

1 Samuel 16 “God Looks On The Heart” [\[1\]](#)

Series: “*Learning to Wait on God: The Life of David Before He Became King*”

1 Samuel 16-31

Last week, by surveying the entire book of 1 Samuel, we laid a foundation for a new series which we are beginning this evening: *Learning to Wait on God*. In the weeks ahead, the Lord willing, we'll be looking at the life of David *before* he became king of Israel . David, after being promised by God that he would be Israel's next king, had to *wait* a long time and face many obstacles before seeing the fulfillment of that promise. Our aim is to join and learn from David during that phase of his life, as recorded in 1 Samuel 16-31.

We meet David in 1 Samuel 16. In order to appreciate David, we must take a moment to look back at the preceding context.

The Context:

Baseball players know a rule very well: “Three strikes and you're out!” That's exactly what happened to Saul. Although God gave Saul to Israel to be their king (at their request), in time God rejected Saul. Here's an overview of what happened:

Strike #1--ch 13 Saul viewed God as a good luck charm (offerings).

Strike #2--ch 14 Saul's insecurity led him to make a foolish oath.

Strike #3--ch 15 Saul rebelled against God.

In ch 16, we watch God's plan unfold in the identification of a man after God's own heart, the man God would have to be king, David.

Outline of I Samuel 16:

I. The Selection (1-5)

II. The Surprise (6-13)

A. Choosing a Leader--From Man's Perspective

B. Choosing a Leader--From God's Perspective

III. The Service (14-23)

I. The Selection (1-5)

Q: What question did God ask Samuel? V 1 "How long will you mourn..."

Notice that. We're not told that Samuel mourned for the rejection of his sons, nor even his own rejection. But he mourned for Saul. He knew Saul's rejection would bring disgrace to the whole nation, and the Lord.

What does that tell us about the kind of man Samuel was?

Q: What did God tell Samuel to do? V 1 "Fill your horn...go..."

It was 10 miles from Rammah to Bethlehem (6 miles SW of Jerusalem).

Q: Who was Jesse?

Ruth and Boaz had a son, Obed. Obed's son was Jesse (Ruth 4:21-22). Jesse belonged to the line of promise. Through his line, the Messiah would come. Jacob had prophesied that the scepter would not depart from Judah .

Q: What was Samuel's hesitancy? V 2 "...he will kill me..."

Q: What did God tell Samuel to do? V 2 Take a heifer to sacrifice

Q: What kind of reception did the elders of Bethlehem give Samuel? V 4

They "trembled." What a reputation! Why do you think they were fearful?

Q: What was Samuel's response? V 5 "Peaceably." I'm here on business!

Key: Here's the point of ch 16. Saul was king because the people wanted him. And God gave the people exactly what they wanted. But on what basis was David chosen to be king? Solely the sovereign grace of God. God selected a son of Jesse.

It came as quite a surprise to everyone--to Jesse, to Jesse's sons, to Samuel, even to the son that was chosen.

II. The Surprise (6-13)

The surprise had to do with who was selected to be Israel 's new leader. There are two perspectives in the narrative (and quite often in our decision-making)...

A. Choosing a Leader--From Man's Perspective

Q: Who caught Samuel's eye first? V 6 "...he looked on Eliab..."

Q: How did Samuel respond when he saw Eliab? V 6 This must be him!

Q: On what basis was Samuel impressed with Eliab? Outward appearance.

Knapp (190), "How quickly we forget the lessons of former experiences; and how prone we are to look 'on the outward appearance,' and so be repeatedly deceived."

Q: Who was the second son? V 8 Abinadab

Q: God's response? V 8 "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

Q: Then who? V 9 Shammah

The scene is somewhat comical. Jesse stood by as his seven oldest sons passed by. And to each, the LORD said (10), "Not him. Not him. Not him."

I can just see Samuel scratch his head, look at Jesse, and ask (v 11)...

V 11 "Are ALL your children here?"

What was the problem?

By nature, people make decisions based on appearance. We do surveys, and make projections, and do a cost analysis. We look at the facts. We're impressed by visual impression. The point of ch 16 is not that this is wrong. But let's notice, by contrast, how God chooses a leader.

B. Choosing a Leader--From God's Perspective

Look back at what God told Samuel when he jumped at Eliab...

Principle: V 7 "But the LORD said, Look not on his countenance..."

God's ways are not man's ways. For one, there's a biblical pattern that God chose the younger over the elder to be His man: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Essau, Joseph over the 10 older brothers. Why?

LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush's *OT Survey* (238), "Rather than accidental, this pattern highlights these events as turning points in God's redemptive program. He is breaking into the ordinary practices of the time and culture and is doing a new thing. These choices are based not on the laws of authority or inheritance but on God's sovereign will and power. Consequently the mighty accomplishments of these men are not their own. God is their source."

Q: What stood out about David? At first, nothing! He was an obscure, youngest son, who was out tending sheep! But what does v 12 tell us? "ruddy" (thesaurus "healthy, reddish color").

Samuel anointed the young man in v 13. We're finally given his name. David.

Q: What happened when he was anointed? V 13 "the Spirit of the LORD..."

This was the supernatural authentication of God's will.

What's the point? People are impressed by what they see on the outside. But God knows what a person is really like (Klein, 161).

Discuss: Let's think of some implications. How will the principle of v 7 affect

--the way we as parents help our children choose their friends?

--the way we choose leaders (from school boards, to congressional seats)

We are so prone to make judgments based on appearance.

Illust: At a Pastor's conference—a man with a long pony tail...

III. The Service (14-23)

Saul had a problem. What was it? V 14 "an evil spirit"

Saul was afflicted by depression. It went from bad to worse. By the time he dies, he will be a totally unstable, paranoid, uptight, nervous, obsessed man.

What was his problem, according to v 14? "an evil spirit from the LORD..."

How can this be? Is God the author of evil? No. But even evil is under His sovereign control.

Key: The LORD allowed Saul to experience the consequences of his sinful choices.

eg--What happened to Ahab? There was a conference in heaven, in God's presence, concerning Ahab. I Kgs 22:19-22; God is sovereign. Even over evil. He's in control, working out his purpose.

He used Saul's malady to introduce him to someone. Guess who? We'll see...

Q: What brought him some relief? V 16 Music

Q: What musician was found to help Saul? Vv 17-18

David! The man who would one day sit on his throne!

Q: What did Saul do? Vv 19-23 Promoted to Saul's service as armor-bearer!

Discuss: What is providence?

1 Samuel 16 is an illustration of God's providence. Years before this, God fashioned David in his mother's womb. God gave him an aptitude for music. God brought someone along to nurture that ability to play the harp ("skillful" v 16). God prepared David for such a time as this!

Asaph gave us a poetic commentary on God's selection of David.

READ Ps 78:70-72 "He chose David His servant..."

From what? The sheepfold

To what? The throne

Key: David was faithful in the small things. And God opened a greater door.

Discuss: What lessons can we learn from this story?

[\[1\]](#) These are unedited teaching notes used initially for a Wednesday evening Bible study at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . They are provided for your edification as you personally study God's life-changing Word. Pastor Brad Brandt