Quarter Theme: Generations—From Canaan to Jerusalem

November Theme: From Judges to Kings

November 22, 2026 "David is Anointed King" 1 Samuel 16:4-13
Lesson 4

Intro

The exodus took place about 400 years before the events in today's study. Because of the failures of Samuel's two sons, the elders of Israel ask for a king to rule over them, like the other nations around them have. Samuel didn't want to do this; asking for a king amounts to rejecting God for them. But God directs him to give the people what they ask for. So Saul becomes king, starting well but disobeying God on two occasions. God rejects him as king, and has Samuel anoint Saul's replacement.

Read 1 Samuel 16:4-13

1. vs. 4: First, Samuel obeys God and leaves his home in Ramah to go to Bethlehem
   This is a day journey, between 10-20 miles
   Second, the elders "tremble" when Samuel arrives—why?
   They ask if he "comes in peace"
   Several possibilities exist
   1) Samuel brought a heifer, perhaps a sacrifice for a sin that needs cleansing
   2) Samuel executed King Agog of the Amalekites in ch.15; something similar now…?
   3) There has been a lot of discord between Saul and David at this point
      Samuel's arrival / purpose may put the elders in a dangerous position with Saul

2. vs. 5: Samuel tells them he does indeed come in peace
   This de-escalates the tension
   Samuel can't tell them why he's come; it will draw Saul's anger
   Instead, he says he has come to "sacrifice to the Lord"
   Samuel tells Jesse and his sons to consecrate themselves and come with him
   Consecrating means to make ritually clean to be in God's holy presence
   Calling Jesse and his family is the first step in Samuel obeying God's command

3. vs. 6: God told Samuel in chap. 16 that he would anoint one of Jesse's sons as the next king
   But God didn't him which one
   When Samuel sees Eliab, he sees someone who looks like king material
   He is the eldest of Jesse's sons
   Traditionally, the eldest has more rights and responsibilities than the other sons

4. vs. 7: God knows what Samuel is thinking, and corrects this misunderstanding here
   Eliab is indeed tall and handsome and the eldest son, a natural choice for king
   Saul had the same qualities which made him a good choice for king
   The word "look" gets used 3 times in this verse alone, 9 times in vs. 1-18
   Humans care about how things look on the outside, to the eye
   God looks not at the outward, but "at the heart"

In the Near East, the heart is considered the center of a person
Their thoughts, their emotions, their reason, and their conscience
God is looking for a leader with a strong character over an impressive physique
God says in 13:14 he's looking for a "man after His own heart"

5. vs. 8-9: Two of Jesse's sons are presented to Samuel, but both are rejected
These two are the second and third oldest; they aren't what God is seeking

6. vs. 10: Seven of Jesse's sons pass by Samuel, but God says none of them are who He wants
In Hebrew tradition, seven is the number of completion and fullness
As we will see in the next verse, these are not all of Jesse's sons

7. vs. 11: Since God has rejected all of these, Samuel knows there must be another son missing
God told Samuel he would anoint one of Jesse's sons as the kind
So Samuel asks Jesse if this is all, and as suspected, one is missing
The youngest is tending the sheep
The youngest is the least likely to fulfill the role of king
This son is to be brought immediately; nothing else will be done until he is seen

8. vs. 12: Jesse sends for this last son, and he is brought before Samuel
He is described as "glowing with health" with a "fine appearance"
Though this is not God's prime requirement, this son does have the good looks down
This is likely a healthy complexion from being outside with the sheep all day
God gives Samuel the go-ahead: "Rise and anoint him; this is the one"
Anointing involved pouring oil over an object or person
It is used to show something set apart for God, for a healing, or for protection
In the OT, sometimes priests, prophets, and kings are anointed
Not all kings are anointed, only some
Saul, the first king
The beginning of a new dynasty (David)
Identifying the legitimate heir in a situation of conflict
The phrase "The Lord's anointed one" came to be translated as "Messiah" or "Christ"
The people were waiting for a new anointed one, the Messiah

9. vs. 13: Samuel anoints David in front of his brothers
Samuel doesn't announce that this is David's anointing as the next king
It is believed that David is about 15 here; he becomes king at about 30
The Spirit of the Lord comes upon David at this point, a sign of God's presence and favor
It came upon Saul also, but left him because of his disobedience
The Spirit stays on/with David throughout his life
This is a sign of God's choosing him, and then equipping him

Application: God chose David based on his heart. People has expectations of what made someone fit to be king, but God selected the youngest child from an insignificant family instead. God loves to select people that the world does not see as valid or worthy. So we can be encouraged that God can use us, too. At the same time, this story serves as a warning as well. We are reminded to reduce and then eliminate our confidence in human ability or beauty. God can indeed use these qualities, but they do not qualify us for God's work. If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that sometimes (sometimes more than sometimes…), we do things to gain attention so we might receive praise or greater authority or greater influence. It can be easy to use superficial cultural standards to evaluate our effectiveness or ability. We don't have a window into any else's heart, but we do have a window into our own. Reflect and meditate on your own heart this week. Examine if you are valuing spiritual wisdom, peace, and integrity over outward appearances.

Prayer: Father God, help me to trust that Your choices are best. Help me to see with Your eyes, to focus on godly character rather than outward appearances. May this be especially so as I look at my own life and character over another's. In Jesus' name, Amen.