

# The Book of 1 Samuel—16:1-13

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## *“The Lord Looks at the Heart”*

(10/18/15)

When we began this book we said that the underlying theme of 1 & 2 Samuel is leadership.

Since these things were written for our learning—the thing we learn from the history of Israel is that in the absence of godly leadership a nation will suffer and decline—whereas in the presence of godly leadership it will prosper and be strengthened.

Or to put it another way—as leaders go so goes a nation.

The books of 1 & 2 Samuel chronicle for us the lives of three of Israel’s most famous leaders—Samuel, Saul and David.

Samuel served the nation as a judge; Saul as its first king and David as its second king.

Samuel was one of Israel’s best leaders serving the nation from the time he was just a boy until he was an old man.

At that time the people came to him and said that he was too old to lead the nation any longer and his sons didn’t walk with God as he did (they were corrupt).

Therefore they told Samuel they wanted a king like the Gentile nations around them—and so the Lord had Samuel anoint Saul to be Israel’s first king.

But as we have already pointed out—Saul was the king the people wanted—not the king God wanted. (Elaborate)

Saul never followed the Lord with all of his heart which he proved time after time by only partially obeying what God told him to do.

The final straw came in chapter 15 when he failed to wipe out the Amalekites and their livestock as God had commanded him to do. (Explain)

**1 Samuel 15:10-12a, 26 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, <sup>11</sup> "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. <sup>12</sup> So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul...<sup>26</sup> ...Samuel said to Saul, "...you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

It deeply grieved Samuel that God was removing Saul from being king in Israel.

I really think he loved Saul and that Saul was like a son to him—so he mourned over this for many days.

**1 Samuel 16:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?..."

The word translated “**mourn**” means “*to mourn for the dead*” and reveals the depths of Samuel’s sorrow.

Sometimes we can get more attached to the instrument than to the One using the instrument.

I have seen Christians who are more attached to their pastor and more loyal to him than it seems they are to God.

So much so that when it comes to light that their pastor has been cheating on his wife or embezzling money from the church and needs to be removed from ministry—they mourn more for him than they do that God’s name has been disgraced and denigrated.

But this doesn’t just apply to holding onto leaders—people can hold on to traditions and institutions in the church and mourn the loss of them more than looking to God to do a new thing.

I think that many people would rather hold on to the past (even if it hasn’t been so great)—than to trust God to give them a new beginning and take them into the future.

One author put it well when he said,

*“Through the centuries, Christians have often been trapped by their inability to turn loose of those things which no longer seem to serve God’s purpose. We grow accustomed to institutions, organizations, programs, ways of thinking, and ways of doing things. We develop such an emotional attachment to them that long after their usefulness to God is past we hold tenaciously to them. Sometimes the hardest thing to get rid of is something that no longer meets a need. We often need help from God to turn loose of what is past and to face the future that God has planned for us.”*

## **I. God Sends Samuel to Anoint a New King—v.1-5**

### **1 Samuel 16:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the 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."**

Bethlehem was a small but well-known place to the Jewish people.

It was near Bethlehem that Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, died while giving birth to Benjamin.

It was in Bethlehem that Ruth, the widow from Moab, found her husband, Boaz, and gave birth to Obed, David's grandfather (Ruth 4:13–22; Matt. 1:3–6).

David, who would go on to be Israel's most famous king, lived and grew up there.

And of course the little town of Bethlehem's most famous claim to fame was that it was there that our Savior was born—even as God had prophesied about in Micah 5:2.

The name Bethlehem means “house of bread”—a fitting name for the place the “Bread from heaven” would come down to dwell among us in human form.

**“I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.”**

Jesse was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:17, 22).

**1 Samuel 16:2-3 (NKJV)**

**<sup>2</sup> And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears *it*, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' <sup>3</sup> 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."**

Samuel's fear was understandable—traveling from Ramah to Bethlehem (11 miles) would take him right through Gibeah—the town where Saul lived.

Samuel had not spoken to Saul ever since God sent him to tell Saul that He was removing him from being king.

Saul had a reputation for being unstable at times and given to fits of anger toward those whom he believed were against him—

And so Samuel was afraid of what Saul might do to him if he thought he was on his way to anoint a new king.

To allay those fears God provided Samuel with a “cover story” that would satisfy Saul’s curiosity upon seeing Samuel passing through his town.

The LORD told him to take a heifer with him to sacrifice to the LORD once he got to Bethlehem.

This would have been a fellowship or “peace offering”—a common offering made for a town that was in good standing with the Lord.

This was by no means a lie—for the town of Bethlehem was a quiet and peaceful town and so a peace offering would have been appropriate.

What Saul didn’t need to know was that during the sacrifice a new king would be anointed.

**1 Samuel 16:4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>4</sup> So 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?"**

Why were the elders of Bethlehem so afraid upon seeing Samuel come to their town?

Primarily because whenever God sent a prophet to a town it was usually to pronounce some kind of judgment upon it for their disobedience toward Him.

And even though, as we just said, Bethlehem was a quiet, law abiding town—you never knew if someone in town was secretly breaking God's law and thus bringing a prophet to town with a pronouncement of judgment.

So naturally when Samuel showed up on their doorstep they thought the worst and trembled out the question—"Do you come in peace?"

**1 Samuel 16:5 (NKJV)**

**<sup>5</sup> And 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.**

I. God Sends Samuel to Anoint a New King—v.1-5

**II. Samuel Looks at the Outward Appearance—v.6-10**

**1 Samuel 16:6-10 (NKJV)**

**<sup>6</sup> So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD'S anointed *is* before Him." <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his 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.*" <sup>8</sup> So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." <sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." <sup>10</sup> Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."**

Samuel was guilty of the same mistake the people had made when they chose Saul to be their king—they chose him based on his outward attributes (tall, dark and handsome) and now Samuel is doing the very same thing here with Eliab.

Verse 7 is not only the key verse of the chapter—it is the key principle for all those that the Lord chooses to serve Him—He always chooses His servants based on heart attitudes and not physical attributes.

**2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart is loyal to Him...

**Jeremiah 17:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

**1 Kings 8:39 (NKJV)**

<sup>39</sup> then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men),

**“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (v.7)**

“Yes, but what does that mean, what is He looking at?”—Well first of all, when it comes to God choosing servants— let’s understand what He’s not looking at—

- *He’s not looking at the color of their skin.*
- *He’s not looking at their outward beauty.*
- *He’s not looking at their social standing—how popular, how powerful or at how much prestige they have in the eyes of others*
- *He’s not looking at the car they drive, the house they live in, or the designer clothes they wear.*
- *He’s not even looking at how smart they are or how many degrees they’ve earned.*

All of these things the world looks at when choosing its leaders—but not God—

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NLT)**

<sup>26</sup> Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. <sup>27</sup> Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. <sup>28</sup> God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. <sup>29</sup> As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

Do you think for one second if God had let the people choose another king they would have in your wildest dreams chosen David a young shepherd boy?

David was the very embodiment of someone that was a nothing and a nobody in the eyes of the world—but God was looking at his heart.

*“Yes, but again—what exactly is He looking for in a person's heart?”*

Well, certainly the Lord is looking for purity and integrity—but I believe in this context the main thing He was referring to was loyalty.

This was exactly what He never got from Saul—unwavering, uncompromising loyalty.

The Hebrew word **loyal** carries with it the idea of “*completeness*” or “*whole-heartedness*.”

God wants our *whole heart* in the sense that we don't love Him or try to serve Him with a ‘divided heart’ or in a ‘half-hearted’ way.



In other words we can't love and serve God *and* the world—we must choose to love and serve God *or* the world—

As Joshua challenged the children of Israel, “*Choose this day whom you're going to serve...*” and as Jesus challenged all of us when He said “*you can't serve two masters*” (i.e. “God and the world”)

This is what God was looking for in the heart of the next king—a heart that was completely in love with and given over to Him without compromise and without any other competing loves.

Again this is not what He had with Saul—Saul loved himself and the praise of people more than he loved God.

This caused Saul to compromise on what God told him to do if it would make him more popular with the people of Israel—which is the very reason God removed him from being king—

**1 Samuel 13:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

Of course God was talking about David when he said this—which has stumbled many because they can't figure out how God could call David a “*man after His own heart*” when David was such an imperfect man.

The idea of David being a man after God's heart doesn't carry with it the meaning of David being a perfect man or someone who never sinned—it carries with it the idea of loyalty.

A person after God's heart is a person who is as loyal to Him as He is to them.

To understand this fully all you have to do is think about the loyalty that a husband and wife expect from each other in marriage.

Would a husband saying to his wife—“*I’m loyal to you most of the time*” be acceptable to her?

Would that be acceptable to a husband to hear his wife say to him “*I only cheat on you once in a while*”?

Husbands and wives don’t expect perfection from one another—but what they do expect is loyalty—especially in the area of marital fidelity.

David was not a perfect man—but he was a loyal man to his God.

We never see David worship an idol or give his love and faithfulness to anyone or anything other than God—that’s why God called him “*a man after My own heart.*”

You see when we made a commitment to God through Jesus Christ—God committed Himself to us unconditionally and eternally.

So that even when we blow it and fall into sin—He still loves us and remains committed to us—forever!

He promised, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*” (Hebrews 13:5)

Is it too much for God to ask us to be as committed to Him as He is to us?

### III. God Chooses a Man after His Own Heart

#### **1 Samuel 16:10-13 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." <sup>11</sup> **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." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."** <sup>12</sup> So 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!" <sup>13</sup> Then 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.

Many believe that David was around 14 or 15 years old at this time.

The word translated "**ruddy**" is the same as Esau's nickname *Edom* a word that means "red". (Gen. 25:24–34)

Because of it some have interpreted this to mean that David was a redhead—but it may only mean that, unlike the average Jewish person, he was fair of skin and hair.

And even though the text says that David was "good-looking" the reason God chose him was because of his heart for God.

Once again, do you think for one second that if God had let the people choose another king they would have chosen a 14 year old shepherd boy—absolutely not!

Years ago I had someone in our church challenge me over my choice of someone to be a leader in one of our ministries—they challenged me with the statement—"I just don't see it."

I quoted back to them what God told Samuel when he looked at the outward qualities of Eliab, Jesse's oldest son—“...*the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*”

Listen, God doesn't choose us to serve Him based on what we are at that moment but upon what He knows we can become in time through His power and grace—that was David.

God chose David not based on what he was at that moment, a lowly shepherd boy, but on what God knew he would become in time through His power and grace—a great king.

I have heard many people say over the years, “*Who am I to think that I can serve God?*”

And to that I say that everyone whom God has called into ministry has felt that way.

Moses said, “*How can I serve God—I stutter?*”

David, Jeremiah, Timothy and Mary were only teenagers when God called them into ministry—I'm sure they didn't feel worthy or qualified.

Even the great apostle Paul expressed his unworthiness to be chosen by God for the ministry—

**1 Corinthians 15:9-10 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am...

(Story of the old master violinist and his Stradivarius violin)