

## **ANOINTED!**

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

As we studied the choices that the people of Israel made in demanding a king and then looked at the choices that Saul made when he reigned as king of Israel, we concluded that choices have consequences and they carry with them responsibility and accountability. As we looked further into what was going on “behind the scenes” we see that not only did the people and the king make choices, but also that God made choices in the life and events of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob so that His “plans” and His “will” would happen.

We know that God is ever faithful and He acts (responds) in accordance with His will and Master Plan and is accountable only to Himself. We are admonished in the Scriptures that we are to follow the example that God sets for us. For example, we are to be holy as He is holy and we are to show the same kind of love, compassion and forgiveness that He shows. One major difference is that we are not only accountable to ourselves (to thine own self be true) but we are also accountable to Him. A proper awareness of being responsible and accountable will (or should) impact the choices that we make. This simple act of knowing the objective and considering the impact of our actions should yield consequences that result from our choices that move us closer to or in the direction of our goals. This is the essence of what Jesus was telling us when He said “I do only the will of My Father.”

We might then question why God allowed Saul to become king since that forty-year diversion or detour didn’t seem to work toward accomplishing the “plan.” The answer could be that since the people were not patient and demanded a change that seemed to be earlier than the ideal timing, then God used that detour to teach them (and us) a lesson regarding making choices based on external appearances rather than on inner characteristics. Do we think that the people would have been satisfied if God had told Samuel to tell them that He would give them a king but they needed to wait forty years for it to happen? They would not have waited and the outcome was grief for the nation and especially for Samuel.

#### Samuel’s Assignment – 16:1-5

<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.” <sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, “How can I go? When Saul hears *of it*, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup> “You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.” <sup>4</sup> So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in peace?” <sup>5</sup> He said, “In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 1 Samuel 16:1-5 (NASB95)

We can learn a lesson from Samuel’s response to the failure of Saul to be successful in his role as king of Israel. Think of all the years and the effort that Samuel had invested in Saul from the time he was picked to be king only to have it all nullified because of Saul’s disobedience. That disobedience resulted in God rejecting Saul as king since his actions would not result in Israel being able to carry out God’s ultimate plan and design for bringing His Son into the world to redeem mankind. Samuel was said to “grieve” or “mourn” over this loss. Apparently, he could not “give up the dream” of a successful reign of Saul.

We don’t know how long this went on before God raised the question with Samuel. Apparently, God will allow us to wallow in our grief without a challenge until that sorrow causes

us to “blame God” or becomes a hindrance to what God has for us to do in accomplishing His will and purpose.

Apparently, Samuel’s sorrow did not keep him from carrying out his routine duties as high priest. We could say that Samuel was operating in a mode of “obedience without buy-in.” This can happen to us when we take the attitude of “I will be obedient to what God tells me to do even though I don’t like it or necessarily agree with it.” It is the attitude that says “Someone made me so mad that I really wanted to hit him, but I restrained myself because I knew that I was supposed to turn the other cheek.” When we don’t have “buy-in” or agreement with God, then He continues to give us opportunities to “get it right” by repeatedly exposing us to those who take us to the point of exasperation until we no longer want to “hit them.”

Apparently, Samuel had not given any thought to a successor to Saul even though he had personally passed on the information from God to Saul that he (Saul) had been rejected as king. God initiated this new action so that His plan could move forward and He was going to use Samuel to begin this next phase. In typical fashion, God revealed His plan to Samuel with only enough information for Samuel to take the next step. Additional information would come after that next step had been taken. That first step in Samuel’s assignment was to take oil for anointing a king and go to the family of Jesse in Bethlehem. God’s choice for the next king was one of Jesse’s sons.

People change and Samuel was not an exception. We can recall the first encounter Samuel had with God where he responded with “Speak, for your servant hears.” This response implied immediate and complete obedience without any concern for consequences. Now, decades later, God spoke and instead of immediate obedience Samuel raised a concern for his own personal safety. His response, in his old age, sounded very much like what we might hear from Christians today. Often, we tend to be more concerned about ourselves than about what God wants us to do. This would appear to be evidence that Samuel had lost some of his confidence in God. His effort to protect himself shows a drifting away from God which may have happened as a result of being absorbed by his grief over what had happened to Saul.

An even bigger change had happened in the life of Saul. Saul had begun with tremendous respect for Samuel as the prophet of God. After he was told that he had been rejected by God, he became paranoid and he too was intent on protecting himself and his position even to the point of being willing to kill God’s prophet. Since this threat from Saul was real and since Samuel had become fearful, God provided Samuel with an accommodation or a “cover story.”

The “cover story” was that Samuel was going to Bethlehem to make a sacrifice unto the Lord so that people in that area could participate in the ceremony. Having an announced alternative motive for what we do rather than telling everyone the real purpose of our actions can be called “subterfuge” which has an implication of dishonesty. One commentator (Tyndale) stated that God did not “suggest deception but gave Samuel an alternate assignment.”

Is it wrong to keep secrets as a plan unfolds in what we are trying to accomplish? God had Moses send spies into the land of Canaan before they invaded it. That action required subterfuge. God’s plan of salvation was held as a “mystery” that was kept secret since the world began and was then revealed in Jesus Christ at the right time. Jesus spoke to the people in parables and told His disciples that they were allowed to “know” the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those who were not part of that kingdom only parables would be told to them. When we think about it, God does not tell us everything He knows but reveals to us only what we need to know when we need to know it.

Think of the confusion and danger that would have resulted if Samuel had announced to the people of Bethlehem that his purpose in coming to them was to anoint the next king of Israel. They asked him a simple straightforward question, “Do you come in peace?” This was just another way of saying “Why are you here?” Samuel needed an answer to calm their fears that the prophet of God had come to their town in “judgment.” They likely thought that Samuel had come in judgment because they were aware of sin in their lives and this produced fear. What they had imagined as the purpose was totally wrong and that happens to us in many cases. We see something going on in the world and we jump to a conclusion of why it is happening. Unless we have been given spiritual insight or discernment, our conclusions are likely to be wrong.

Apparently, the people of the town were invited to prepare themselves for and participate in the offering of the sacrifice. They were told to sanctify themselves which would include bathing and washing their clothes. The wording used with reference to the family of Jesse is somewhat different in that we read that Samuel sanctified them and specifically invited them to the sacrifice and only they participated in the feast following the sacrifice.

### God’s Criteria – 16:6-10

<sup>6</sup> When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him.” <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” <sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “The LORD has not chosen this one either.” <sup>9</sup> Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “The LORD has not chosen this one either.” <sup>10</sup> Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” 1 Samuel 16:6-10 (NASB95)

It would seem that before the feast that Samuel was introduced to Jesse’s sons which would not be an unusual thing to do. Apparently, Samuel had told Jesse that God had chosen one of his sons. In the process of meeting the sons they were introduced to Samuel. We could assume that Jesse had these seven son pass before Samuel from the oldest to the youngest. Eliab was the first and he made a very positive impression on Samuel. However, since Samuel was looking for a replacement for Saul, he was using the same criterion that had been used to initially pick Saul to be the first king. One by one, God rejected all seven of Jesse’s sons because he was not looking at the outward appearance but looking at the heart of each individual. All Samuel could see was the physical appearance since that is what typically makes up first impressions.

How many times have we thought that we had everything figured out and none of the possible alternatives we tried actually worked out? Sometimes when that happens we might conclude that our “objective” was wrong and we give up and abandon the project. Since Samuel had been told directly by God what the objective was, he was not free to simply give up. A lesson that we can all learn is that we usually don’t know all the facts and we should avoid making assumption when the answer to a simple question might be the solution to the mystery.

### David’s Selection – 16:11-13

<sup>11</sup> And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are these all the children?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep.” Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” <sup>12</sup> So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.” <sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. 1 Samuel 16:11-13 (NASB95)

We can’t be sure if Samuel deliberately used the word “children” rather than “sons” when he started looking for a reason why God had not given His approval to any of the sons of Jesse he had met. In that culture, there was usually a “rite of passage” that would be a recognition

point in the family and perhaps the community of friends that a child had reach the point of moving from the status of a “child” to that of a “son.” If the youngest of Jesse’s offspring had not had his bar mitzvah, then that would logically explain why he was not included in the group that had been introduced to Samuel. There may also have been a cultural bias that would discount the significance of a young person before they had gone beyond their teenage years even though they may have had the formal rite of passage that would recognize them legally as a son with inheritance rights.

Samuel had them send to have David come there before anything else was done such as sitting down for the meal to which the family had been invited. When David came into view, the first thing that the writer of this passage mentioned was his physical appearance. He was a good looking young fellow with pleasant feature and beautiful eyes. The description of him being “ruddy” was likely a result of spending so much time out in the field with the sheep. God had already told Samuel that physical appearance was not the criterion for selecting a leader. While people were focusing on the outward appearance, God was looking at the heart of this young man.

Without further ado, God instructed Samuel to take the oil and anoint David. We might legitimately wonder what Samuel said to the other family members or to David. Did he explain it to them? There is a lot left untold in this story. We know that later on his brothers did not show him a lot of respect when came to the battle field when the Philistines and their champion Goliath were challenging Israel.

We are told that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in a mighty way from that day forward. God would prepare David for his assignment as the next king of Israel and would also prepare the people to be ready to accept David’s leadership after Saul died.

If we had been planning this transition, we might have had Samuel spend some time with David and instruct him in the ways of the Lord. That did not happen. Samuel simply arose and went back home. God used the experiences in David’s life from that time forward to prepare him. We know from many of the Psalms that David did not realize what God was doing as he was undergoing battles and literally running for his life as Saul was pursuing him.

A lesson for us is that all that we need to learn about being successful in what God has called us to do is not going to be learned in the Sunday morning church service or from faithfully reading the Scriptures. A lot of what we need to know can only happen by faithfully following the leading of the Holy Spirit as we encounter trails and even tribulations, successes and failures in our lives.