

1 Samuel 16:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.

Analysis

And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.

Samuel's immediate assumption that Eliab was God's chosen reveals how deeply ingrained human criteria for leadership had become - even in a prophet. The Hebrew suggests Samuel was struck by Eliab's stature and appearance, much as Israel had been impressed by Saul's height. This moment of prophetic presumption becomes the occasion for one of Scripture's most important theological declarations about divine versus human evaluation.

Historical Context

Firstborn sons held special status in ancient Israelite society, receiving the double portion of inheritance and family leadership responsibilities. Eliab's impressive appearance followed the pattern of Saul, who 'from his shoulders and upward was higher than any of the people' (1 Samuel 9:2). Physical stature was prized as a sign of warrior capability.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What human criteria do you unconsciously use to evaluate spiritual leadership potential?
2. How has God surprised you by choosing leaders who didn't match expected qualifications?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי י' H1961	בָּבוֹאָם H935	וַיִּרְא H7200	אֶת H853	אֶלְיָא ב H446
And it came to pass when they were come	that he looked		on Eliab	
וַיֹּאמֶר H559	אֲנִי H389	נֶגְדָה H5048	יְהוָה H3068	מְשִׁיחוֹ: H4899
and said		Surely the LORD'S	anointed	

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