

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

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

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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

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

אָמַר	שָׁמֹאָל	בְּלֹא	אָמַר	קָטָן	אָפָה
said	And Samuel		H3808	H518	When thou wast little
H559	H8050				H6996
בְּעֵינֵךְ		רָאשׁ		שָׁבֵט	אֶת
in thine own sight	wast thou not made the head			of the tribes	of Israel
H5869	H7218			H7626	H3478
מַשְׁמִיךְ		לֹמֶךְ	עַל	יִשְׂרָאֵל:	
anointed	and the LORD	thee king	H5921	of Israel	H859
H4886	H3068	H4428		H3478	

Additional Cross-References

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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