

1 Samuel 16: God's Plan

An Unlikely King

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

In 1 Samuel 15, king Saul refused to obey God's command and was rejected as king over Israel. Though he looked the part of a king - tall & strong- his heart had strayed from the LORD. He feared people more than he feared God. Samuel, the prophet who had anointed Saul, was heartbroken. But God was already at work, preparing someone else - someone after His own heart. But the story of this new king doesn't start there. Think back to the book of Ruth.

Ruth's loyalty and faith led her to Bethlehem as she chose to follow the God of Israel. It was here that this unlikely Moabite woman married Boaz and had a son named Obed. "Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David" (Ruth 4:22). Ruth became the great-grandmother of Israel's greatest king. Yet, the story doesn't end with David. Generations later, another unlikely King will be born in Bethlehem - a King whose reign will never end. His name is Jesus.

Through Jesus, God's plan to redeem and restore every square inch of all creation was set into motion. Yet even now - before the day when God fully dwells with His people - He continues to work through the unexpected, the overlooked, and the unlikely: people like Ruth, David - even us. Followers of Jesus are called to join God in bringing justice, peace, and wholeness to the world - to build His Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. So let's take a closer look at how David fits into this greater story of redemption.

Read: 1 Samuel 16 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. Who is talking to Samuel (v. 1)? Who is Samuel supposed to meet? Where? Why him?
 - *Think back to Ruth.* Do you recognize any of these names or places?
2. Why are they looking for a new king (v. 1)? Why is Samuel hesitant to do this task (v. 2)?
3. Let's summarize the plan the LORD gives Samuel (v. 2-3). Does he do it (v. 4)?
4. What interaction do the elders and Samuel have in Bethlehem (v. 4-5)?
5. *Set the scene.* What did Samuel think of Eliab (v. 6)? Why, what was he looking at (v. 7)?
 - What does the LORD look at (v. 7)?
6. Which of the seven sons did the LORD choose (v. 10)? How did Samuel respond (v. 11)?
7. What do we learn about the youngest son (v. 11-12)?
8. What happens after Samuel anoints David (v. 13)?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. What does it mean that 'the LORD looks at the heart' (v. 7)? What does this tell us about the things that God values? What can we assume He saw in David?
2. David wasn't initially invited to the sacrifice - what does this show about how his family thought of him? What makes him an unlikely king from worldly standards?
3. Why is it significant that after being anointed 'the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David' (v. 13)?
4. How does this story fit into God's plan for the world? What connections and similarities do you see from Ruth to David? From David to Jesus? How is Jesus an unlikely king?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. Like Samuel did in verse 6, in what ways do you tend to make assumptions based on outward appearance? What are some ways we can train ourselves to value what God values in others - and in ourselves?
2. If God did a full examination of your heart, what would He find? What are some of the things you're hiding, ignoring, or hoping He won't notice?
3. In a world that constantly judges based on looks, success, or followers - how can you focus on building & prioritizing a heart that reflects God's character? What are some practical examples of what that could look like?
4. David was anointed long before he was appointed king. God has a plan for each of our lives - what are some things that have been put on your heart? How might God be preparing you, even if you can't see the full picture yet?