

BIBLICAL BIOGRAPHIES



SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

“Very often the introduction of a character tells us something absolutely fundamental to who they are that is going to shape our perception of them. Often that is an action they do [or] it might be a physical characteristic about them.”

DAVID G. FIRTH

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

Sermon Theme

As we examine Saul's introductory episode in 1 Samuel 9, we discover three key theological realities:

1. Saul is a judgment from God
2. Saul is a foil for David
3. Saul is an apologetic for God as King.

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

A. The Poetics [Art] of Hebrew Narrative

- i. The inspired narrator never explicitly states the theme or intent of a passage, so you must discover it and anchor it to the primary plot of the book.
- ii. The omniscient narrator has access to all the information but only gives some of it and what he does give, he arranges to serve the primary plot.
- iii. The way a new character is introduced into the narrative often characterizes or foreshadows the rest of their life in keeping with the primary plot.

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

A. The Poetics [Art] of Hebrew Narrative

B. The Anticipation of Israel's First King

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Theme of 1 Samuel

God is transitioning His people, the nation of Israel, from being led by *temporary judges* to being ruled over by a *permanent king*.

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

A. The Poetics [Art] of Hebrew Narrative

B. The Anticipation of Israel's First King

- i. Previewed in Earlier Biblical Revelation
- ii. Fulfilled in the Narrative of 1 Samuel



“Kingship lies at the heart of Samuel.”

DAVID G. FIRTH, COMMENTARY ON 1–2 SAMUEL

“The crime of the people, then, was not their request for a king, but their expectation that a human king could succeed where they believed the Lord had failed.”

ANDREW HILL AND JOHN WALTON, A SURVEY OF THE OT

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS


1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

II. Saul and the Lost Donkeys (9:1–20)

A. Saul's Problematic Credentials (1–2)

- i. He is connected to the events described in Judges 17–21
- ii. He is not from the tribe of Judah
- iii. He is only described in physical terms



“Most notable in Saul’s introduction is its lack of any mention of qualities beyond the physical. Traits and abilities are not noted.”

V. PHILIPS LONG, COMMENTARY ON 1–2 SAMUEL

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel


II. Saul and the Lost Donkeys (9:1–20)

A. Saul's Problematic Credentials (1–2)

B. Saul's Troublesome Abilities (3–10)

i. He can't find the donkeys (3–4)

ii. He doesn't offer a solution (5–10)



“According to the general principle of biblical narrative that the first reported speech of a character is a defining moment of characterization, Saul’s first utterance reveals him as a young man uncertain about pursuing his way.”

ROBERT ALTER, COMMENTARY ON THE HEBREW BIBLE

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

II. Saul and the Lost Donkeys (9:1–20)

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i. He can't find the donkeys (3–4)

ii. He doesn't offer a solution (5–10)

a. The slave suggests seeking out the man of God (6–7)

b. The slave provides a gift for the man of God (8–10)



“Saul’s unnamed servant proves to be more resourceful than he is.”

JAMES HAMILTON, GOD’S GLORY IN SALVATION THROUGH JUDGMENT

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I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

II. Saul and the Lost Donkeys (9:1–20)

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C. The Women's Helpful Instructions (11–14)

D. Samuel's Insider Information (15–17)

“What the narrator has concealed is that this series of perfectly normal events is not independent of Yahweh’s greater purposes. By means of a direct intrusion into the narrative ... we discover that Yahweh has a far more important purpose for Saul than we might have expected, and even the (temporary) loss of the donkeys was not simply an accident but part of Yahweh’s providential purpose that involves Saul’s appointment as Israel’s leader.”

DAVID G. FIRTH, COMMENTARY ON 1–2 SAMUEL

SAUL AND THE CASE OF THE LOST DONKEYS

1 Samuel 9

I. Saul and the Narrative World of 1 Samuel

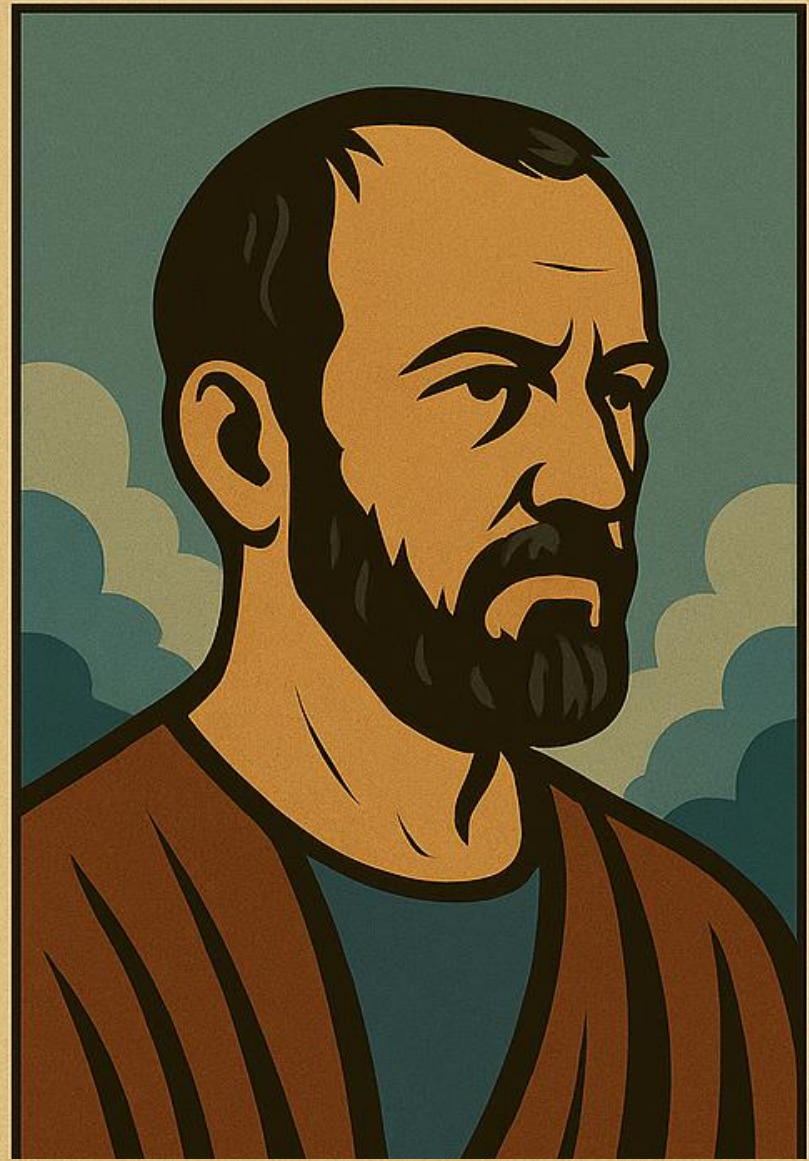
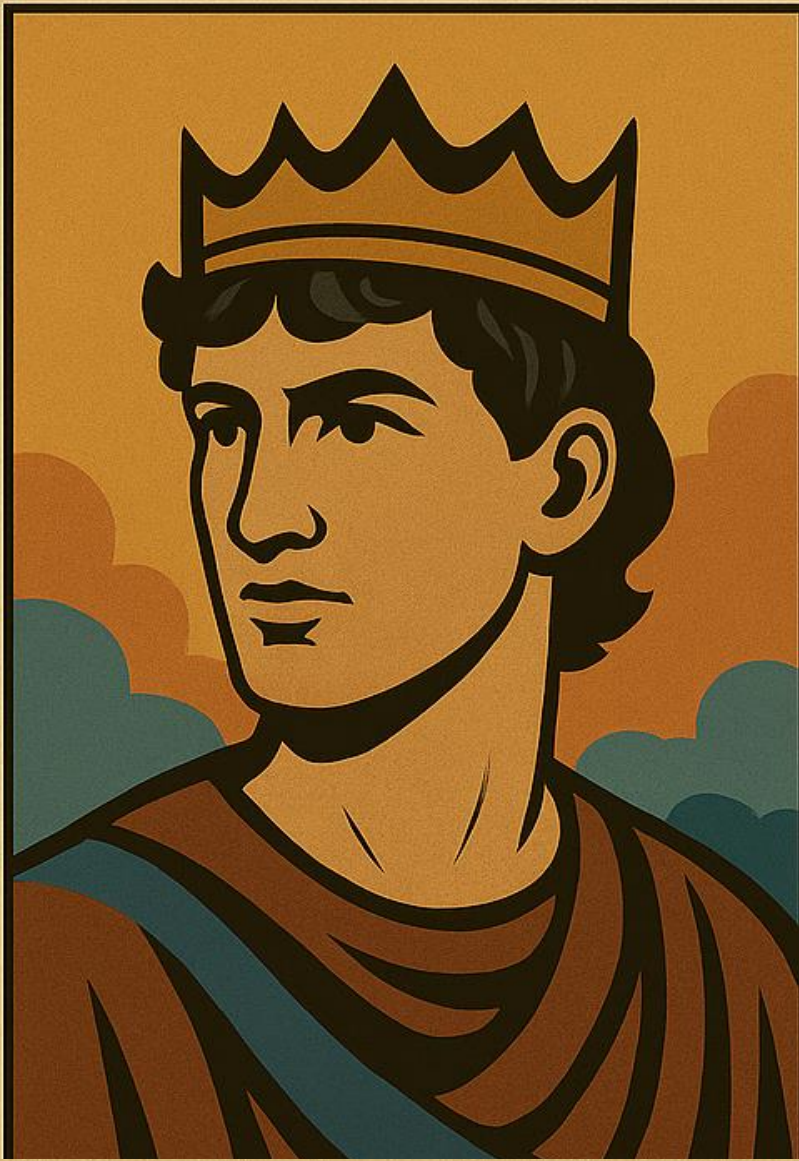
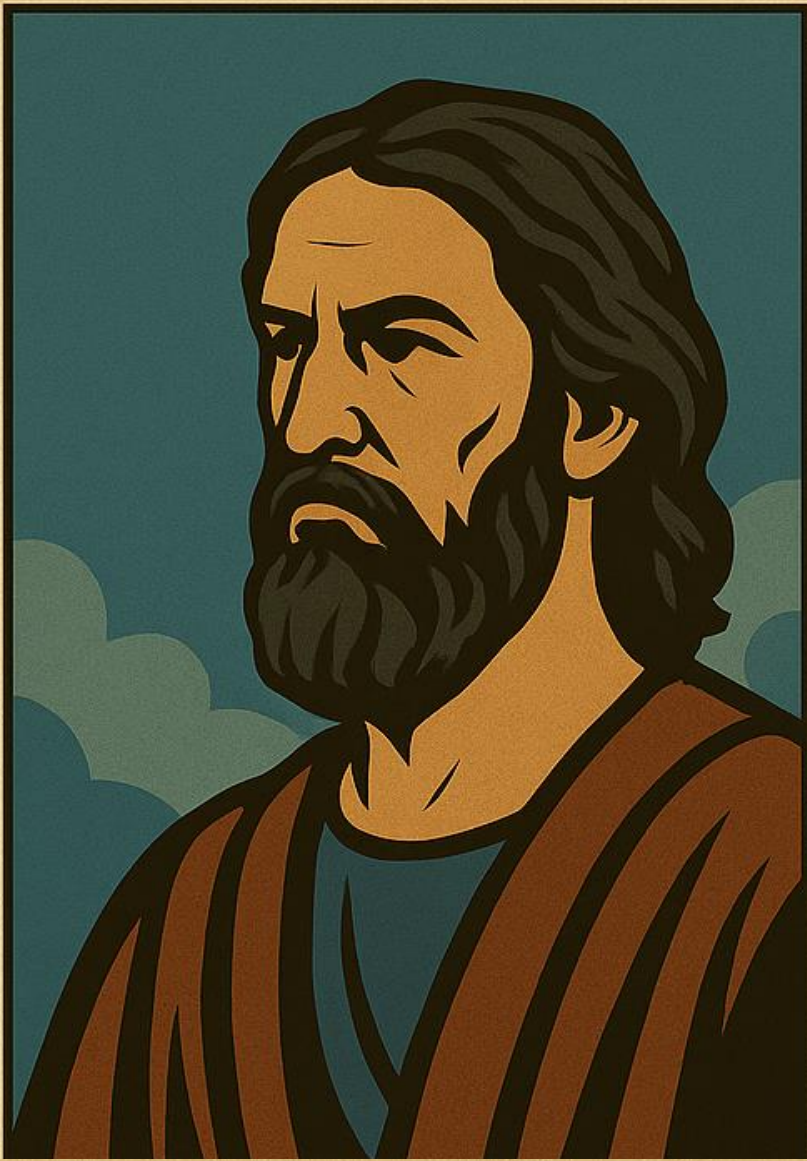
II. Saul and the Lost Donkeys (9:1–20)

III. Saul and His Infamous Legacy

A. He is a judgment from God

B. He is a foil for David

C. He is an apologetic for God as King



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