

October 30, 2022

“David Anointed as King”
Lesson 5 of Unit

I Samuel 16:1-13

Intro

In last week's lesson, the people ask for a king, and God directs Samuel to choose Saul in chapter 10. Two years later, in chapter 13, Saul offers a sacrifice in Samuel's absence. This causes him to lose God's favor in being king, as Samuel tells him, “You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God which He commanded you.” Samuel tells him at that moment that Saul's reign will come to an end, and God will choose another who is “a man after His own heart.” This will be David. However, Saul's reign lasts 40 years before David becomes king. So it is known for a long time that David will become king. Today's passage deals with Samuel's reactions to all this, and with the choosing of David.

Read I Samuel 16:1-13

1. vs. 1: God asks a question of Samuel, then gives him a task

First, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king?”

Samuel is sorrowing over Saul's rejection; Samuel wants good things for Israel

God tells him that the time for sorrowing is over; it's time to move on

Second, he is to go to Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of his sons as the new king

The horn he fills with oil is often a symbol of power, especially God's power

Jesse is the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, a strong spiritual lineage

2. vs. 2: Samuel is worried about Saul's reaction to Samuel's task—“He will kill me”

To get to Bethlehem, Samuel will have to go through Saul's hometown of Gibeath

Strong chance that Saul or those connected to him will realize what's happening

God gives Samuel protection

“Take a heifer...and say, “I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.”

Samuel has done many sacrifices while traveling

See I Sam 7:9, 9:12-13, 10:8

It's not the only thing he's doing, but it will be done when anointing the new king

A heifer is a female cow; usually males are offered in sacrifices

However, in a fellowship offering, either a male or female could be used (Lev. 3:1)

The only requirement is that it have no blemish

This sacrifice is not connected with any specific festival

Therefore it is most likely a fellowship offering

3. vs. 3: Note how God is giving Samuel instructions one at a time

Vs. 1: take a horn of oil and go find Jesse of Bethlehem

Vs. 2: take a heifer as a sacrifice when you go

Vs. 3: invite Jesse to the sacrifice

“I will show you what to do”

Samuel is walking by faith in God's leading

He obeys each action he is called to do, trusting that God will tell him more when needed

4. vs. 4: Samuel obeys and arrives in Bethlehem to an interesting reaction

The elders tremble when he arrives—why?

The text doesn't say

Prophets from this time on gain a reputation for bringing punishment and bad news

The people may have feared something like this

They ask "Do you come in peace?"

This Hebrew word for peace here means more than a lack of violence

It also carries the idea of wholeness and well-being

5. vs. 5: Sacrifices were done in this way because there wasn't a temple yet

An altar could be built according to God's specifications (see Ex. 20:24-26)

Samuel also tells the people to consecrate themselves

This is an act of preparation

washing to remove ritual uncleanness

putting on freshly washed clothes

The idea is that, though no gift could be good enough for God from man, God accepts what comes from a clean heart.

Jesse and his sons are consecrated and brought close to the sacrifice

6. vs. 6: The eldest son, Eliab, seems to Samuel like a fitting choice

Being the firstborn son entitled him to high honors

The eldest inherited a double portion compared to the younger brothers

Jesse probably brought Eliab first because he was the oldest and therefore most likely

Maybe he looked kingly, like Saul did

7. vs. 7: Here is God's answer to Samuel, and one of the more familiar ideas about God in Scripture

God says, "Don't consider his appearance or his height"

So he must have had the look of a king/leader, like Saul

God says He has rejected Eliab

"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

This is similar to what God says in Isaiah 55:8-9

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."

This is a key difference between God and man—how each sees things

People get distracted by appearances; God does not

God looks at a person's heart

God knows a person's character, like Eliab's, which Samuel can't see

In ch. 17, Eliab will not stand up to Goliath

He also chastises David for coming to the battle

8. vs. 8-9: Jesse calls his next two sons, Abinadab and Shammah

God's response to each of them is "The Lord has not chosen this one"

9. vs. 10: Jesse has his first seven sons do the same thing, but God rejects all of them.

10. vs. 11: Samuel basically says, “Anyone else?”

Jesse acknowledges David, out tending the sheep

David is not present for this consecration

Perhaps Jesse didn’t think him worthy to be there

Perhaps there was no one else to watch the sheep

Jesse describes David as “the youngest”, which could also mean “the smallest”

This idea of appearance equaling worth is a very human tendency

It contrasts with God’s views in vs. 7

David is a shepherd to his sheep

This caring / protective quality is what God seeks in one who leads His people

See Psalm 23, Is. 40:11, and John 10:1-18

Samuel tells Jesse to bring this youngest son in

It is so important, they won’t sit to eat the sacrifice until he arrives

11. vs. 12: David’s appearance is noted here

He is “glowing with health”, had a “fine appearance and handsome features”

He also looks the part of a leader/king

But he is obviously younger and smaller than his brothers

Again, humans frequently base leadership on observable physical traits

This again shows how God differs from man

A person could be God’s person and look attractive or look ugly

God doesn’t care; he wants the heart

God tells Samuel, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”

12. vs. 13: David is anointed right then and there

He is still in his dirty, smelly, shepherd’s clothes

David’s brothers, who are all washed and clean, have to watch their brother

God looks at David’s clean heart, not his outwardly dirty appearance

The brothers, clean on the outside, are rejected because of their hearts

Anointing, until Saul and David, was traditionally a religious devotional experience

Priests or objects presented as holy to the Lord were anointed

David is also anointed with the Holy Spirit

This reminds us of Jesus’ baptism, where the Spirit descended like a dove

Jesus is the fulfillment to David of one of his seed having an eternal throne

David is the imperfect human with a heart towards God

Jesus is the perfect example of God’s very image

Application: God chooses from a different perspective than man. We make choices and decisions based on what we see and feel. But we are called to see with spiritual eyes. We too have the Spirit, who does not lead us to fear what we see, but to trust in what we cannot see with physical eyes. We don’t see the whole story and all the steps to take, as God does. He only shows us a step or two at a time. For most of us, that is more than enough. It would be good of us not to despair at the world’s failings and faults that we see, but to ask God to help us see them through His eyes—to see past the problems and the sin to His redemption and His desire for the hearts of all people to turn to Him.

Prayer: Father God, help us learn to value the heart in a person over outward appearances. Help us continually seek You, that our hearts may be described as “after God’s own heart.” We ask you to keep transforming us into the image of Jesus. In His name we pray, Amen.