

# Samuel Anoints David

God sends Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint a new king from Jesse's sons. While everyone expects the oldest, God chooses David, the youngest shepherd boy.

1 Samuel 16:1-13

CHARACTERS: Samuel, Jesse, David, Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah

THEMES: God's choice, Looking at the heart, Anointing, Divine calling, Humility

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THE LORD SAID to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.'

But Samuel was afraid. 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.'

The Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.'

Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. 'Do you come in peace?' they asked. A visit from a prophet could mean judgment or blessing.

'Yes, in peace,' Samuel replied. 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.' Eliab must have been impressive—tall, handsome, commanding in presence. He looked like a king.

But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'

There it is—one of Scripture's most profound truths. Human beings are impressed by appearance, credentials, charisma, and resume. God looks deeper. He sees character, faith, integrity, devotion. He sees what a person is when no one else is watching.

Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The Lord has not chosen this one either.' Then Jesse had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, 'Nor has the Lord chosen this one.' Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has not chosen these.'

Then Samuel asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?'

'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.'

Notice the dismissive tone. The youngest, the one left out in the fields while his older brothers attended the important religious gathering. In that culture, the youngest son inherited least, mattered least, was considered least. David wasn't even invited to the sacrifice.

Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'

So Jesse sent for David and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'

So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

It's a remarkable scene. David was anointed king while still a youth tending sheep. His brothers witnessed it—the youngest, least regarded

son chosen above all of them. Yet it would be years before David actually became king. He would face trials, persecution, exile, and danger. The anointing was not the coronation; it was the beginning of preparation.

But something happened that day: the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. The same Spirit who had once empowered Saul now left him and came upon David. The transition was beginning.

What made David different? Later Scripture tells us: David was a man after God's own heart. Not sinless—David would commit terrible sins. Not perfect—he would make devastating mistakes. But his heart orientation was toward God. When he sinned, he repented. When he worshiped, he held nothing back. When he fought, he fought for God's glory. When he wrote, he poured out his soul in psalms.

God had found His king—not in the palace, but in the pasture. Not among the prominent, but among the overlooked. Not by human standards, but by divine choice. The shepherd would become king, the psalmist would become warrior, and the boy anointed in secret would become the greatest king in Israel's history, the man whose lineage would produce the Messiah.

From Bethlehem would come both David and, a thousand years later, David's greater Son—Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the King of Kings. God's way of choosing leaders hasn't changed. He still looks at the heart.