

File No. 55

I SAMUEL 16:1–13

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

(SBS Bk 2 Story No. 34)

Story Notes

Background Information

Samuel must have longed for good leadership in Israel again. Perhaps he hoped that Saul would be spared. However, Saul was glorying in himself, preening himself on his 'obedience' to God, and putting a religious twist on his own ambition. Littleness in his own eyes had now turned to bigness in his own eyes with the need to humour the people so they would continue to follow him. Sacrifice, even though commanded by God could not replace simple obedience. David and the prophets, and Jesus also, would never forget what was learned here (Ps. 51:16–17; Isa. 1:11–15; Micah. 6:6–8; Heb. 10:6–9). Finally, nothing could remove all the sins of rebellion and insubordination other than the body of Jesus offered up in simple obedience to his Father.

Saul regarded loss of kingship as the worst thing that could happen to him, and he longed for the prophetic approval that was essential to his standing. Samuel, grieved yet lovingly, provided this last concession to Saul's failed kingship. Samuel discharged the task omitted by Saul, and then, the focus of our story moves to David. Samuel must leave Saul behind him.

Main Lesson

The story moves to the king that the Lord would choose for himself, rather than for the people. Bethlehem's elders were not sure they stood in God's favour, but they need not have feared. From them would come Israel's next king. From them also would come the Messiah (Micah. 5:2). Then, Samuel and the elders of Bethlehem, with Jesse, witnessed God's selection process. Those thought most suitable were bypassed. However, the youngest son, David, was handsome, which seems to be acknowledged as a sign of God's favour (Exod. 2:2 with Acts 7:20). All present, including the brothers, witnessed David's anointing.

We are not told how the Spirit came on David, but he was soon known as a mighty man of valour. This, together with his skill on the harp, and especially his faith in God, placed him appropriately in the king's court. There, he assisted the man who had aspired to something in his own right and who was now left to achieve it by his own power. For the moment, Saul was comforted by God's gift of David.

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