

David | The Once and Future King

The Anointing

First Samuel 15.34-16.13; Psalm 78.70ff; Revelation 22.16

8.1.21

Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

^{16.1} Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." ² But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³ "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you." ⁴ So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" ⁵ He said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him." ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ⁹ Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

¹² So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

Psalm 78.70 The Lord also chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds; ⁷¹ from the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. ⁷² So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands.

Rev 22.16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

Before we leave The Book of Revelation (our most recent series) we should note: in the very final words of the enthralling book that's claimed our attention (last 14 weeks), six verses from the end of the whole Bible, a reference to a figure who lived about 1,000 years before Revelation was written. Jesus Christ says, "I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (22.16)

The Morning Star, Jesus Christ, has appeared the New Day is dawning – and before long light will flood the world. We look ahead... AND we look back – back to a character who was THE prototype of the ideal king – he's a living promise that only a perfect Man could fulfill. Jesus is the Source (root) and the heir (descendant) of David who first walks on to the stage in today's reading.

David's evidently a key figure in the Bible (last verses) and YET when we first meet him...he's so unimportant that he's totally disregarded... like Cinderella. In the next weeks we hope to see him as David, the shepherd, the musician and the warrior. But today, he's just the overlooked kid no one regarded – this introduction tells us that with God we should expect the unexpected.

Most people only see what they expect to see – even Samuel the Prophet expects the expected – he has preconceived notions of greatness. AND we too have our views (inherited from our cultures) of what a winner should look like... BUT THAT is the big take-away from this passage: what does strength look like? How do we gauge success; what are we looking for?

What's our perspective? How important are the unseen aspects of a person's character – how deeply do our eyes penetrate and what impresses us as we walk through this life? **I'll tell the story and draw three conclusions: how this episode leads to 1) PRO-vision, 2) Clear-Vision and 3) Night-vision.**

Saul was the people's choice for a king. God gave the people something harmful because they insisted like a baby who demands to taste the lipstick because it looks so delicious...and the mom agrees. Saul is still in office but his successor is an un-named kid; God says, "I have selected" – lit. "I've seen to it".

Samuel the prophet is sent to "O Little Town of Bethlehem" to the family of Jesse to anoint (mash-ach as in meshiach = messiah) to anoint one of Jesse's sons. When the prophet arrives in Bethlehem the people are afraid (think he's come to judge/punish) but God gave Samuel safe passage (from Saul) by sending him with a sacrifice to be offered to God but eaten by the people – it was like a town barbecue.

The sons of Jesse are strutted before the prophet like 4-H calves at the County Fair and the first calf – the oldest of the seven sons is obviously the one – look no further! But Samuel is gently corrected: "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his

stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (7)

There’s a repetition of the word “see” in the whole passage. God has “seen” to it that there’s a new king and now “seeing” reaches a crescendo in v 7. It’s evidently the main idea of the section and many scholars think it’s the key verse in the entire BOOK.

We don’t see like God sees. Our focus is different. We’re naturally, sinfully conditioned and doomed to see things at the surface, appearance-level. Our eyes don’t penetrate to the level of character or motivation. We’re trapped by what our eyes see. Eliab LOOKS the part, looks like Saul who looks like the Canaanite kings – tall, muscular, presidential, royal – like a king should look.

But God reminds us – “Saul was the people’s choice and SAUL has only harmed you. Now, it’s time for MY choice – a man whose heart belongs to ME and who sees like I see (with beautiful eyes).”

So, they trot out all seven of these big, handsome, strapping men. And Samuel must be thinking, “Uh... your name IS Jesse, right? And I’ve seen the full number (7) of your sons? ...Is there no one worthy to open the book and break its seals (Rev 5)?”

And it’s as if someone says, “Look...there’s a lamb...and I looked and behold a lion of the tribe of Judah” (Sorry, I still have Revelation on my mind!)

Among the lambs, there’s a lion... “We do have one more son... but he’s... uh... the runt... he’s a shepherd... artsy (poet/musician type) and a loner... Frankly, we usually forget him because he’s small and kind’a extra (#8 – we could’a stopped at 7!)

So they call #8 whose name we haven’t even heard yet – we know him only as “the smallest and the one who tends the sheep” (Cinderella!) And Samuel says, “Well, we’re not gonna eat til I have a look at the little runt...so go get what’s-his-name!”

And they bring him in – reddish complexion with beautiful eyes and handsome but ...small. And God tells the prophet, “Anoint HIM. He’s the one.” (v.13)

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward.”

And this is actually a frequent occurrence with God. He chooses the barren woman. He picks the stutterer to be a public speaker. Culture dictates that the First-Born gets the inheritance but God gives it to the second born (or in this case the 8th born – BTW, 8 is the number of the New Creation and this will be a new day for Israel) And it’s not till the last verse that we even get the

name of this handsome little afterthought: David. AND, it won't be until about a decade later that this runt begins to reign.

Now, he's basically useless/smelly... he's a shepherd.

And it's NOT that God hides or glosses over this embarrassing fact – instead – the fact that David was a common shepherd is emphasized in the Bible: (as in Ps 78) “The Lord also chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands.”

Somehow, in that low and humble, undesirable, bottom-rung job, God taught David tenderness (with little lambs). Saul was also with life-stock when we first met him: DONKEYS. And Saul turned out to be stubborn and mean. David was with sheep and lambs and turned out to be tender and protective ...and (as we'll see next week) a musician.

Now, the applications: this passage and this pattern in the Bible is a gift to us. It's meant to equip us for life in the right-side-up Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of grace. In a shallow world of appearances and transactional relationships and “performance-ism” and karma, this pattern assures us of God's PROVISION, CLEAR-VISION and NIGHT-VISION.

Let me tease those out a little bit.

When we look around and judging by what we see, we may conclude that it's “just not happening in my life” and that we have to make it happen, shoe-horn it in and even “bend the rules” or go into fight or flight or freeze-mode. But when we're racked with anxiety (in this AGE of anxiety) we should remember this passage and how it screams to us that things are often not what they seem. With God we should expect the unexpected. Had the people NOT insisted that God give them a king who looked like all the other kings, (an expected, conventional king) is it possible that God would have provided David in God's own perfect timing? Despite appearances, God provides.

And don't we see, in the wide-angle view, that in the long wait of history...in the fullness of time (Gal 4.4) God returned to Bethlehem (the House of Bread) and raised up another unlikely, who according to Isaiah 53 (2) was NOT royal-looking or presidential.

He was also a shepherd. He said, “I am the Good Shepherd and I lay down My life for the Sheep.” He, David's Descendent and David's Source, was the Shepherd who was also a Lamb and God gave Him skillful hands to shepherd us. He can be trusted.

And that wait was necessary. We cry out, “How long, O Lord?” but the provision is always perfect. Even now as we live in this moment when the Kingdom is come and yet still coming (the

already and the not-yet) we can trust God to work out His will in the world, in the Church and in our individual lives even when we don't see it with our eyes God is providing.

Second, this passage not only convinces us about God's PRO-vision, it leads to a CLEAR-vision about God and your life and callings and a clarity in your vision of others – it's a new way of seeing.

We can begin to break free of our slavery to appearances. The Gospel liberates us to see past facades and pretenses and begin to get to the heart of the matter. The Gospel releases us to see people as they really are – people made in the image of God and therefore GOOD but also corrupted by sin and therefore messed up and opposed to God and in need of New Life from God's Life-Giving Spirit.

All Christians are anointed in a way that David was – this passage is more than just an example to follow – it's news of power from God. As the Holy Spirit came upon this forgotten runt and began to assert Himself IN David... the Spirit sanctifies David's past – suddenly all David's past experiences became useful in the work of God's Kingdom. You'll see!

St John writes to all Christians when he says, "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him lives in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but His anointing teaches you about all things" (1st John 2.27)

He's not saying that we have mystical insight into all things but that the Spirit convinces us that the Good News is true and that it's the most important thing about me. The Spirit of God who IS the anointing, He is actually helping the believer in Jesus to see all things in light of the doing and dying and rising of Jesus Christ.

We're NOT left to our own will-power when it comes to living the life of True Spirituality – the Spirit is changing the way we see and empowering and setting us free from shallow externalism.

Last, this passage equips me with "night-vision". What I mean is, when we pass through periods of time that are "the dark night of the soul" – when all around my soul gives way and I face tough questions and doubt seems to brutally assail us – that's what were about to see in the life of David – then we see that God has a good plan even for these difficulties.

Saul had a very easy road to the throne but that express-train to the kingdom did not make him humble or tender and certainly not a good repentor. We all want an easy life but easy lives rarely lead to spiritual depth and usefulness to God and others.

I love what C.S. Lewis said about NEED. "We become 'jolly beggars.' The good man is sorry for the sins which have increased his Need. He is not entirely sorry for the fresh Need they have produced."

In my own flesh, I hate to be needy...but when we're seeing through the lens of God's grace – the God who is NOT impressed by appearances – the God who needs NOTHING we could give Him but loves us JUST to demonstrate His own beauty... And when I'm seeing that and my need is sending me to this God – I, the jolly beggar (like 2nd Kings CH 7), and God the Blessed Giver – the God who is drawn to my need – when the Spirit helps me see that, I become, like David, tender like a lamb and bold to repent.

My tendencies toward comparison with others, fear, defensiveness, being easily offended, self-pity, an over-critical attitude, easily threatened, an unwillingness to receive from others – when I see my need and the Gospel assures me that God LOVES to meet those needs – it leaves me humble, grateful, inquisitive, creative and ready to be used by God.