

Looks Can Be Deceiving (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

1. Stop Grieving (v.1)

- We are not informed how much time has elapsed from Samuel's retreat to Ramah and Saul's departure to Gibeah (15:34). Perhaps several weeks.
- Saul has already forfeited his future kingdom at Gilgal (13:14) as well as current kingship (15:23). Both Samuel and the LORD are grieving (15:35).
- The LORD inquires of Samuel: "how long will you grieve over Saul?" Samuel is grieving as a father or mother over a prodigal son; one who has spurned the commandments of the LORD. He is anguishing over Saul and his disappointment as king. He is also weeping for the nation in their idolatry and unbelief in their demand for the king (8:5) which has failed them. What will happen to the LORD's people (9:16)? What is the next step?
- In Samuel's grief, he may have over-indulged in sorrow. While seasons of sorrow may follow after disappointments in life, it is never justified to shut God and His providence out of view with connection to sorrow.
- The LORD, in his kindness and mercy is bringing about a new season in the life of not only Samuel, but the nation. It is time for Samuel to "go."

2. Do Not Fear (v.2)

- Not only is this aged prophet (8:5) grieving, but also fearful and trembling. Why?
 - He fears Saul and thinks Saul is going to kill him. Samuel has already departed from Saul after the prophetic announcement of Saul's forfeiture of kingship. They have not spoken since.
- Samuel has been commanded to "fill his horn with oil." Another king will be anointed, except this time it will be the son of Jesse, who is a Bethlehemite.
- If Saul catches wind of Samuel going to Bethlehem with a horn of oil, Saul will kill him. Additionally, in order to get to Bethlehem, Samuel has to cross through Saul's hometown, Gibeah. Saul would view this as treason and execute him.
- To accommodate Samuel's fearful hesitancy, the LORD commands him to bring a heifer to sacrifice in Bethlehem. There are two potential reasons for this:
 - If Samuel brings a sacrificial offering, no one will think anything of it; he is a Levitical judge. This is not duplicity, but concealment. Samuel is not obligated to enlighten anyone on the reason for his travels.
 - As a Levitical judge, he was authorized to sacrifice an animal as part of a ritual that atoned for an unsolved murder that was committed in a rural region (Deut. 21:1-9).
- Once Samuel reaches the city limits, he is met by the elders of Bethlehem. They are "trembling." Why?
 - A. They think that Samuel has received some wind of injustice or wickedness in the community. It is a disciplinary visit.
 - B. There is an unsolved murder prior to arriving, which was only known to the elders (Deut. 21:1-9). It is an atoning visit.

C. They have reverence to him as a prophet of God.

D. They heard of what he did to King Agag and were curious for his arrival.

*Bethlehem was not on Samuel's normal route as a traveling prophet (7:16).

3. Look (v.6-12)

- Once the elders have consecrated themselves and the animal was sacrificed, the meal is being prepared. He then makes his way to the home of Jesse.
- Jesse summons his oldest son Eliab:
 - Samuel's Reaction: We are not given any adjectives or descriptions other than that Samuel was about to anoint him. He must have been physically attractive and in the image of Saul. This was a test for Samuel
 - The LORD's Rebuke: Samuel is about to anoint Eliab only to be rebuked; Samuel "looks" at Eliab the same way the nation "looked" at Saul
- After Eliab is rejected, Jesse has six of his sons pass before Samuel. The LORD is silent, and Samuel inquires of Jesse whether there are others (v.11).
- We cannot assume why David was not summoned before Samuel, but there would be no meal until David was fetched from his shepherding duties.
- When David arrives, he is described as "ruddy" which is the same word used to describe Esau (Gen. 25:25). David's hair or skin may have been red. He also has "beautiful eyes" which as a metaphor describes his physical appearance.
- Even though David is noted as handsome, and aesthetically pleasing, this was not the standard for his election. The LORD has already informed the reader that He has another man after His own heart (13:14). David has favor before the LORD because He has set His affections on him; David was God's choosing.

4. Anoint (v.13)

- Oil was used in diplomacy, business contracts, nuptial rights, and the manumission of slaves. The anointing would symbolize a contract or covenant.
- After Samuel anoints David, the LORD has committed himself to David. David's anointing would have been in front of his seven brothers (v.12) and quite a scene.
- After this private anointing, David and Samuel part ways. As a shepherd, David would have accumulated uncompromising qualities that would make him useful as a king. Shepherds had to watch, feed, protect, heal, bind up the broken, and recover that which was lost.
- After David was anointed, the Spirit rushed on "David from that day forward." Unlike Saul, David will be empowered continually moving forward.
- Jesse was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:17-22) and comes from the tribe of Judah (Ruth 4:12; Gen 38). From this time forward the name Jesse, from the city of Bethlehem and the tribe of Judah, will always be associated with Israel's Messiah.

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