

1 Samuel 16
September 18, 2022

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

There are some really good camera angles to today's passage, so I am going to start us off by looking at this passage from the vantage point of Samuel.

Background: God commands Samuel to anoint a new king, since God has rejected Saul as the king of Israel. You will recall from last week's text that Samuel told Saul, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. ²⁹ He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind."

As we'll see in today's text, Samuel tells the Lord, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me." So the Lord told him to take a sacrifice and go to sacrifice in Bethlehem.

Q: Do you think God was suggesting Samuel do something deceptive? [Let people engage]

Transition: Let's read the text and see what transpires. Would someone volunteer to read 1 Sam 16?

BOOK:

Samuel Anoints David

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

² But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

⁵ Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ⁹ Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰ Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down (or not gather) until he arrives."

¹² So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.”

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

David in Saul’s Service

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil (or injurious) spirit from the LORD tormented him.

¹⁵ Saul’s attendants said to him, “See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. ¹⁶ Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better.”

¹⁷ So Saul said to his attendants, “Find someone who plays well and bring him to me.”

¹⁸ One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him.”

¹⁹ Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.” ²⁰ So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.

²¹ David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. ²² Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, “Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.”

²³ Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

God’s action followed His omniscient plan to use Saul’s disobedience as the human occasion for implementing His higher plan. God had permitted the people to have the **king** of their choice. Now that that king and their mistake in choosing him had been clearly manifested, God proved the superiority of His own wisdom in raising up a king who would come in fulfillment of His perfect will.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Sa 16). Victor Books.

We enter now into a study of the life of David, “the man after God’s own heart.” As Saul is a picture of the carnal life, so David is a picture of the spiritual life of the believer who walks by faith in the Lord. It is true that David sinned. Unlike Saul, however, David confessed his sins and sought to restore his fellowship with God. We see in these chapters three scenes in David’s early life.

I. The Obedient Son (16:1–13)

What a solemn statement: “I have rejected Saul!” This rejection was not yet known to the people, and Saul was still “putting on a front” as the king of the land. A person may be rejected by God and still be accepted by men, but ultimately God’s judgment will fall. So dangerous was Saul that Samuel had to devise a plan to escape his wrath when visiting Bethlehem. See 22:17–19 for a sample of Saul’s jealous rage.

When, at God’s direction, Samuel arrived at the house of Jesse to invite them to the feast, David was not even there! He was in the fields caring for the sheep. We cannot help but be impressed with David’s obedience and humility. As the “baby of the family” he had very little status, but he was faithful to his father and to the Lord. David’s life illustrates Matt. 25:21—he began as a servant and became a ruler; he was faithful with a few sheep and then inherited the whole nation; he knew how to work, so God gave him joy. Compare this to the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, who began as a leader and ended as a servant; began owning many things and ended up poor; and started with pleasure but finished in slavery. Matthew 25:21 outlines God’s method of success, and we see it proved in the life of David.

Samuel was about to make the mistake of evaluating the men by their physical gifts (see 10:24) when God reminded him that the heart was the important thing. Read Prov. 4:23. When David appeared, summoned from the field, God told Samuel, “This is he!” David was fair of skin, and he had red hair. His handsome appearance and his surrendered heart were a wonderful combination. He was the eighth son, and eight is the number of new beginning. His anointing with oil brought him a special unction from the Spirit of God, and from that hour he was God’s man. It is not likely that David or his family understood the significance of the anointing that day. Samuel would certainly explain it to David at an opportune time.

II. The Humble Servant (16:14–23)

What a tragic contrast: the Spirit came upon David, but departed from Saul! An evil spirit was permitted by God to afflict Saul and he became, at times, like a madman. See 18:10 and 19:9. His strange behavior prompted his servants to suggest that he call a skilled musician to soothe him. How sad that Saul’s servants dealt with the symptoms and not with the causes, for music could never change Saul’s sinful heart. True, the king might “feel better” afterward, but it would be a false peace. The servants should have prayed for Saul to get right with God! David was just the man Saul needed, and one of the servants suggested him. Already we can see David’s abilities being recognized, yet David was not promoting himself: God was doing it. Read carefully Prov. 22:29; also 1 Peter 5:6. Too many young people today try to push themselves into prominent places without first proving themselves at home in the small matters. David came to

court and immediately became a favorite. Of course, had Saul known that God had chosen David to be king, he would have immediately tried to kill the lad. When he did discover this, Saul began to persecute David and hunt him in the wilderness of Israel.

David did not remain permanently at court; 17:15 should read, “But David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep.” He would visit the court when needed, but he did not neglect his responsibilities at home. What humility! Here is a gifted lad, chosen to be king, anointed of God, yet he still cares for the sheep and works as a servant! No wonder God was able to use David.

Merrill, E. H. (1985). 1 Samuel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, p. 447-448) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

a. The choice and anointing of David (16:1–13)

16:1–13. After Saul’s further rebellion against the Lord and his subsequent rejection by **the LORD**, Samuel was commissioned to seek out the **one** who would succeed Saul on the throne of **Israel**. This one had already been identified as “a man after [God’s] own heart” (13:14) and “one of [Saul’s] neighbors” who was “better than” he (15:28). David had been chosen from eternity past to be ruler of Israel. The rejection of Saul did not force **the LORD** to a new course of action. Rather, God’s action followed His omniscient plan in such a way as to use Saul’s disobedience as the human occasion for implementing His higher plan. God had permitted the people to have the **king** of their choice. Now that that king and their mistake in choosing him had been clearly manifested, God proved the superiority of His own wisdom in raising up a king who would come in fulfillment of His perfect will.

After an undetermined length of time in which **Samuel** lamented the rejection of **Saul**, the Lord commanded the prophet to go to **Bethlehem** to select a son of **Jesse ... to be king** (16:1–3). Jesse was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:18–21), and so was in the line of promise (see the chart “David’s Ancestry from Abraham”). As the wives of Jacob gave birth to a royal house (Gen. 35:11; 49:10), so Ruth would produce the Davidic dynasty (Ruth 4:11). God did not tell Samuel to be deceptive, but rather to combine the anointing with the business of sacrificing (1 Sam 16:2). **The elders in Bethlehem** may have wondered if **Samuel** had come for judgment (v. 4).

After the **seven** older **sons of Jesse** were disqualified one by one (vv. 5–10), **David** was singled out by **the LORD** and **anointed** by **Samuel** (vv. 11–13). The anointing, as in the experience of Saul, was accompanied by the coming of **the Spirit** of God mightily on the young lad (v. 13). This was the supernatural authentication of God’s will. Later David was anointed king over Judah (2 Sam. 2:4) and then over Israel (2 Sam. 5:3).

b. David as Saul’s musician (16:14–23)

16:14–23. As David was invested by the Spirit, that same **Spirit** left **Saul**. This is evidence of the fact that the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament says nothing about salvation but only that His power worked in those whom God selected for service (cf. Jud. 3:10; 6:34; 13:25; 14:6; 1 Sam. 10:10; 16:13).

With the departure of the Spirit of God, Saul became **tormented by an evil spirit** which **God** permitted to come (v. 14; cf. vv. 15–16; 18:10; 19:9). Whether this spirit had sinful or only

harmful characteristics, it is quite certain that it was a demonic, satanic instrument (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6; 1 Kings 22:19–22). In his troubled state Saul could find relief only in music, so he commanded that a musician be found (1 Sam. 16:15–17). In His providence God arranged that **David** be the one, so the shepherd boy was introduced to the palace of the king (vv. 18–21). The Holy Spirit empowered **David** to drive away **the evil spirit** that overwhelmed **Saul** (v. 23). Harps had already been mentioned in connection with prophesying (10:5). Later Elisha, when seeking a revelation from the Lord, also requested that a harp be played (2 Kings 3:15). Also, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun prophesied with harps, lyres, and cymbals (1 Chron. 25:1).

Mathews, K. A. (1998). *The Historical Books*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (pp. 114-115). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

God Anoints David (16:1–23). The Lord instructed Samuel to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint Israel’s new king. Although frightened that he might be found out by Saul, Samuel went to Bethlehem to offer a sacrifice. There he was joined by the family of Jesse. Samuel looked upon Jesse’s seven older sons and was impressed by their appearance. But God rejected them and looked instead for one who had a faithful heart. David, the youngest, was called to the house, and the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint him. David was empowered by the Spirit from that day forward.

Since the Lord rejected Saul as king, He withdrew His Spirit; and Saul received an “evil spirit.” The identity of this “evil” spirit has been disputed. Some believe that it was a demon. Others argue that it was a troubling spirit causing emotional disturbance (see Judg. 9:23). Some have suggested that the Lord permitted Satan to afflict Saul as punishment for his sin (see 2 Sam. 24:1 with 1 Chr. 21:1). What is clear is that this spirit was sent by the Lord (see 1 Kgs. 22:20–23) to show that Saul had been rejected. It caused Saul to experience bouts of rage and despondency. Christians do not have to fear that the Lord will remove His Spirit from them, since the Spirit is the believer’s permanent possession (Rom. 8:9, 12–17; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

Saul’s attendants sought a musician to soothe troubled Saul. David was selected to enter into the service of the king.

Philbeck, B. F. (1972). *1 Samuel*. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary* (p. 172). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Saul Meets His Successor (1 Sam. 16:1–23)

The passage—As Saul’s reign wore on, his unstable character made it apparent that he could never provide a suitable foundation for Israel’s monarchy. Samuel, however, either out of affection (10:24; 15:11, 35; 16:1) or fear (v. 2), was reluctant to select a rival candidate for the throne. Finally, the matter could be put off no longer. Samuel was then led to Bethlehem where he was to find God’s chosen leader. After seeing and rejecting all of Jesse’s older sons, David was finally selected and anointed.

Again, it must be understood that the divine appointment carried with it no office, title, or prerogatives. David’s anointment at the hands of Samuel simply represented a future destiny to be worked out in human history.

David’s first step toward the throne occurred when he became a member of Saul’s court. In the first of two accounts of his introduction to Saul (16:14–23, see 17:1–58), David is portrayed as a musician and a warrior, recommended by a member of Saul’s court to help soothe the king’s

murderous rages. Saul found comfort in his music and, with Jesse's permission, permanently attached David to his court as his armor bearer.

Special points—The “evil spirit from the Lord” which came upon Saul (v. 14) represents the ancient Israelite view of God's sovereignty. All things, even evil (Isa. 45:7), were attributed to him. Today we would describe Saul's condition as a mental illness.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Samuel 16). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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