

DAVID: GOD'S CHOSEN KING

BIBLE BACKGROUND

PASSAGE

1 Samuel 16:1-13

THEME

David, a man after God's own heart, was chosen by God to be the King of Israel.

STORY

God directs the prophet Samuel to anoint David in secret as Israel's future king. Twenty-four years later all of Israel covenants with David and anoints him king, "according to the word of the Lord to Samuel." (1 Chronicles 11:1-9)

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES

1 Samuel 16:7b (NRSV)

"For the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." {Younger classes may want to use the CEV translation: "The Lord told Samuel, 'People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts.'"}"

PURPOSES

- A.
- B. The students of this rotation will appreciate that God is in charge, working steadfastly according to God's own plan and timetable.
- C. The students will learn that the shepherd boy David will become Israel's greatest king, and, more importantly, an ancestor of the Messiah. David's idealized kingdom points ultimately to the coming Kingdom of God.
- D. The students will learn that God sees things that people do not. Even God's most trusted and most faithful followers sometimes fail to follow God's instructions, taking charge themselves and relying wrongly on themselves. We recognize ourselves in their struggles to understand and to do God's will.
- E. The students will also see that when God calls people to do something, God prepares them and provides all they need to do God's work. We also can rely on the Holy Spirit's presence and support in our own lives.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

1 Samuel 16:1-13

1-3 - God to Samuel: "Stop grieving over rejected Saul and go to Bethlehem to anoint a king from Jesse's sons." Samuel is afraid; he knows Saul will kill him if he anoints another king. God tells him to take a heifer to Bethlehem to give the appearance of going to make a sacrifice. If Samuel invites Jesse to the sacrifice, God will show Samuel what to do and who to anoint.

4-5 - Samuel obeys; terrified elders meet him and ask if he has come in peace. Samuel says "peace" and invites them to the sacrifice. He sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them.

6-7 - First son comes before Samuel and Samuel is sure this is the one God wants anointed. God says, "You're looking at the outside, it's what's on the inside that I see and that's what's important. I have rejected this man for anointing."

8-10 - All seven sons pass by Samuel, and God does not choose any of them.

11-12 - Samuel asks Jesse if these are all of his sons. Jesse says only the youngest is left but he is tending sheep. Samuel asks Jesse to send for him. When the youngest comes in, God says to Samuel, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."

13- Samuel anoints David in front of his brothers. From that day forward, God's spirit was on David in power. Samuel leaves for Ramah.

1 Chronicles 11:1-9 (Also found in 2 Samuel 5:1-10)

1-2 - All Israel gathers together and says they are all family. They acknowledge that David commanded the army while Saul was king and that God appointed David to be their king.

3- The elders of Israel anoint David as king over all of Israel, according to God's word through Samuel.

4-6 - David and his army march to Jerusalem and take it from their enemies. Joab was made commander-in-chief because he led the attack.

7-8 - David begins living in the fortress of Jerusalem. Joab and David build up and restore the city.

9- David becomes more and more powerful because the Almighty God was with him.

COMMENTS ON THE TEXT

Our text is a wonderful story about how God chooses, prepares and uses leaders. We see God faithfully working in God's own time through his chosen people. We're entertained by Samuel's misconceptions, but focused on the fact that God is in charge.

The scene opens with the Lord's words to Samuel, a powerful prophet, priest, and the last of the judges of Israel. God is rebuking Samuel for his continuing grief over the disobedience of Saul, Israel's first king. God announces, "I have rejected him." Then the Lord sends Samuel on a startling, unexpected mission to anoint a new king in Bethlehem.

Samuel responds in fear, knowing that vengeful Saul would kill Samuel if he heard about the prophet's anointing a replacement for him. But God reassures Samuel that God knows how to avoid that disaster.

When Samuel actually arrives in Bethlehem, the elders of Bethlehem are themselves terrified at Samuel's coming. They fear both Samuel and Saul, but meekly accept the ruse that God's great prophet has traveled this distance only to offer a sacrifice with Jesse and his sons.

We as readers are in on God's secret with Samuel, but Jesse and the elders are unaware of the pivotal importance of this event. Our narrator draws out both the drama and the comedy of this scene. We see Samuel preparing to choose Jesse's eldest son, Eliab, the natural choice in a Hebrew family and a man with the physical height for leadership. But the Lord speaks directly to Samuel, warning him that physical appearance is not how God chooses a leader. Perhaps Samuel now remembers that Saul also was tall and appeared suited to leadership.

Jesse's next two sons, Abinadab and Shammah, are rejected by name. Then the last four pass by, nameless, but also rejected. This must be an important story because seven is an important number. Samuel finally asks, "Are all your sons here?"

The youngest, too inconsequential to have been invited to the sacrifice, must be brought in from keeping the sheep. So everyone stops, waiting for David's arrival. Walter Brueggeman notes, "The narrator makes Jesse's household wait, and

makes the reader wait, for the arrival of (the as-yet unnamed) David. The story waits, just as Israel has waited." (1)

As David finally arrives, the first information we are given is his physical description. Ironically, the Lord has just instructed Samuel to disregard physical appearance. But our first information about David is that he is redheaded with beautiful eyes, a handsome fellow. Apparently, God also knows how to use attractive people as leaders. Throughout his life, David's charisma, his attractiveness to both men and women, will be important to him.

David speaks not a word, and the anointing is quickly done. "... And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward." We are again reminded that all the glory in this unfolding story belongs to God.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel were written anonymously, but the authorship is attributed to the prophet Samuel. The date the books were written is unknown, but probably after the time of Solomon. The events center around three important men: Saul, Samuel, and David.

Political, moral, and spiritual anarchy and deterioration marked Israel's history under the Judges. (2) When it appeared that Israel could no longer survive under such unfaithfulness to God, He intervened and gave Hannah the son she longed for, Samuel. Samuel, as a judge, prophet, and priest, was a strong leader. Unfortunately when he became too old to lead, there was no one to take his place. Not even his own sons were fit to succeed their father.

At this point in time Israel complained, actually whined and said they wanted to have a king like all the other nations. (1 Samuel 8:5, 20) This was an implied rejection of God as their king. Many hundreds of years earlier, God had promised Israel a king; God was not withholding anything good from them. The timing was not right, however, for the man of God's own choosing.

Nevertheless, Saul was anointed king by Samuel and reigned for forty-two years. His reign was marked by some successes but mostly by rebellion against God. Saul became insanely jealous of David and tried to kill him at least seven times. God finally rejected Saul.

An undetermined amount of time passed between God's rejection of Saul and God's command to Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint the king of God's own choosing. Jesse, David's father, was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz and so was in the line of promise for the coming Messiah.

The line of promise is as follows as recorded in Matthew 1:1-6:

Time of the Patriarchs: Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-Judah, then...
Egyptian Bondage: Perez-Hezron-Ram-Aminadab-Nashon then...
Conquest and Judges: Salmon-Boaz-Obed-Jesse-David. (3)

The author of 1 Chronicles is unknown, but Jewish tradition suggests Ezra was the author, probably around the 5th century BC. Some commentators believe the author of Chronicles is guilty of a bias on behalf of David. David's adultery with Bathsheba is omitted, however, many of his other misdeeds are indeed recorded, such as his mishandling of the ark, (1 Chronicles 13:9-14), his polygamy (14:3-7), and his premature request to build the temple (Chapter 17). (4)

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

"You have been our king from the beginning, O God; You have saved us many times." (Psalm 74:12) Although these words were written after the time of Saul and David and Israel would have many human leaders, God was their one and true sovereign, which made their demand for a king all the more sad.

God had chosen an earthly leader for His people; this man had already been identified as one of Saul's neighbors (15:28) and a man who was after God's own heart (13:14). "David had been chosen from eternity past to be ruler of Israel." (5) God did not change his mind in relation to Saul, but rather had used Saul to implement God's higher plan. God had permitted the people to have the king of their choosing and their poor choice became quite evident! Now, God's people chose to trust God for their king and He gave them David.

As the "baby of the family," David was not even invited to partake in the sacrifice or to witness the anointing. This did not give David "poor self-esteem;" instead he was obedient to his father in tending their few sheep. Because of his obedience, God gave him a whole nation of sheep! (1 Chronicles 11) (6)

The purpose of Chronicles is to show the reign and dynasty of David as divinely inspired and ordained. One way in which this is revealed is by the death of Saul being recorded as God's judgment for his unfaithfulness and consulting a medium. God's judgment of Saul prepared the way for David's reign. We see a tragic contrast -- the Spirit came upon David but left Saul. An evil spirit came to torment Saul from that time until his death.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Brueggeman, Walter. *Interpretation #8, First and Second Samuel*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 122.

(2) Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck. *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1985, p. 431.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 449.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 590.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 447.

(6) Wiersbe, Warren W. *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*. Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1993, p. 266.

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