

David - shepherd and king

The anointing of David

(1 Samuel 16:1-13)

After the time of Gideon and Samson and the other Judges of Israel, the people decided that they would rather have a king instead. Just like the other countries around them. There was a great prophet and priest in the land called Samuel, so the people went to him and said: "Ask the Lord to give us a King!"

Samuel told them: "God says I am your King. If you have a human king he will only bring you trouble."

But the people insisted: "We want a king!" So God told Samuel to anoint Saul as the king of all Israel.

The people were happy, for a while. But then, just as God had warned, things started to go wrong. Saul caused loads of trouble and fell out of favour with the people and with God.

So God said to Samuel: "Saul has fallen out of my favour, so I am choosing a new king. I am sending you to Bethlehem to visit a man called Jesse. One of his sons will be the new king."

Samuel took a young cow and headed off for Bethlehem. When the people saw him they were frightened. They thought he had come from Saul to cause trouble. But Samuel said: "Don't be frightened, I have come in peace. I want to offer a sacrifice and worship God here. Come and join me, go and get yourselves ready."

The people were happy and went off to get ready for the sacrifice. Samuel invited Jesse and all of his sons to come as well. As he got ready, Samuel prayed: "Lord God, show me who you have chosen to be the new king."

All the people arrived and so did Jesse with 7 tall, strong, handsome and clever sons!

"Great," thought Samuel, "one of these is clearly right to be king!"

Samuel looked at the tallest and strongest of Jesse's sons, he was called Eliab.

"Surely he is the one," Samuel thought. But then he heard God say:

"Don't look at his appearance or his height, he is not the one. I do not look at the things that you think make a good king. I don't look at outward appearances. No, I look at the heart."

Then Jesse's next son passed by. He was called Abinadab and was just as tall and handsome as Eliab.

"Surely he is the one?" thought Samuel. But God said:

"No he is not the one either."

So the next son passed by, just as tall and just as handsome. He was called Shammah. But again God said: "No, he is not the one either." And the same happened with all seven of Jesse's sons.

Samuel was surprised. "Are these all your sons?" he asked.

"All you want to see," said Jesse. "There's just the youngest, but he is only a boy. He is small and only looks after the sheep."

"Fetch him!" said Samuel.

So they brought the youngest son, he was called David. As soon as Samuel saw David walking towards him, he heard God say: "This is the one. David is the one. Get up and anoint him to be the next king of Israel!"

And that is what Samuel did. To everyone's surprise he anointed the smallest and youngest of Jesse's sons to be king. And Samuel then knew the truth of God's words: "I don't look at outward appearances. No, I look at the heart."

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