

The Sunday-School.

THIRD QUARTER,
LESSON II.—July 12.

SAUL CHOSEN 111

I SAMUEL 10: 17-27.

Read I Sam. Chapters 9, 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The Lord is our King
he will save us.*—Isa. 33:22.THE LESSON.—The account of Saul's
first meeting with Samuel, I. Sam. 9:
1 to 10, and the lesson, I Sam. 10: 17-
27.LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 24, 25; Prov.
16: 33; Eph. 4: 1, 2.HISTORICAL. SETTING.—Time. The
chronology is uncertain. 1079 B.C., ac-
cording to the Cambridge Bible.Place.—*Mispeh*. (or Mizpah) the
"watchtower," is a name given to sev-
eral places in Palestine. The Mizpah
of our lesson is generally held to be
the present Neby Samwil, a hill near
Ramah and Geba, five miles from Jeru-
salem.GOD'S PREPARATION OF A KING.—I
Sam. 9: 1 to 10: 16. After rehearsing
the people's demand for a king, the
author of the book of Samuel looks
backward, and traces the history of
Saul, who was to fill the great
position. This young man be-
longed to the tribe of Benjamin. His
father was Kish, "a mighty man of
power," who dwelt in Gibeah. Saul is
described as "choice and goodly," and
of unusual height.Saul was sent one day after his father's
drove of asses. Arriving at Ramah,
he besought the help of Samuel, the
prophet. Obeying a God-sent dream,
Samuel entertained the young man over
night, and in the morning poured upon
his head the sacred oil and kissed him,
thus setting him apart for his kingly
destiny. On Saul's way home from this
mysterious ceremony he was met by
one of the companies of prophets which
Samuel had organized. They were
chanting hymns, and Saul, seized with
a divine fervor, joined in their religious
exercises. As to the anointing for the
kingship, Saul kept absolute silence.In this history there are disclosed
several kingly features of Saul's character:
(1) his trustworthiness, (2) his
perseverance, (3) his respect for religion,
(4) his ready yielding to impulses from
on high, (5) his modesty and prudence.
Alas, that his entire career did not follow
out the promise of his young manhood!THE FINAL WARNING.—Vs. 17-19.
The historian tells how Samuel made
known God's choice to the people. *And
Samuel called the people together.* He
convoked the national assembly, or
'congregation of Israel.' This body was
composed of all Israelites of twenty
years old and upwards. *Unto the Lord.*
The Hebrews associated God's presence
with particularly holy places, such as
Bethel and Mizpah. The phrase im-
plies the presence of the ark, or the
tabernacle, or the high priest's ephod.
To Mispeh. Samuel chose this spot
for the assembly on account of the
memories of his own victory, many
years before, at that place.*And said unto the children of Israel.*
What follows is a summary of what
was doubtless a long oration. *Thus
saith the Lord . . . I brought up Israel
out of Egypt.* They were constantlyforgetting it, just as we forget our past
blessings. *And delivered you . . . out of
the hand of all kingdoms, and of them
that oppressed you.* Jehovah had al-
ways done for them the very things for
which they desired a king. *And ye
have this day rejected your God.* By
desiring to shake off his direct rule
and authority. *Who himself saved you.*
Literally, "Who is a Saviour to you."
*And ye have said unto him, Nay, but
set a king over us.* They had spoken to
Samuel, God's representative. *Now
therefore present yourselves before the
Lord.* Come together in solemn as-
sembly. *By your tribes, and by your
thousands.* Moses had instituted a
division of the tribes into thousands,
hundreds, fifties, and tens.*In modern times God is rejected:* (1)
by those that openly defy him, and
scout the claims of religion; (2) by
those that live for mammon, disregard-
ing religion; (3) by those that profess
religion, but bend all their desires upon
the things of the world. The last was
the case of the Israelites.THE DIVINE SELECTION.—Vs. 20-22.
Having uttered this solemn warning,
Samuel perceived that further expostu-
lation was useless, and proceeded to a
confirmation of the secret choice God
had already made. *And when Samuel
had caused all the tribes of Israel to
come near.* The choice is made by the
sacred lot. *The tribe of Benjamin was
taken.* By selecting a king from this
least and nearly extinct tribe (Jud. 20),
divine wisdom designed to remove all
grounds of jealousy among the other
tribes. The names of the tribes graven
on stones or written on slips of parch-
ment, were placed in the sacred bag of
the high priest's breastplate, in presence
of the princes and elders. Then the
high priest draws one forth. The one
drawn was marked 'Benjamin.' Why
did Samuel draw lots when Saul had
already been selected? That the people
might have a visible token that the
choice of this obscure youth was from
God. *The family of Matri was taken.*
This family is not mentioned elsewhere
in the Bible. *And Saul the son of Kish
was taken.* The narrative omits the lot
cast among the heads of households, by
which Kish was selected. *And when
they sought him, to present him to the
people he could not be found.* Saul hid
himself through modesty, and natural
shrinking from the exalted position.
*Therefore they enquired of the Lord
further.* The technical phrase for as-
certaining God's will by means of the
Urim and Thummin in the breast-
plate upon the high priest's ephod. It
is not known what these were nor how
they were used. *And the Lord answered.
Behold, he hath hid himself among
the stuff.* The baggage.SAUL'S STATELINESS.—Vs. 23-25.
Learning thus where Saul was to be
found, the people sought him out. His
physical fitness was at once made mani-
fest. *He was higher than any of the
people from his shoulders and upward.*
He is conjectured to have been not less
than seven feet high. *And Samuel said
to all the people, See ye him whom the
Lord hath chosen. . . . And all the
people shouted, and said, God save the
king.* This was the greeting usually
given a ruler. *Then Samuel told the
people the manner of the kingdom.* A
charter establishing and defining the po-
sition of the king in relation to Jehovah
and to the people. In substance, at any
rate, it probably resembled the law of*the king in Deut. 17: 14-20. And wrote
it in a book.* The reference may be to
"the book of the law," the book in which
Moses inscribed his system of govern-
ment. There were added to it histori-
cal narratives and other important rec-
ords. *And laid it up before the Lord.*
That is, beside the ark, which was then
in Kirjath-jearim. It is a solemn
thought that all our engagements are
laid up before the Lord. *And Samuel
sent all the people away.* Samuel had
not lost his supremacy. And till the
end of his life, though he appeared sel-
dom, whenever he came forward it was
as leader and chief.THE NEW KING TESTED.—Vs. 26, 27.
The new king was immediately tested
in three respects,—his power to win
friends, his ability to meet enemies at
home, his power to conquer foes abroad.
He met all three tests successfully.
And Saul also went home. He wisely
chose to make quiet preparation for his
work. *And there went with him a band
of men.* Warriors, who wished to form
his bodyguard. *Whose hearts God had
touched, drawing them to Saul.* But
the children of Belial said. Belial is
not a proper name but a common noun,
signifying "worthlessness." *How shall
this man save us?* Perhaps they were
princes of the leading houses of the
tribes of Judah and Ephraim, who were
disgusted at the choice falling on an
unknown man of the small tribe of Ben-
jamin. *And they despised him and
brought him no presents.* The token
homage. *But he held his peace.* The
best answer to a taunt or an insult is
absolute silence. By his silence Saul
showed that he was master of himself.
Saul soon had an opportunity to prove
himself worthy to be king. From east
of the Jordan came an army of the fierce
Ammonites, under their king, Nahash,
(I Sam. 11: 1-11). Gathering a great
army of 330,000 men, Saul totally rout-
ed his adversaries. Thus he won the
confidence of the people. Thus fortun-
ately did Saul's reign open, with victory
over his foes, with a devoted people,
and with Samuel for his sage counselor.

BOOK POISON.

Some one asked the late Dwight
L. Moody if he had read a certain book.
He replied, "No, I believe there is poi-
son in it; at least, I have heard so on
good authority." The friend said, "But
wouldn't it be well to read it for your-
self?" No," said Mr. Moody; "if I
take poison in my stomach, the doctor
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in my mind? I might never be able to
get it out."

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