

God Anoints

Printed Text • 1 Samuel 16:1–7, 11–13

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will be able to **EXPLAIN** why David was anointed to be king, **BE GLAD** God looks at our hearts, and **COMMIT** to obeying God's directions no matter the cost.

In Focus

The Bradshaw administration was extremely anxious when they learned that the African American community had chosen one of their own, Alex Harvey, to run against him for mayor in the general election.

Having taken the Black vote for granted for years, Mayor Bradshaw realized that he would need to visit several Black churches in the city if he wanted to secure another term as mayor. However, this time, the Mayor's one liners and broken promises failed to win over the people.

Alex, on the other hand, led an honest campaign with grassroots support.

After he finished coaching their kids at soccer practice, he listened to the problems Cheryl and the other parents were having. He visited Andre's barber shop and the salon where Denise and Tamika worked and shared about the time his family was food insecure. He worked together with Aaron Brown to understand the problems with local rent practices.

Ultimately, Mayor Bradshaw was ousted from office and young Alex Harvey was elected to replace him. When asked about the reasons for this change, many in the Black community expressed that it wasn't just a rejection of the man, but also a rejection of his policies. They were hopeful for the promise of positive change under Mayor-Elect Harvey.

Sometimes change is necessary, especially when policies fail and people's lives are at stake.

How do we respond when politicians prioritize staying in their positions over serving their communities?

Keep In Mind

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7, KJV)

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, NLT)

Words You Should Know

Anointed (1 Samuel 16:13) *masah* (Heb.)—To rub with oil or a liquid.

Countenance (vs. 12) *'ayin* (Heb.)—eye, face, or presence.

Say It Correctly

Ramah. rah-MUH.

KJV 1 Samuel 16:1–7, 11–13

1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take a heifer with thee, and say I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

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

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose, and went to Ramah.

NLT 1 Samuel 16:1–7, 11–13

1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king.”

2 But Samuel asked, “How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” “Take a heifer with you,” the LORD replied, “and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.

3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me.”

4 So Samuel did as the LORD instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. “What’s wrong?” they asked. “Do you come in peace?”

5 “Yes,” Samuel replied. “I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice as well.

6 When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, “Surely this is the LORD’s anointed!”

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

11 Then Samuel asked, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse replied. “But he’s out in the fields watching the sheep and goats.” “Send for him at once,” Samuel said. “We will not sit down to eat until he arrives.”

12 So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, “This is the one; anoint him.”

13 So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

The People, Places, and Times

Bethlehem. Two Hebrew words form the Hebrew proper noun bet lehem (**BATE LEH**-khem) which can be translated as “the house of bread.” Bethlehem is in the southern part of Israel and was first mentioned in the Amarna letters, which were correspondence written to Egyptian pharaohs by local kings of Palestine and Syria before 1250 BC. Before the period of the Israelite monarchy, Bethlehem was home to the Levite who served as a priest for a man named Micah in Ephraim (Judges 17:7–13). It was also where the tragic story of the concubine, whose murder led to the massacre of the people of Gibeah, took place (Judges 19–20). Additionally, Bethlehem was the residence of Elimelek and Naomi, who had to leave Moab due to a famine (Ruth 1:2–4:11). Bethlehem was the family home of King David and the site of his anointing by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:4–13).

Emperor Hadrian destroyed Bethlehem in the second century AD. However, around AD 325, after the Roman Empire had embraced Christianity, Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, initiated the construction of a great church there. The church suffered significant damage during the Samaritan revolt from 521 to 528, but it was rebuilt in the sixth century, mainly in its present form, by Emperor Justinian.

Background

As Israel adapted to life under the monarchy, the prophecies given by Samuel of all the problems that would befall them for wanting a king began to unfold. King Saul was not a godly leader; he was fearful and ultimately sinned against God when he failed to eliminate the Amalekites. His failure to rid the land of the Amalekites led to his loss of the right to rule the kingdom (1 Samuel 15:10–35).

At-A-Glance

1. God Moves Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1–4)
2. God Sees Beyond Appearances (vv. 5–7)
3. God Chooses David (vv. 11–13)

In Depth

1. God Moves Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1–4)

Though King Saul had disobeyed God twice by refusing to follow Samuel’s words as given to him by God, it is evident from Scripture that Samuel deeply admired Saul. After God rejected Saul as king, Samuel returned to his home in Ramah to mourn (1 Samuel 15:34–35). Samuel may have mourned because he realized that Saul’s potential to be a great king was lost due to his unwillingness to follow instructions. It’s also possible that the prophet mourned because he understood the implications of God’s rejection of Saul for the nation of Israel. Regardless of the reasons for his mourning, God decided it was time for Samuel to move forward and focus on His work. There was still a nation of people to care for, and God remained in control; He had already chosen the next king for Israel. Samuel was instructed to go to Bethlehem, a city located

approximately 15 miles south of Ramah, with a flask of oil to meet a man named Jesse, the father of eight sons. Among these sons, Samuel would discover God's choice for Israel's next king and would also be the one to anoint him, just as he had done with Saul.

However, Samuel immediately protested God's command, as Bethlehem was not part of his usual travels (1 Samuel 8:2, 4). The prophet feared that Saul would learn about his journey to Bethlehem to anoint another king to replace him and would turn against Samuel, potentially causing harm to him. To relieve his fears, God instructed Samuel to take a sacrificial animal with him and invite Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice as they worshiped the Lord in the city. That way, if Saul found out Samuel was in Bethlehem, the king would conclude that the prophet was on an assignment from the Lord— which he was.

When the prophet arrived in Bethlehem, the city fathers were surprised to see him. Because Samuel had shut himself in Ramah after Saul's rebellious actions, the elders were fearful that Samuel's arrival in town probably meant judgment and rebuke from the Lord. Therefore, they wanted to know whether Samuel's visit was a peaceful one. When God gives us an assignment, we need to obey Him, regardless of whether others misunderstand us. Can you think of a time when it has been hard to complete the assignment God has given to you?

2. God Sees Beyond Appearances (vv. 5–7)

Samuel lets the elders know that he had come to Bethlehem, not only in peace, but also to perform a sacrificial service unto the Lord. It was important for Samuel that these men attend the service, probably so they might be witnesses in case the king asked them the reason for Samuel's visit. Though Samuel was there to anoint Israel's next king, he understood God's requirement for sanctification. Therefore, the prophet told the elders to "sanctify themselves" (v. 5) before they came to the service. God is calling His people to be holy and set apart for His service (1 Peter 1:15–16). Holiness is not a denominational label but should be a way of life for all believers everywhere. Samuel also invited Jesse and seven of his sons to join him in the service. The prophet ensured that the eight men were sanctified before they entered the presence of the Lord.

As the service progressed, Samuel looked at all of Jesse's sons with one purpose in mind. He had to anoint the man who would become king, and he wanted to get it right. However, Samuel forgot that it wasn't his responsibility to choose the man; it was God's. The first person Samuel saw was Eliab, the oldest of Jesse's sons. Scripture does not give us a complete description of Eliab, but we can surmise that he was a tall, strong, and handsome man who greatly impressed Samuel (1 Samuel 16:6–7). Samuel was about to call it a day when he suddenly heard the Lord speak to him and told him not to look at his outward appearance. Can you think of a time you made a decision based on what you saw, rather than asking God if it was the right decision?

3. God Chooses David (vv. 11–13)

Having been rebuked by God, Samuel wondered whether Israel's next king was among Jesse's seven sons who had come to the sacrifice. Had he truly heard from God? Was there another son nearby? Jesse told the prophet that he did have a younger son, but he was out in the field taking

care of the sheep. Since God chose none of the other sons, Samuel concluded that whoever he was, the younger son must have been God's choice. Therefore, Samuel made it clear that no one would partake of the sacrificial meal until he had seen all of Jesse's sons.

When David arrived at the service, Samuel looked at him and noticed like King Saul, he was a very handsome young man. Perhaps he was more handsome than all his other brothers. To eliminate any doubts Samuel may have had about David, God spoke to the prophet and told him to get up and anoint David, who would be Israel's next king. Once Samuel poured the oil on David's head, God's anointing came upon the young man for the rest of his life. Having successfully completed his assignment, Samuel returned home to Ramah.

Search the Scriptures

1. What was the Lord's command to Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1)
2. When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, how did the elders respond? (v. 4)
3. Whom did the Lord tell Samuel to anoint as Israel's next king? (vv. 12–13)

Discuss The Meaning

1. What does it mean that the Lord looks on the heart of man? Discuss.
2. What is the significance of David being anointed with oil?
3. Does anointing with oil have any significance for believers today?

Liberating Lesson

We live in a society dominated by social media platforms. Therefore, we are moved by what we see and hear, but not necessarily by the inner character of a person. In this society, what are some steps we can take to discern what is genuine and what is fake?

Application For Activation

Before we can discern the character of another, we must understand who we are on the inside. Reflect on this week as a time when you were misled by your observations and consider what you might do differently in the future.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

1 Samuel 16:1–7, 11–13

1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

This passage begins with a direct divine speech from God to Samuel. This type of speech, from God to an individual, leaves no doubt as to who is speaking and who is being spoken to. God asks Samuel how long he will mourn. The Hebrew word ‘abal (aw-**BALL**) can be translated as “mourn” and “lament” and it points to the grief over the death or absence of a person and disobedience to God (Genesis 37:34; 2 Samuel 19:1). However, Saul was neither dead nor missing. God tells Samuel that Saul has been rejected from reigning.

Instead, God says, Samuel must go to Jesse, who lives in Bethlehem, a town in the region of Judah. Saul was a Benjamite; now the next king would arise from the land of Bethlehem, which belonged to the tribe of Judah.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. 3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

Samuel’s apprehension concerning Saul is valid. Will Saul indeed kill him? This fear is likely derived from the fact that he had informed Saul of his dethronement, and Saul would try to stop anyone from removing him as king. God did not dismiss Samuel’s fear. Instead, the Lord gave Samuel a strategy to allay suspicion. God instructs Samuel to take a heifer with him as a sacrifice unto the Lord. Sacrifices were offered for various reasons, including unintentional and intentional sin, to express gratitude to the Lord, and to foster fellowship with God (Leviticus 1–5). So, although Samuel was coming for a sacrifice, there is no way that Saul would know the purpose for the sacrifice.

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

Samuel obeys God fully and goes to Bethlehem. The elders tremble (Heb. hared, khaw-**ROD**) with fear, but it is not clear why they are afraid and whether their fear is a result of their own guilt or fear that if they are with Samuel, Saul will turn against them and have them killed. They

ask if this is a peaceful visit, and not only are they assured that the visit is peaceful, but they are also told to consecrate themselves and come to the sacrifice. The process of sanctifying oneself for sacrifice likely included ceremonial washing, changing of garments, and fasting.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. 7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Here is a contrast between what the man sees and what God sees. Samuel calls him the Lord's anointed, but God says that he has refused him. Just as God rejected Saul, He has rejected Eliab; however, it is not clear what makes Eliab's heart not right. Perhaps it is his hatred of his brother David. In 1 Samuel 17:28, Eliab, who "burned with anger" against David, called him "conceited" and said that David had a "wicked" heart.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

The lack of a chosen child can only mean that Jesse has not been honest and has disobeyed the prophet's command to bring all his sons to the sacrifice. The text reads that there is a young one who was tending to the sheep, but it does not reveal his name. The text uses two Hebrew words in the imperative (command) form salah (shaw-**LAKH**) which can be translated as "send" and fetch, laqah (law-**KAKH**), which can be translated as "take." Therefore, Samuel commanded that the youngest be brought to the ceremony. The Hebrew word for sit, sabab (saw-**BAB**) can mean to turn, turnabout, and turn back. Therefore, it could be inferred that they would not turn away from the purpose of the gathering until the next king was anointed. Verse 12 continues to show obedience to the prophet's commands. Jesse sent someone to bring David in, and he is anointed. The text does not say that David is consecrated before the ceremony. Only that there is a command for Samuel "to arise and anoint him, for this is he."

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Samuel anoints David, the youngest son of Jesse, on God's command in the presence of his brothers. Despite David's youth and lack of respect from his family, the Spirit of God comes mightily upon David from this day forward. This is perhaps to demonstrate that the rule of God's people requires the king to rely on God's power. After completing his task, Samuel returned to his hometown in Ramah. Ramah will later be the place where Samuel will die and be buried.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

God Chooses David from the Sheepfolds
(Psalm 78:70–72)

TUESDAY

God's Testimony About David's Heart
(Acts 13:22)

WEDNESDAY

God Sends Samuel to Bethlehem
(1 Samuel 16:1–4)

THURSDAY

The Lord Looks at the Heart
(1 Samuel 16:5–7)

FRIDAY

Jesse's Other Sons Pass By
(1 Samuel 16:8–10)

SATURDAY

David is Called from the Sheepfold
(1 Samuel 16:11–12)

SUNDAY

David is Anointed King
(1 Samuel 16:13)