

# 1 Samuel 15:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

## Analysis

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**And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?**

Samuel's rhetorical question - 'When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?' - recalls Saul's earlier humility (9:21; 10:22). Being 'little in thine own sight' (qatan) described Saul's self-assessment when God chose him. The LORD's anointing responded to this humility. By implication, Saul is no longer 'little in his own sight' - his monument-building suggests the opposite. Growth in position produced growth in self-importance that undermined the humility God honored.

## Historical Context

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Saul's initial humility impressed Samuel and was part of why God chose him. His tribe (Benjamin) was smallest; his family was 'least' in the tribe. This external smallness reflected internal humility that qualified him for elevation. That qualification no longer applies.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does growth in position sometimes destroy the humility that qualified us for that position?
2. What happens when leaders become great in their own sight?

## Interlinear Text

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אָמַר	וַיֹּאמֶר	לְ	שְׁמוּאֵל	וְאֵם	הֵל וְאֵם	קָטָן	אֶתְּהָ
said	And Samuel					When thou wast little	
H559	H8050			H3808	H518	H6996	H859
בְּעֵינֶיךָ	רָאִיתָ	אֵם	שָׁבִיטִי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶתְּהָ		
in thine own sight	wast thou not made the head		of the tribes	of Israel			H859
H5869	H7218		H7626	H3478			
וּמִשְׁחָךְ	יְהוָה	לְךָ	עַל	יִשְׂרָאֵל			
anointed	and the LORD	thee king		of Israel			
H4886	H3068	H4428	H5921	H3478			

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Samuel 9:21** (References Israel): And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

**1 Samuel 10:22** (References Lord): Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

**1 Samuel 10:1** (References Lord): Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

**Matthew 18:4** (Kingdom): Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

**Hosea 13:1** (References Israel): When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.

**Judges 6:15** (References Lord): And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

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