

David

A Passionate Leader

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1 Samuel 16

Called from Obscurity

The people of Israel have asked for a king to lead them, to go before them and fight their battles. Although by doing this they are rejecting the LORD as king, God directs the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul, a young, handsome man from a respected family, who stood head and shoulders above everyone else. If you were on an executive search for the first CEO of an emerging company, Saul might have been near the top of your list.

In presenting Saul to the assembled tribes of Israel as the man the LORD has chosen, the prophet Samuel carefully explains the rights and duties of kingship in Israel. (See 1 Samuel 10:24-25 and Deuteronomy 17:14-20.) The LORD confirms Saul's appointment by sending the Spirit of God upon him in power, and uses him to deliver the people from their Ammonite enemies. Saul, however, begins to act independently of God's commands and forgets that he serves under God as ruler over the people. When he arrogantly rejects God's orders to completely destroy the Amalekites and their possessions, the LORD rejects Saul as king of Israel.

What characteristics would you include when describing an ideal national leader?

An ideal spiritual leader?

To place David in the context of events that precede his anointing and reign, read 1 Samuel 8–13 and 15–16.

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

1. Describe the scene in which David is anointed by Samuel to be king. Look at these verses as you would to make a documentary film of the event.

*Note: The word written as **LORD** translates the name YHWH, meaning I AM WHO I AM, the Self-existent One, by which God made himself known to Israel. **The LORD** is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and is the name by which God is to be remembered forever (Exodus 3:15). YHWH was probably pronounced “Yahweh.”*

2. What does the LORD want Samuel to learn from this experience?

Why doesn't God simply tell Samuel right away that David is the chosen one?

3. How does the way the LORD evaluates human beings differ from the way you might judge a person's qualifications for a responsible position?
4. What does this incident reveal about David and his family?

9. What do you learn about David's reputation, his appearance, and his abilities as he enters Saul's service?

How does Saul feel toward David?

10. What are David's responsibilities in the royal court (verses 21, 23)?

SUMMARY

1. What circumstances bring sudden changes in David's life?

2. Imagine yourself as the young David as the surprising events of this chapter unfold. You have been playing your harp alone while you protect your father's sheep; you are called in from the fields to be anointed king as Samuel passes over your brothers; you are then sought out for Saul's court to serve as the king's musician. How have you changed during the dramatic events detailed in chapter 16?

CONCLUSION

In the presence of David's brothers, the prophet Samuel has anointed David to be king. Though David is the youngest of Jesse's sons, ***the LORD*** who ***looks at the heart***, chooses him above all the others, and comes upon him in power. As the Spirit of the LORD departs from Saul, the king asks for a talented harpist whose music can soothe his torment. In this way, David is introduced to the royal court and comes to know King Saul.

PRAYER

O Lord, though you rule over all nations, you know each of us and our inmost thoughts, our desires, and abilities. Three thousand years ago you called a young man from tending sheep to shepherd your people Israel. In your choice of David, we learn you do not judge by outer appearance or age or birth order, but you look at the heart.

Thank you for caring about us today as individuals, families, communities, and nations. Help us to care first for what pleases you, and to use the talents and skills you have given us for your glory and the good of this world in which we live.

We pray in the name of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.