

1Samuel 16:1 ¶ And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

Samuel mourned for Saul because of his disobedience to the LORD; I think he had high hopes for him as a spiritual leader in the beginning. The LORD basically told Saul he needed to get over it because He had rejected Saul as king over Israel. The LORD told Samuel to fill his horn with oil and go to visit Jesse of the town of Bethlehem because He had chosen one of his sons as the next king of Israel. Such identification seems to indicate that Bethlehem was not a very big town.

1Samuel 16:2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

1Samuel 16:3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

Samuel's response was in the flesh and indicative of weak faith; he seemed to forget that nothing could harm him unless God allowed it. He explained to the LORD that Saul would kill him if he heard what he intended to do. The LORD went right on with His instructions as if Samuel had never said anything. He told Samuel to take a female cow with him and declare that he had come to sacrifice to the LORD. Samuel was to invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and the LORD would show him how to go about the process of anointing the one He identified as His chosen king.

1Samuel 16:4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

1Samuel 16:5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

Samuel obeyed the LORD in spite of his fears; he went to Bethlehem leading the heifer. The elders of the town evidently worried that Samuel had come to announce the LORD's judgment against them and asked him if he came in peace. Samuel assured them that he had; he had come to sacrifice to the LORD. He invited the elders to come to the sacrifice after making sure that they were physically and ceremonially clean. He then specifically invited Jesse and his sons to come as well.

As I read through the following verses, it seems evident that he enjoyed the meal that followed the sacrifice with only Jesse's family.

Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin. We know from the genealogy provided in Ruth that Jesse was of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Judah through his son Pharez.

Ruth 4:18–22 “Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.”

We know from Jacob’s prophetic blessing of his sons that the king was to be of the tribe of Judah.

*Genesis 49:8–10 “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; **thy father’s children shall bow down before thee....The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”***

1Samuel 16:6 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD’S anointed is before him.
1Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

When Jesse’s family arrived, Eliab immediately caught Samuel’s attention, and he thought that he was surely the LORD’s anointed. The LORD, however, told Samuel that he was not to judge worthiness by appearance or height. Eliab was not the one. The LORD told Samuel that the LORD saw people differently than man. Men tend to be impressed with a person’s outward appearance; however, the LORD is more discerning. The LORD looks right into a person’s heart.

This is a truth that we should all remember and live by. God doesn’t judge a man’s worthiness for service based on color, appearance, financial status, popularity, talent, etc.; He makes his determination by what He sees in a person’s heart, his true character. That is what we should strive to do. We may not be able to see into a person’s heart, but we can observe their demeanor and testimony. That requires that we show no favoritism to people based on outward appearance. Those that may not necessarily be attractive on the outside may be the most beautiful on the inside. That is the kind of beauty we should most desire and appreciate.

1Samuel 16:8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.
1Samuel 16:9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.
1Samuel 16:10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.
1Samuel 16:11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

Samuel had told Jesse his purpose for coming as noted by his comments to Jesse in verse 10: "The Lord hath not chosen these." Jesse presented Abinadab next followed by Shammah, and each time the LORD told Samuel that he was not the one. This continued until Jesse had presented seven of his sons to Samuel, and the LORD had rejected them all. Samuel then asked Jesse if he had any more children, and Jesse said that his youngest son was out keeping watch over the sheep. Implied—I didn't think it could possibly be the youngest one.

I liked this application from Redpath: "You may not be intellectual or well thought of in your family circle; you may be despised by others for your faith in Christ. Perhaps you had only a little share in the love of your parents, as David did. But remember that those who are rejected of men often become beloved of the Lord."

Samuel told Jesse to send for the boy because they could not sit down (and enjoy the meal is implied) until he came.

1Samuel 16:12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

1Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Samuel sent for his son, a boy that was ruddy (reddish of hair or complexion) with beautiful eyes, a handsome boy. Finally, the LORD told Samuel to anoint him because this was the one. Samuel anointed David in the presence of his family. The Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. After their meal of fellowship, Samuel returned home to Ramah.

Because I am familiar with David's story, I can't help but wonder what his older brothers thought when Samuel anointed David as the future king. Did only his father know Samuel's purpose? The brothers surely would have questioned their father. Future events recorded in scripture certainly don't indicate that they showed him any special deference.

JFB adds this insight: "JOSEPHUS says that David was ten, while most modern commentators are of the opinion that he must have been fifteen years of age."

1Samuel 16:14 ¶ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

1Samuel 16:15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

1Samuel 16:16 Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul. And then a confusing statement, "an

evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.” Even more interesting, Saul’s servants recognized that there was an evil spirit from God troubling Saul.

When I looked at the Hebrew, there was no word for “from” in verse 15. I think when the LORD took the Holy Spirit away from Saul that He allowed an evil spirit to trouble him because he had rebelled against the LORD. This is not surprising in that the LORD often uses those that are wicked to carry out His judgment on sin. The narrative seems to indicate that this evil spirit was source of mental affliction to Saul.

One of his servants suggested that Saul command his servants to seek out a man who was proficient with the harp. Then, when the evil spirit from God came upon him, the man could play soothing music to calm his soul.

The ancient harp was a stringed instrument that one could hold in your hands.

The power of music to influence for good or bad is undeniable. I’ve often heard it referred to as the language of the soul. I found this quote from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: “There is an inner connection between music and the spirit. When language aspires to the transcendent, and the soul longs to break free of the gravitational pull of the earth, it modulates into song. Music, said Arnold Bennett, is ‘a language which the soul alone understands but which the soul can never translate.’ It is, in Richter’s words, ‘the poetry of the air.’ Tolstoy called it “the shorthand of emotion.” Goethe said, ‘Religious worship cannot do without music. It is one of the foremost means to work upon man with an effect of marvel.’ Words are the language of the mind. Music is the language of the soul.”

Dr. Michael Friedman has this to say regarding research findings as to the healing powers of music: “We now know through controlled treatment outcome studies that listening to and playing music is a potent treatment for mental health issues. Research demonstrates that adding music therapy to treatment improves symptoms and social functioning among schizophrenics. Further, music therapy has demonstrated efficacy as an independent treatment for reducing depression, anxiety and chronic pain.”

Adam Clarke related a very telling incident regarding the powerful influence of music: “This has been literally proved: a musician was brought to play on his instrument while they were feeding a savage lion in the tower of London; the beast immediately left his food, came towards the grating of his den, and began to move in such a way as to show himself affected by the music. The musician ceased, and the lion returned to his food; he recommenced, and the lion left off his prey, and was so affected as to seem by his motions to dance with delight. This was repeatedly tried, and the effects were still the same.”

1Samuel 16:17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me.

1Samuel 16:18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person,*

and the LORD is with him.

1Samuel 16:19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

Saul liked the suggestion of his servants and asked for them to bring him a man that could play well. One of the servants evidently knew about David's proficiency on the harp. He told Saul that he had seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite that was skilled at playing the harp. He was also a valiant man, a man of war, eloquent (from the Hebrew), good looking and "the LORD is with him." I would assumed that to be a reference to his character and talents. It could also, however, be a reference to the fact that David had shown amazing strength when encountering the wild animals that threatened his sheep.

The fact that the servant refers to David as a valiant man and a man of war indicates that he had to be at least 20 years of age at this time.

Numbers 1:45 "So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel...."

It seems likely that the Spirit of the LORD left Saul when He chose to empower David. If so, then the timing of this narrative would have been fairly close in time to the time that Samuel anointed David. That being the case, I believe David was not the young age commonly assumed.

So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and asked him to send David to him.

1Samuel 16:20 And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul.

1Samuel 16:21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

1Samuel 16:22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

1Samuel 16:23 And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

Jesse complied with Saul's request and sent David along with a gift of bread, wine and a kid goat to honor the king. When David appeared before Saul, the king liked what he saw; and he made David his armor bearer. He obviously had no clue that David was the man chosen by God to replace him as king. This too testifies to an older age for the young man that would face Goliath.

Guzik adds this insight: "Saul took to him immediately, and gave him the important and trusted position of armor bearer, his chief assistant in battle. A soldier's life often depended on the courage and faithfulness of his armor bearer, and Saul knew David was worthy of this position."

Saul sent a message to Jesse asking for him to allow David to stay with him since he had found favor in his sight.

JFB notes: "In the East the command of a king is imperative; and Jesse, however reluctant and alarmed, had no alternative but to comply."

Whenever the evil spirit troubled Saul, David took up his harp and played music that refreshed his soul and got rid of the torment of the evil spirit. I am sure that David's music was beautiful and soothing. I am also sure that the evil spirit detested such music.