

David

The Anointing, Seeing as God Sees

We first meet David in chapter 16 of 1 Samuel. The context is the beginning of the end for King Saul, the first king of Israel. He had obeyed the people instead of the Lord by taking captive spoil from the campaign against the Amalekites. God had said, “Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”¹ However Saul and the people spared the king and the best of the livestock. The Lord’s assessment of the situation was, “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.”² Samuel, in turn, said to Saul, “the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”³

That brings us to chapter 16. In verses 1-13 we learn an important lesson about the Lord and how He works with mankind as a new king over Israel is anointed. We learn that God is not concerned with the same things we are when it comes to what is important in a person.

The chapter begins with the Lord coming to Samuel, the last of the judges that have ruled Israel for the last 350 years since their occupation of the Promised Land. He says, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him⁴? God is ready to move on, unlike most of us after what appears to be a setback. The Lord has already taken events and people into consideration and is ready to move forward with plans developed since the foundation of the world, actually before that.⁵ He has a specific mission for Samuel. “I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.”⁶ Let us learn to rebound quickly and move on, “Press on.” Great football players do this. I saw Ray Nitschke, the Green Bay Packer legend, do this in a televised game. He was cleanly blocked, knocked on his back side. But it was as though he was made of rubber. He scarcely hit the ground and he was back on his feet, pursuing the play to make the tackle across the field. Our Lord is immediately ready to move on, when we fall. As soldiers of the cross, there is no good reason to do otherwise than follow Him.

The chapter goes on to describe Samuel’s visit to Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel. He used the pretext of offering sacrifice to avoid possible anger and attack from Saul. Saul had not taken kindly to the Lord’s displeasure and his impending dethronement.

¹ All references from, [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Sa 15:3.

² Ibid., 1 Sa 15:11.

³ Ibid., 1 Sa 15:26.

⁴ Ibid., 1 Sa 16:1.

⁵ Ibid., 1 Pet 1:20.

⁶ Ibid., 1 Sa 16:1.

Greeted on his arrival by fearful city elders, he offered the prepared explanation for his visit and promptly invited Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice, along with the elders. All these were consecrated and attended the sacrifice with Samuel. The text never says anything more about the sacrifice but proceeds to the task at hand, as the seven oldest sons of Jesse are brought before Samuel. The first and oldest seemed to be an obvious choice to Samuel but the Lord corrected him, *“Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”*⁷ Samuel was learning to see things as the Lord does, the main lesson we are learning here, also.

Perhaps we are learning something about Samuel’s point of view when it comes to leadership. It is interesting that in God’s comment to Samuel above, He mentions two things specifically, appearance and height. Samuel must have thought of Saul as the perfect choice for king since he was a “choice and handsome *man*” and “taller than any of the people”⁸. However, Saul disappointed the Lord by disobeying and Samuel “grieved over Saul”⁹.

After Eliab, the oldest, Samuel reviewed the seven sons of Jesse that were there, probably in order by age.¹⁰ Having exhausted the supply of sons present, Samuel says, “Are these all the children?” Jesse replies that the youngest is tending the sheep, not considered worthy to attend the feast. It’s not clear if Jesse knew of Samuel’s real intentions when bringing his oldest sons, but it seems clear that the youngest was an afterthought, if he was thought of at all. At any rate, he was sent for urgently, at Samuel’s command, “We will not sit down until he comes here.”



Upon David’s arrival, he is described in the text as having “beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance.” These traits, we are reminded, are secondary to the Lord’s consideration for “*man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*” Leaders may have the traits regarded by man but the Lord sees what they have inside. Not the capability for perfection or even goodness, in ourselves, but a heart to lean on His enablement and sufficiency. God looks on our heart.

Antonio González Velázquez, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons¹¹

⁷ Ibid., 1 Sa 16:7.

⁸ Ibid., 1 Samuel 9:2

⁹ Ibid., 1 Sam 15:35, 16:1, twice.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1 Sam 17:13 gives the order of the first three sons of Jesse, the same as here in chapter 16.

¹¹ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=45565615>

Samuel promptly anointed David, on the command of the Lord, “Anoint him, for this is he.” After anointing David, Samuel did not seem very impressed for the text just says, “Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”¹² The job at hand completed, Samuel departed unceremoniously for home. God’s work with David had begun and, “the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward.”¹³ David was the, “man after my heart, who will do all My will.”¹⁴ He was the one in whose body was the humanity of the Messiah and the one to whom eternal promises would be made.

God still regards the unlikely, the weak, the young, the old, as Paul says, “*there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world ... and God has chosen the weak things of the world . . . and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not . . . so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus.*”¹⁵ We must all recognize our weakness, if we would be strong “in the Lord and in the strength of His might”¹⁶. We must realize we serve and walk with a God Who looks at our heart, not our appearance or outward prowess. *For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*¹⁷ How scandalous and unexpected for God to choose David, the youngest, not even thought worthy to be brought before Samuel for consideration. Not even consecrated, according to the text, as the others. He keeps us reminded that He is, “Not a man.”¹⁸

So don’t be discouraged when you are weak or sin, when trying your hardest, or if you don’t have the skills of some or the education or the looks or whatever advantages you may think are necessary. You please the Lord because of Who He is, not because of who you are. “God is love,”¹⁹ and He is looking at your heart.

¹² Ibid., 1 Sa 16:13.

¹³ Ibid., 1 Sa 16:13.

¹⁴ Ibid., Acts 13:22.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1 Co 1:26–30.

¹⁶ Ibid., Eph 6:10.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1 Sa 16:7.

¹⁸ Ibid., Num 23:19.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1 Jn 4:8.