

Session 3 David Anointed in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:1-13)

I. DAVID ANOINTED IN BETHLEHEM

- A. We see the rejection of King Saul in chapter 15 and the anointing of David in chapter 16. The high point of Samuel's ministry was anointing David as the second king of Israel.
- B. Saul's work for God had ended, but God's work would go on. This chapter is not so much about David as it is about God. We see God's personality in His choice of "weak ones" (1 Cor. 1:28).
- C. God's rejection of Saul and choice of David was decisive, clear, and final, yet it took about 15 years for the story to unfold. His purposes come to pass, but not as fast as we would like. God usually works behind the scenes. His sovereignty was demonstrated in the context of their personal choices.

II. SAMUEL WENT TO BETHLEHEM TO ANOINT A NEW KING (1 SAM. 16:1-3)

- A. The Lord told Samuel to go to Bethlehem to anoint a new king.

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." ***²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'*** ***³"Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."*** (1 Sam. 16:1-3)

- B. God's zeal and desire for David: The Lord raised up David as king for His pleasure and purpose. Samuel taught David that he was anointed as a king "for God" (1 Sam. 13:14; 16:1, 3), or for God's pleasure. He repeatedly used specific language denoting His zeal, such as "sought for Himself" (13:14), "you shall anoint for Me" (16:3), and "I have provided Myself a king" (16:1).

¹⁴"The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart." (1 Sam. 13:14)

¹"For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." (1 Sam. 16:1)

³"You shall anoint for Me the one I name to you." (1 Sam. 16:3)

- C. David knew that he was chosen first for God, thus he responded by diligently seeking Him, longing to worship, love, and obey God and see His beauty (Ps. 27:4; cf. 18:1; 31:23; 36:8).

³But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly. (Ps. 4:3)

- D. The elders of the city trembled when Samuel arrived in Bethlehem (16:4-5). They assumed that if a prophet was visiting them, it must be negative, to address their failure. Many people carry a residual guilt in their hearts, so the very idea of receiving prophetic ministry unsettles them.

⁴So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ***⁵And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice."*** Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. (1 Sam. 16:4-5)

III. THE LORD CORRECTED SAMUEL'S VIEW OF THE NEW KING (1 SAM. 16:6-11)

- A. Samuel went to Bethlehem, but without knowing all the details of God's will.

“So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him.”⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”⁸ Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.”¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.” (1 Sam. 16:6-11)

- B. **The LORD does not see as man sees:** Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the decisions and intentions of the heart. This is one of the most important statements in Scripture.
- C. **The LORD looks at the heart:** People measure themselves and others by *externals* (performance, gifting, achievement, money, position, etc.), while God measures by *internals* (the goals, intentions, decisions, and movements of the heart toward God).

David's understanding of God's heart was formed by the truths of how God chose him, as revealed to Samuel by God. This knowledge dynamically affected David's view of himself.

David saw himself as God's beloved (Ps. 60:5), as the apple of God's eye (Ps. 17:8), as one in whom God delighted (Ps. 18:19), and as one treated with gentleness by God (Ps. 18:35).

The Lord does not evaluate His people with accusation as others do. God's paradigm for evaluating life is different than man's—God defines His people by the intentions of their heart. He sees our heart motives (1 Cor. 4:5) and our inner qualities (Ps. 29:2).

Sometimes we look at *negative externals* (our lack of gifting or opportunity or position) and wrongly conclude that we have no future in God's purpose.

- D. **Do not look at his appearance:** The Lord told Samuel not to look at *externals*—performance, skills, accomplishments, position, wealth, failures, etc. He chose an uneducated farm boy as His anointed.
- E. David found his primary identity (his sense of value and success) in who he was in his relationship with God. He measured his success in life by how much he grew in grace and to the degree which he walked in obedient love for God and meekness toward people.
- F. **Leadership lesson:** God chooses differently than man—He esteems unknown people in unknown places for His purposes.
- G. **Leadership lesson:** We must not choose people who have great gifts but lack a servant spirit. Conversely, do not abandon your calling just because you have not yet had opportunity to walk in it.

IV. SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS THE NEW KING OF ISRAEL (1 SAM. 16:11-13)

- A. The Spirit of the Lord came on David (16:13) as it had once rested on Saul (10:6, 10; 11:6). God worked in David's life inspiring his heart and strengthening his body to do courageous acts. The Hebrew word *ruach* means breath, wind, and Spirit—"it is the invisible hand of God that moves in the visible world"
- ¹²So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. (1 Sam. 16:12-13)*
- B. Some scholars suggest that when a leader anointed someone, they were *pledging themselves* to the anointed one. For example, when the elders of Judah (2 Sam. 2) or of Israel anointed David (2 Sam. 5:3), they were making a commitment to David. So when God chose someone to be anointed as king, God Himself was showing His commitment to that new king.
- C. **Leadership lessons:** God knows where we are, and His timing is never late. God needs no help in locating "His Davids." We don't have to strive to get attention from the people in charge.

Do not confuse offering your service with insisting on recognition or receiving a position of honor. Some people misunderstand this principle and wait to be asked to serve. Scripture teaches us to be diligent in serving, yet without insisting on receiving recognition or honor.

When we feel the need to measure how much people value or honor our work, it can easily result in complaining. When we know that God sees us, then we can serve with a free spirit.

V. DAVID ACCEPTED IN THE ROYAL COURT (1 SAM. 16:14-23)

- A. Note the parallel statements: the Spirit *rested on* David (16:13) and *departed from* Saul (16:14). The theme "the Lord was with David" occurs four times (16:18; 18:12, 14, 28). David delivered Saul from spiritual oppression and, later, Israel from the oppressive Philistine enemy, Goliath the giant.
- ¹⁴The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. ¹⁵And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. ¹⁶Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well." ¹⁷So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me." (1 Sam. 16:14-17)*
- B. **The Spirit departed from Saul:** At the beginning of his reign, about 25 years earlier, the Spirit had come on Saul (10:6, 10; 11:6). Saul's character gradually deteriorated. He went from being a national hero to despondent and melancholic, and then an angry, murderous tyrant.
- C. **A distressing spirit:** The Lord allowed Saul to be demonically oppressed as an expression of divine judgment on Saul's stubborn rebellion. His servants rightly regarded this as punishment from God.

- D. **Seek out a skillful harpist:** Saul's servants urged him to commission them to find a musician to play for him during his attacks. They rightly believed this would bring relief from Saul's oppression. So Saul ordered them to search for someone who could play well. Anointed music was known to release the activity of the Spirit (1 Sam. 10:5; 2 Kgs. 3:15).
- E. One of Saul's servants already knew of David's skill in music (16:18). In other words, God opened doors to the royal court for David; he did not even have to try to push the door open.

¹⁸One of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him." ¹⁹Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." ²⁰And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent them by his son David to Saul. (1 Sam. 16:18-20)

Skillful in playing: David was an accomplished musician, anointed even for Saul's comfort.

Mighty man of valor: David was both brave and successful in facing danger. His exploits of killing the lion and the bear justified him being called a mighty, valiant man.

Man of war: David may have fought marauding Philistines on occasion while tending sheep.

Prudent in speech: David was skilled in speaking and, therefore, in building relationships.

Handsome: As part of being handsome, David would have been in good physical condition.

The LORD is with him: The presence of God was evident in David's life.

- F. **Send me your son David:** Hearing of David's outstanding abilities, Saul asked Jesse to send David to him. David impressed Saul, and the king requested him to stay permanently.
- G. **David stood before him:** To stand before the king (v 21) means to enter into his service (Gen 41:46). David became one of Saul's armorbearers after being accepted into Saul's court.

²¹So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer. ²²Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." ²³And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him. (1 Sam. 16:21-23)

Saul unwittingly invited his successor into his inner court. It was God's purpose for David to spend a season at the court; therefore the Lord inclined Saul's heart toward David.

Here we see the workings of God's hand. The king's heart is in the Lord's hand, and He turns it according to His will (Prov. 21:1). David wrote of this truth when exhorting people to "commit their way to Lord" and to rest in the Lord, patiently trusting Him to bring His will to pass in their lives (Ps. 37:5-7).