer **revealeth secrets**; but he that is of a faithful spirit **concealeth the matter!**' A talebearer revealeth secrets but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter, it's true, isn't it? how absolutely important that is in ecclesial life, that when we go to someone and turn to them for advice or for counsel, we have to be sure, don't we? that they'll guard the doors of their mouth. There's no good going to someone, even if they're able to offer counsel and advice, if you feel that somehow what you have told them, will not be sacred, it will go to other people. You can never really trust them absolutely, can you? you feel that! There's a tremendous lesson here for all of us to learn, the virtue of keeping counsel, it's part of the secret of building friendships. There are lots of things at times, that we hear concerning others, that it's not appropriate or seemly or edifying in any way for that to be noised abroad and we've got to learn to guard the doors of our mouth in that regard. Samuel could! David felt absolutely confident in the old man at this time!

So what we've really got in these verses then, let's just see where Samuel stands in the story at this point of time! He's really going to show himself as Samuel the **succourer** in these verses, isn't he? in this matter of caring for David. So notwithstanding the close proximity to Gibeah, David, in fleeing to Samuel in Ramah **felt safe**; he obviously felt that he could safely confide in Samuel as being a faithful friend and a confidant, one into whose ear he could pour out all his woes, in the knowledge that counsel would be kept in the matter. But he was more than that, wasn't he? in this story, because remember that despite the tremendous gulf in age, there was a remarkable bond, a spiritual bond, between the young captain and venerable prophet. David obviously felt drawn to Samuel as his spiritual guide and mentor. Remember as we said before, it's possible that David has already spent time with Samuel in Ramah, for that bond to develop perhaps before this occasion of his fleeing to him. We're told that David was taken by Samuel to dwell in Naioth, principally we believe, to strengthen him for the challenges that yet lie ahead. The moving experiences of collective praise and worship would have greatly boosted David's spirit, and here we see Samuel revealed therefore, as a **sympathetic teacher and a succourer** of David in his times of need.

Now it's interesting that, obviously I think, there was more than just a friendly meeting involved perhaps in this occasion. You see, there are signs in the record that this time, this time that David spent with Samuel, was well spent on planning the whole framework of Israel's worship, so Samuel was going to become **a practical organizer and advisor** to the king; **his friend, his guide, his teacher, his advisor!** Now just come and have a look at this reference in 1 Chronicles 9, actually we've looked at this one before, but I think it would pay dividends in terms of a revisit to the story. 1 Chronicles 9, so here we have David with Samuel in Ramah together in the college of the prophets, now let's just see what the chapter reveals to us! 1 Chronicles 9 verse 22 it says, 'All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were 212, these were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office'. Now that's interesting! 'whom **David and Samuel together** did ordain in their set office', when did Samuel and David ever organize that together? What opportunity was there for Samuel and David to collaborate together in the matters of organizing divine worship? Later on in David's life, we know there were a whole lot of things set up; there was the organization of the singers, and the courses of the priests, and a further commentary on the doorkeepers. There was a whole system of worship that was established in David's day. But this chapter tells us that he did it **with Samuel!** David had obviously spent time with Samuel on the matter of planning the kingdom; actually if you come back to 1 Samuel 10 for a moment, remember this passage here, verse 25, maybe this is where this verse has relevance as well; 'Then Samuel told the people **the manner of the kingdom**, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Yahweh', remember that? The Jerusalem bible translated the phrase, 'Samuel explained the royal constitution to the people'. So remember we made the point that Samuel had written down a charter for the organization of Israel under the monarchy; and I believe that some of these matters of worship and of the way in which the nation should be administered under the king, were written down by Samuel and it says, 'he inscribed it in a book and laid it up before Yahweh'. I think he took the book and gave it to David! I think the book if that's what was in the book, that Samuel gave it to David, and therefore, when we come to David's time, we suddenly find now a whole system of worship unfolding for the nation, and we have these little clues in the narrative that Samuel and David had cooperated together in these matters.

You know, Samuel must have been so thrilled by this opportunity to work with David and to see David's keen spiritual mind! As a matter of fact, there's a marvellous lesson here, let's get back to chapter 19, because here's David, he flees to Samuel and Samuel takes him into Naioth, but you see Samuel was never ever one to lose an opportunity to do good work in the truth. Here's a last opportunity for Samuel in this regard! and I can just see this happening, he says, 'Come on, come on, David!' and he takes him into Naioth into the school of the prophets, now he says, 'look, I know there are some problems here with Saul; but you and me, we've got some work to do together! We've got a little bit of time here to discuss further the planning of the

kingdom; now get out your pen and get writing, lad, because there's a few things I want to talk to you about!' and he spent time, you see, with David concerning the planning of the kingdom. I think there was a great blessing here also from God Himself for the benefit of the old prophet. You see, you can imagine what Samuel's grief was at the failure of his own sons; you can imagine Samuel's grief at the rejection of himself by the nation; you can imagine Samuel's feeling at the increasing burden of old age; you can imagine how Samuel felt when Saul was rejected and we have these signs in the record that the old man has withdrawn into Ramah, as it were, to mark his declining days. Now, along comes this young man, who loves the truth, who's keen concerning spiritual things, and Samuel's heart must have glowed with absolute joy to be able to talk to this young man and to lay up before him what was needed in the nation, as they talked together concerning the planning of the kingdom. There was a great blessing for Samuel in that, wasn't there? as he marked out the loneliness of his declining years and he was able to have this enormous comfort, that here was a man that truly would carry on the same principles that he himself had believed in all his life. I think that's what went on with David and Samuel in Naioth at Ramah!

Then 1 Samuel 19 verse 20 says, 'And Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul'. Now that's interesting because you see, we're going to have a whole series of chapters here in 1 Samuel, around about now on, that talk about Saul pursuing David. David wanders all over the wilderness, and wherever David goes, Saul goes; he hunts him, doesn't he? like a partridge. Hunts him like a bird, plays cat and mouse with him: creeping around mountains, stalking through forests, wherever David is, there's Saul not far behind; that's what these chapters are about, aren't they? Saul tracking David all over the kingdom, in order to try and tag him down to take his life, and yet remarkably we're told here, in verse 20, on this occasion Saul **sent messengers**; now the word 'messenger' here, 'malak' means as you would expect, literally 'to dispatch as a deputy' (4397) Now what's a **deputy**? Well, a deputy is somebody that you get to do something instead of you; so here you see, we've got Saul, for some reason showing a marked reluctance to actually go and capture David himself; do you know why?

Verse 19, because what he'd been told was, 'behold, David is at Naioth **in Ramah**'. That's Samuel's territory! ohhh no! I'm not going there! do you see that? One of the few occasions where Saul just doesn't seem to have any interest in going personally is on this occasion when David flees to Samuel, and it was because of Samuel. You see, Saul was still in **awe** of the old prophet, wasn't he? Actually, there is an interesting parallel there, the way that Saul was in **awe** of Samuel, isn't that the same as the way that Ahab viewed Elijah? isn't that the same way that Herod viewed John? You see, these were great men, weren't they? these trial blazers. Saul was so impressed still, with the old man, there was no way that he was going to anywhere near 'Ramah', not personally, he sent **deputies**! You know, there's an interesting lesson that comes out of that, isn't there? because just look at the difference between Saul and David here; you



see, here's a matter of crisis and when the crisis was upon David, he instinctively fled to Samuel. But when the crisis was upon Saul, he instinctively keeps away from Samuel. That's interesting, isn't it? So I suppose the question is, who are we drawn to in the truth? Who do we instinctively turn to in times of difficulty? who are our **real friends** in the truth? those to whom we are drawn will provide some indication as to our own spiritual state of mind. Saul wouldn't have a bar of going into Samuel's territory, no way.

So we're told he sent messengers. Now it says concerning the messengers, 'when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying'; if you come back to chapter 10 for a moment, this phrase 'the company of the prophets' is used, I think, on just two occasions, once in chapter 10 and once in chapter 19. On the first occasion that it's used here in chapter 10 verse 5, it says, 'After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy'. **Thou shalt meet a company of prophets**, and the word 'company' on this occasion is the Hebrew word 'chebel' and it means literally '**a rope as twisted together**' (2256). So here is the company of prophets, a group of men that were **bound together** in the things of the Spirit, they were, as it were, twisted together as a group, a cord that could not be quickly broken. Here was the company of the prophets! But when we come back to chapter 19, that is **not** the word used there in chapter 19 verse 20, it's a different word. It says there, 'when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying', and the word here in the Hebrew is the word 'lahaqah' (3862) and I think I'm right, I think this is the only time it's ever used; and it's believed that 'lahaqah' is a letter inverted form of 'qahal' (6951) and is the Old Testament equivalent of what New Testament word? ecclesia! So 'lahaqah', this is the only time it's used, as far as I'm aware, is considered to be a letter inverted form of 'qahal'. So really what the word means here in chapter 19 is, 'when they saw the ecclesia of the prophets prophesying. That's what was here! it was an **ecclesia** of prophets and they were busy 'prophesying' or as the word means 'to speak or to sing by inspiration' (5012); and I think both those things were going on; there was both speaking and singing going on here amongst the ecclesia of the prophets. Actually we have some idea how that works, in 2 Kings 3, we have an illustration of how this relationship between music and prophesying appeared to work in the schools of the prophets. It says in 2 Kings 3 verse 14 for connection, 'And Elisha said, as Yahweh of Armies liveth before whom I stand; surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee; but now, bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass **when the minstrel played**, that the hand of Yahweh came upon him'. So you see, there was a relationship here between music and the inspiration that then came upon Elisha the prophet; and that, I suppose is actually another interesting story in its own right, **that here we have music therefore, that was conducive to spiritual thoughts!** So that's important, isn't it? the sort of music that we're drawn to? and there is music that is helpful to the overall spiritual environment that we want to have in our houses and in our families and in our

ecclesias, and there is music that is not conducive to spiritual thoughts! and we need to be careful which one we follow. Here, whatever the music was, we can be quite sure that it was of a sufficiently godly nature to be of assistance in the work of prophesying that then followed.

So coming back then to the record in 1 Samuel 19 verse 20, that was obviously what was going on, on this occasion. There was a mixture of music and of speaking forth of divine things. By the way, I think we just need to remember that when we talk about the word 'prophesy', a prophet wasn't a **foreteller** so much as a **forthteller**; I'll just say that again, a prophet wasn't so much a **foreteller** as a **forthteller**. You see, there were many prophets that never made predictions, there were many prophets that never had a vision of the future; a prophet first and foremost was simply a person who **spoke forth God's mind**. Some of them made predictions, not all of them! so when it says that the company of the prophets were prophesying here, they may simply have been speaking forth the matters of divine principle and divine instruction. They weren't all necessarily making predictions about the future, they were simply speaking forth the divine thoughts and the divine will and there was music there as well.

We're told in the verse, aren't we? in addition to that, '**and Samuel standing as appointed over them**', now Young's Literal translates that phrase, 'Samuel standing sat over them'; the Jerusalem bible and the NIV both translate the phrase 'Samuel standing as their leader'; Rotherham says 'Samuel standing as head over them'. So what the phrase is telling us is that Samuel was presiding over the whole assembly, Samuel was the president of the assembly, so one came into the room and there was the company, the ecclesia of the prophets singing and speaking forth the matters of divine truth, and there at the front was the president of the whole assembly as the driving force and the guiding spirit of all those that were assembled, the old man! He was, and this was very much Samuel's spirit, wasn't it? you see, Samuel imbued that whole company of prophets with his own enthusiasm and his own attitude to the truth, and there they are altogether under his influence and control on this occasion. It's a remarkable story! and you know, there began a work amongst the nation, as we said before, that was going to last throughout the whole of the era of the kings. For that reason, we believe, Samuel goes down in the record as a prophet and not a judge, because this was probably his greatest work to establish the schools of the prophets.

Come and have a look at 2 Kings 23 just by way of illustration; just have a look at the way in which the record marks him out as a prophet even after he died. In 2 Kings 23 verse 22 we read concerning the Passover of Josiah these words, 'surely there was not holden such a Passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah'. So what it says here is that the Passover of Josiah was so wonderful that you'd have to compare it to either the days of the judges; there was nothing holden from the days of the judges nor in the days of the kings, the judges or the kings. Now come and have a look at the parallel record to that,

in 2 Chronicles 35, it mentions the **judges and the kings there**, doesn't it? but it doesn't mention any particular judge or any particular king, but 2 Chronicles 35 does in the parallel record. I want you to just see how it does mention it, in 2 Chronicles 35 and perhaps verse 17 for connection, 'And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened bread seven days. And there was **no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet**, neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as **Josiah** kept'. You see, in the Kings' record it compares it from the time of the **judges** to the times of the **kings**. In the Chronicles' record it mentions somebody, **from Samuel to the kings**, but it doesn't call Samuel a judge, it says **Samuel the prophet**, and he goes down in history, b&s, not so much as a judge as a prophet, because that was his greatest work.

Now just come to the New Testament just to illustrate that a little further, there are only three occasions in the New Testament where Samuel is mentioned (I'm going to come through them backwards, from Hebrews 11 backwards). These are the only three places where Samuel is mentioned in the New Testament record, now just see how he's taken up; how does the divine record summarize the work of Samuel. In Hebrews 11 verse 32, 'And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon (all right, so he's gone into the time of the judges) and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and **Samuel**, and of the prophets', says Hebrews. Do you see the way in which Samuel is removed from the era of the judges, David is put before him, in fact, Samuel, of course, comes before David, but here he comes after David, why? because he's linked to the work of the prophets; Samuel and the prophets. Now the fact of the matter is, that Samuel was actually the last judge, that's not how Hebrews shows him, is it? Hebrews says, 'no, there are the judges, and then David and Samuel and the prophets, and it brings them as being the beginning of that order of things (Hebrews 11, verse 32).

Come back to Acts 13, you see, I think what the scriptures are telling us here is, that this is the divine estimate of the importance of Samuel in this way. He goes down in the divine record as **the man that began the power and the force of the prophetic order in Israel**. In Acts 13 and verse 20, 'And after that He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, **until Samuel the prophet**'. So again, Samuel is not so much marked out here as being the last of the judges, but the first of the prophets. The last reference is in Acts 3, now these are the only 3 occasions that Samuel is found in the New Testament; Acts 3 verse 23, 'And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and **all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after**'. Now do you see that there? So not only does it tell us here that Samuel was a prophet, but he is very much counted as the **beginning** of the prophetic order. The order of the prophets is marked out as beginning with Samuel; all the prophets **from Samuel**, he is the **founding father** of the prophetic order, and he goes down in the divine record in that way. Not so much a judge as a prophet! because here we believe was his greatest

work. He was confirmed to be a prophet from his childhood, and even into old age, he was known, of course, as Samuel the Seer!

So despite his labours as a judge, he was recorded in later history as being preeminently both seer and prophet; and notice this, he was not the first with the prophetic gift, there were others before him who were able to prophesy; we're told that Abraham and Sarah were prophets. There were prophets in the days of Moses, there were prophets in the era of the judges, but **he was the founder of the prophetic office**. He was the man who organized the prophets as a **force** in Israel, like they'd never been before. He was the head of the first college of the prophets as we see here in chapter 19 verse 20 of 1 Samuel. So he goes down in the New Testament record, not so much as the last judge, but **the first in the era of the prophets**. This was the greatest of Samuel's work. You know, it's almost as if you can see that what he said here was this, 'I've lost my own sons, my own sons have failed me', and so what did he do? he gathered around him other young men that would be counted spiritually as his sons and he began an order of things that would be the voice and the conscience of the nation down through time. The bible marks him out for that! and says, 'there he was, it's all the prophets **from Samuel** and as many that follow after and he's given credit with organizing that influence in the land of Israel.

Here it is in 1 Samuel 19 verse 20, it all began from that moment of time, when he's seen here, presented in the record as the one who was the first president of the first school of the prophets. Well, in come the messengers of Saul, we really ought to press on with the story, so verse 20 tells us this: 'Saul sent messengers to take David' (now we've got to picture the scene) can you just see the scene! So up come the messengers of Saul from Gibeah, and they arrive at Ramah. They go from Ramah up into the high place, and there in the high place is a suburb called Naioth, and they go into Naioth which is the compound of the dwelling of the prophets. They go into the dwelling of the prophets and they go into the main chamber, and they opened the door and there's a whole company of prophets prophesying, and they've all got prophet's garb on, the rough garb of the prophet. David is somewhere in the group but you'd never be able to pick him out, because he's one amongst many. There's the old man himself down the front, presiding over this assembly; and they're so moved by that experience, says the 20th verse, 'that the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied'.

Verse 21, 'And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers', well, I'll read that from Rotherham's for you, because I think just the way Rotherham's expresses it, captures the intrigue of this moment. This is from the last phrase of verse 20 from Rotherham's, 'Then came the Spirit of God upon the messengers of Saul, and they also were moved to prophesy. And when they told Saul, he sent other messengers, and then were they also moved to prophesy. And again, when Saul sent messengers the third time, then were they also moved to prophesy'. You know, really you'd have to say **that Saul is**

**extremely reluctant to come to Ramah**, isn't he? he tries and he tries and he tries again to send somebody else, rather than come himself, and they're all caught up in this spirit of this great ecclesia of prophets under the guiding influence of Samuel on this occasion.

So verse 22 says, 'Then went **he also to Ramah**', actually the Septuagint version adds a phrase there, it says, 'And Saul was very angry and went himself to Ramah', and Moffatt in following the text of the Septuagint translation says, 'Then **Saul grew furious and he went himself**'. Now the question is, if he was furious and I think he was, by the way, if he was furious, what was Saul furious about? Was he furious about the ineffectiveness of his messengers? No, I don't think so! was he furious about the delay about apprehending David? No, I don't think that was the problem! I think that the fury that Saul felt on this occasion, was **an unreasoning rage against the enormous power of Samuel in that place!** some spiritual force that he knew Samuel had over others, that he did not understand and he could not control in any way. Do you think that's reading it into the story? it's there! let's just read the record carefully, I believe that that was the thing that was upsetting Saul most of all! **the influence of the old man!** Now look at verse 22 and just read the story, 'Then he went also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David?' Now you think, that's a bit strange, fancy asking where they are when he already knows! Well, although Saul had been told that's where they were, he asks the question on this occasion, not so much to establish where they were, but that they were still there, in other words, that they hadn't moved. So he says, where are they? but do you see what he says, did you miss it? you see what he says! Who's he after? he's after David but that's not what he says; he says, '**where's Samuel** and David'. He **wants David**, he **fears Samuel!** it's a revelation of his mind, where are Samuel and David? and the power of that old man in spiritual things was something that Saul never ever could understand, and he **rages against it** on this occasion and he reveals his mind in the way he blurts forth that question, where's Samuel and David?

'And one said, behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah'. So easily to read the verse quickly, isn't it? but you see what verse 23 is saying. Well, you see what happened to the messengers in verse 20: the messengers got to Ramah, they went up to the high place, they got to Naioth, they went into the compound, they opened the door, they went into the main room and then the Spirit of God came upon the messengers, says verse 20; that's not what happened to Saul in verse 23. We're told concerning Saul in verse 23, 'That he **was moved by the Spirit before he even arrived in Ramah**. In other words, long before the messengers had been affected, Saul was affected on his journey to that place. I believe it was the hand of God upon him that day, the hand of God reached out and touched Saul and he was influenced by that power, long before he even got in the orbit of Samuel on this occasion.

We're told in the 24th verse, now I'll tell you what, this really is an interesting verse, now you've got to read this carefully! It says, 'he stripped off his clothes also and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night'. Well, first of all I don't think he laid down naked; when it says 'he stripped off his clothes', the word for 'clothes' here, 'beged' (899) means 'a covering' but it has reference to his **outer garment**. What he took off was his outer garment, and do you know what garment that was? It was **his royal robe**, in fact, it's the same word if you come back to chapter 18 for a moment, it's the same word in 1 Samuel 18 verse 4, just look at this, it's a very similar phrase, it's the same word, in fact, in the Hebrew! 1 Samuel 18 verse 4, 'And Jonathan stripped himself of the **robe** that was upon him', now that was Jonathan's robe as a prince. He takes it off and he gives it to David, as a symbol of his allegiance; I think that's what Saul was doing on this occasion in chapter 19 verse 20, he strips off his royal robe. Now why did he do that, b&s? I want you to stop and think about this! you know you've got to read the record carefully. You know, in 1 Samuel 15 verse 26 we're told, 'that Saul was rejected by God; but rejected from what? and the answer is, he was rejected from being king! Isn't that true? God says, I have rejected Saul from being king; you know, if Saul had agreed with that and submitted to the divine will and handed over the reigns of government to David, he might have lived a good and prosperous, and a happy life under David's rule; it never said that God wanted Saul's life, just that he was rejected from being king! I believe on this occasion in 1 Samuel 19 verse 24 that Saul came within a hair's breadth of offering the kingdom to David. He came that close, he took off his royal robe, he gave it to Samuel as if to say, 'you can give the kingdom to David if you like'; it was that close! and if he'd done it, he would have lived, and the reason why Saul died was because he hung onto the kingship in defiance of the divine will and lost his life as a result. If he'd submitted to the divine edict concerning stepping down from the throne, his life would have been preserved; he almost did it on this occasion!

He stripped off the royal robe, he prophesied before Samuel in like manner and **he laid down**'. and you'll notice that the margin says 'he fell down', because the word means literally in the Hebrew 'to fall flat on your face' , in fact, the marginal reference is a good one, Numbers 24 verse 4, it talks about Balaam **falling into a trance**; so Saul falls flat on his face now as he's under the influence of the Spirit. Not only is he flat on his face but he's prophesying about the things of the truth, before whose feet? and the answer is, the man he feared the most, the old prophet of Ramah, and Saul here lies prostrated and helpless under the very feet of Samuel on this occasion. Such was the impact of the occasion of the moment!

You know, Stanley has an excellent comment about this particular moment of time in his History of the Jewish Church, volume 1 page 354, this is how Stanley puts it, an excellent little passage: He says, 'Under the shadow of his name, that is Samuel, they dwelt as within a charmed circle. Thither in that age of change and dissolution, Samuel

gathered round him, all that were generous and devoted in the people of God; David, the shepherd warrior and wandering outlaw; Saul, the wild and wayward king; Heman, the grandson of Samuel himself, chief singer afterwards in David's court and known especially as the king's seer; Gad, the devoted companion of David in his exile; Nathan, his stern reprover in after times, and the wise counsellor of David's son. Oh, how different their characters and stations, seemed to have found a home within those sacred haunts; all caught the same divine inspiration, all were for the time at least, drawn together by that invigorating and elevating atmosphere! And so they were, b&s, and it was all of Samuel! That whole spirit had come from Samuel, as he set about creating within the nation, a central core of people that loved the truth, that would be the voice and conscience of God down through time.

Now come and have a look at this very interesting cross reference, in 1 Corinthians 14, reading to compare scripture with scripture. In 1 Corinthians 14, we have, of course, the apostle's words on the outworking of the Spirit gifts, and what truly edifies and what doesn't. We're told there in verse 23, the apostle wishes to set before the ecclesia, the better virtues of the gift of prophecy as opposed to the gift of tongues; and he explains why prophecy is perhaps more beneficial to all, well, this is what he says! Now see if you can see the story of 1 Samuel 19, 'If therefore **the whole ecclesia** (the ecclesia of the prophets) be come together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers (the messengers of Saul) will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned (Saul), he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that **God is in you of a truth.**' Where did Paul get that idea from? But Saul, prostrated before Samuel, with all the secrets of his heart made manifest, and saying to Samuel that he'd known all along that God was in the old man, of a truth, amidst the ecclesia of the prophets, as they all prophesied on that occasion; isn't that an interesting way that the apostle draws on that story? and he talks about the superior benefits of prophecy in the ecclesia of God.

Now, b&s, as in the course of these studies, we've seen Samuel in several different lights, we've tried to look at some of his characteristics, all of which, of course, have been revealed to us, as we've seen his labours as an old man. We've seen him as Samuel the **humble**, in the wonderful esteem that he gave to Saul in his appointment; we've seen him as Samuel the **upright** as he set before the nation, his own integrity of principle, which had been the guiding spirit of his life. We've seen him as Samuel the **counsellor**, as he endeavoured to set before the nation, those principles he wanted them to learn, as an old man, that were the secret to real happiness in the truth. We've seen him as an **intercessor**, as he lifted up time and time again, his voice in loving prayer to intercede for the nation. We've seen him as Samuel the **faithful**, who as an old man lifted up a sword and hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh, because that's what Yahweh said should be done. Also, we've seen him as Samuel the

**compassionate** as he mourned for Saul and grieved all night in prayer to his God, that God would show mercy to the deposed king! We've seen him as Samuel the **depressed**, as the difficulties of life that came upon him, he sank into the depths of despair; and we've seen him with great joy as Samuel the **anointer**, as he learn to recognize that **God in all His sovereign greatness, had all things really under His control after all**, and Samuel had to learn to recognize that it's God's work and not ours.

We've seen him this morning, as Samuel the **succourer**, a man that could be a friend and an adviser, a counsellor, a guide. We have also seen him as Samuel the **prophet**, not the first man to have the prophetic gift, but the man who was about to commence an order of things that would resound through the nation's history ever after. Perhaps most of all, that's the way we ought to leave it, isn't it? that most of all Samuel was the one, who not only bridged one era to the other, but who threw all of his heart and all of his energies into doing what he could to prepare the nation for that next time; he was most of all, the **preparer**, wasn't he? he did everything possible to help the nation into that next period of time. He goes down in history, as the one who had established the order of the prophets to be a voice and a conscience.

You think of the reforms of other men: you think of the times of Isaiah and of Hezekiah, and of Jehoshaphat, and of Josiah, all great men in their own right, but often with those reforms when the man that lead them died, the reform died with them, and there was nothing to follow on! Not so with Samuel! Samuel began a spirit that lasted in the nation, and there was a legacy that he left as a bequest to the nation, and that was a group of men who loved the truth, who studied the truth, and spoke the truth, and were there for generations onwards, all because of what he began. You know, I think perhaps that that's the greatest thing that he did; and what did he do? It's the greatest challenge that we all face, **he stimulated the generation to follow!** His greatest work was, not so much his own labours as a judge, **but** what he did to pass the truth to the next generation, that it might live on after him. Isn't that really where his greatness lies? Isn't that why he goes down in history as **Samuel the first of all the prophets?** and isn't that also the greatest work that we can do ourselves in our ecclesias, and in our families, amidst ourselves? is to help pass on to the next generation, not only our love of the truth, but those skills of bible study and of meditation and of prayer, so the light of the truth can burn in the next generation. If we could only do that, then we would truly echo Samuel's greatest work! He was after all, Samuel the Seer, do you know what 'seer' means? it means just as in the Hebrew so in the English, **'to see'** (7200). That's what Samuel did, you see, he saw ahead for the needs of the nation! He saw ahead for what the nation would need and he did everything possible to provide for that.

So then, in those things, we see the mark of his true greatness, as the record closes on this occasion with Samuel, standing over the ecclesia of the prophets; and even king Saul prostrated before his feet, confessing that God was intimate of the truth; the



secrets of his heart manifest, his royal robe cast aside, the kingdom almost given to David, in that brief wonderful moment of time. To continue the work to come, is the challenge that we must all take up, from the life of the old man, known as Samuel the Seer.