

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

A New Direction I Samuel 16

Intro: These are dark days for Samuel: Israel had rejected his leadership over them b/c he was too old; they refused 2 accept his sons as replacements b/c they were too corrupt; they demanded a human king 2/b installed over them b/c they were too fleshly appreciate that **YHWH** was the only king they needed. So Saul, son of Kish, was anointed as king by **YHWH**'s direction, a choice that reflected the shallow desires of the people. But now, King Saul is guilty of disobeying **YHWH**'s clear commands & then lying about it; b/c of this, Saul's been rejected as king by God Himself! Saul was still in office but he was unfit 2 lead the nation. These were dark, troubling days 4 Samuel. Or were they?

1a- mourn- Ch15 ends w/ a comment on Samuel's feelings over the situation w/ Saul & it seems his condition continued 4 some time. He wasn't able 2 view Saul's failure w/ a professional detachment. It wasn't that Samuel was upset over the apparent failure of his own efforts, although everything he had devoted his life to looked like it was falling apart. No, the passage is clear: Samuel's mourning was **4 Saul**. His sorrow was over Saul's rebellion & rejection by **YHWH**, over a kingship that had started w/ such promise. No doubt Samuel had personal affection 4 Saul but his mourning probably went beyond Saul & extended 2 God's people. He may have feared that Israel would disintegrate &/or self destruct b/c of Saul's sin & rejection. Or that her enemies would ravage her unimpeded again.

1b-go- Whatever Samuel's grief & fears were, **YHWH**'s orders were the answer 2 them: "**I have provided Myself a king.**" That's God's answer 2 Samuel's mourning: "**How long are you going 2 do this? I've already provided Myself a king. I won't allow My people 2 just disappear. I will provide new leadership. I have not let go of My people!**"

There's a dichotomy of truth here, 2 opposing realities that appear 2 cancel each other out. **On the 1 hand**, there's something proper in Samuel's grief: he was distressed over the spiritual failure of a servant of God, over the welfare of God's people (their condition /security). Do we ever **mourn** over such things: affects of sin in others; unbelief in churches /ministers; biblical ignorance in professing believers? Does anything ever move us besides our own **comfort & security**? There's definitely something commendable & instructive in Samuel's sorrow. **On the other hand**, there's a time 2 mourn & a time 2 move forward & do what God's called us 2 do. God will never allow His work 2 die b/c of the death or failure of a man. If it's **God's work**, it goes beyond any man! Mourning over sin & the disastrous situations it can create is normal & 2/b expected of a believer but there can come a point when, if we persist in that sorrow too long, it will begin 2 encroach upon our faith & trust in the Lord. Samuel may have been paralyzed w/ sorrow b/c of Saul's tragic rebellion but **YHWH** wasn't paralyzed! Things can happen, our hearts get broken but God is still on the throne & in every situation, whether joy or sorrow, we must always look 2 Him 4 relief & new direction.

provided- **YHWH**'s statement also implies a distinction between this new king & the current king. Saul was a king of the people's providing, a product of their sinful desires, 4 their own glory & safety. But, this new king will be different: he'll be provided **by YHWH** & anointed **4 YHWH**. Saul was anointed **4 the people**; a king from central casting, the kind of king the people wanted but now, the people's choice has failed & disqualified himself. **YHWH** will now provide a king of His own choosing, 1 that has the qualities & character He desires 2 promote & employ 2 lead His people.

YHWH's choice = **hope!** He's able 2 provide 4 His people when everything is coming undone. The true King never loses control of His kingdom. He's never caught off guard by the latest emergency in the realm. We don't have 2 fear 4 the future when we realize that God can & will provide leaders 4 Himself.

2-5- heifer- **YHWH** was not telling Samuel 2 lie, nor was this just a convenient cover story. The sacrifice was necessary 2 accompany the anointing ceremony, he just didn't need 2 tell everybody everything that was going on.

peace? the elders question may seem strange but considering what Samuel had recently done 2 Agag & their fear doesn't seem that far fetched. Add 2 that the fact that Samuel & Saul are at odds w/ each other & their not sure how Saul will take Samuel's visit 2 their town. Samuel's response allayed their fears – a heifer never looked so good!

6-10- Surely- Jesse's boys file past w/ the rest of the neighbors 2 the sacrifice & w/ only a look, Samuel has an immediate, intuitive hunch about God's choice 4 king. "**This guy sure looks like king material. He must be the 1 YHWH wants me 2 anoint! That's a good choice, God!**" Samuel saw a tall, good-looking young man who fit the part.

In **I Samuel**, so much hangs on choices: Israel chose the ark in **ch4** & disaster followed. Israel chose another king in **ch8** = another disaster. Now godly Samuel's on the scene, surely this faithful prophet of God can be trusted w/ the fortunes of God's kingdom! No, the kingdom is only safe w/ **YHWH**. This teaches us the dangers of our impressions. God immediately instructs Samuel not 2 make this decision based solely on what he can see w/ his eyes.

What a crucial time this was 4 Israel! Samuel made the mistake of judging Eliab based on his appearance. This was the same mistake Israel made w/ Saul. Saul looked the part of a king but he didn't have the heart he needed 2 have 2 proper lead God's people. Samuel may've been impressed but **YHWH** wasn't. Thankfully, He could see clearly into Eliab's heart. We already know what would've happened if Samuel had made his own choice (**9:2**). Here, Sam is looking at Eliab & he's sure he sees God's anointed. Only **YHWH**'s "**I have refused him**" saves Israel from another

disaster. Eliab is created in Saul's image. If God hadn't chosen a king, Israel wouldn't had 2 endure Saul III!

Truth is, we can only see what we can see & that's not much. We can't read the secret intentions of someone else's heart. We are barley honest enough 2 perceive the motivations & intentions of our own hearts. Thus, we must constantly look 2 the Father & seek His heart & mind, especially in our dealings w/ other people. Our natural inclination is 2 judge by what we can perceive (positively or negatively) but this is simply a set up 4 potential failure. This passage isn't teaching that God is opposed 2 good looks. The point is, external appearances neither qualify nor disqualify – it simply doesn't matter! 4 Israel's good & 4 our good, God looks on the heart – that's what matters. The text warns us of **our great need**: our **lack** of **discernment**. Only God's wisdom is adequate 4 guiding His kingdom.

11-12- all?- Samuel faced a dilemma: **YHWH** had told him that He had chosen a king 4 Himself from Jesse's sons & yet 7 sons had passed in review & **YHWH** had rejected each of them. Samuel had walked w/ the Lord long enough 2 know not 2 question His Word so in light of this obvious discrepancy, he turns 2 the only 1 that should be questioned.

youngest- Wow! Apparently this poor fellow didn't rate enough 2/b invited 2 the sacrifice! I mean, you can't leave the sheep unattended, right? Maybe Jesse figured it'd take 2 long 2 find the boy & bring him back, it could take a while... Samuel's not having any of that. "**Send & bring him**" we're not eating until he gets here – now that's real motivation! It must have worked b/ they brought him in, sheep smell & all. It's the stuff songs are made of (**Ps 78:70**).

This is another of God's "go figure" moments. From an obscure town & an obscure family, **YHWH** selects a lad so obscure even his own father didn't think it was necessary 2 invite him 2 the sacrifice. We don't even get his name until **vs13**. Of course, all this is only human estimations. As obscure as he may appear in our eyes, in **YHWH's** eyes, David is **better** than Saul. Not b/c of his appearance, heritage or abilities but simply b/c of his heart. God has a strange & refreshing way of trampling on our standards. He often chooses the most unlikely people 2 do His will & turns logic on its head. Our God is not a slave 2 our conventions or expectations; He does what He knows is best!

13- Spirit- God both chooses David as king & equips him 4 that work. He appoints him 2 a task & gives him what he needs 2 accomplish that task. But this gift of the Spirit is not just gracious – it's severe! Yes, God equips David, but 4 **conflict**, the kind that makes lion fights & bear brawls seem like kid's stuff. No sooner does the Spirit touch David, than he's thrown into endless trouble: the envy, anger & plots of Saul. He's hunted & betrayed, trapped & escaping, hiding in caves, living in exile, driven 2 the edge of despair - 2 the end of **I Sam**. The Spirit comes & trouble begins.

It was the same 4 David's Son & Lord: **Jesus**. No sooner had the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove than He was driven out into the wilderness 2 face the temptation of the enemy & the harassment of wild beasts (**Mk 1:12-13**). It's also the same 4 the servants of **Jesus**. No sooner are we brought into subjection 2 Him than we are swamped in trouble, there may seem no end 2 the pressures, no relief from the pounding we're taking. But the lesson from David & his Son teaches us that this conflict is **not** a sign of our **sin** but of our **sonship**! We're not under God's displeasure but His gracious discipline. The wilderness is not a sign of the Spirit's absence, it's the scene of His presence! God gives us His Spirit 2 equip us 2 serve & 2 strengthen us 4 the trials that will conform us into the image of Jesus Christ

14-23- departed- We've crossed a great divide; David's & Saul's lives cannot be seen in greater contrast than right here. What David has gained thru the presence of **YHWH's** Spirit, Saul has lost! Whereas David's now equipped 2 perform his God-appointed work & face all opposition 2 it, Saul is completely helpless 2 serve the Lord or defend his throne. B/4, Saul was **unwilling** 2 follow **YHWH's** will, but now that the Spirit has departed from him, he's simply **unable**! Worse than that, the void left by the Spirit of God was filled by a spirit that caused Saul much distress. But, in 1 of the greatest ironies of scripture, the rejected king unknowingly seeks relief from the newly anointed king! Saul is greatly impressed w/ David, mainly b/c his music brings relief from his terror & distress, but don't that beat all? David is not only **YHWH's** choice, he's Saul's choice 2! The chosen king keeps the rejected king from falling a part. David's not a threat 2 Saul but a means of grace. Sadly, Saul has therapy but he doesn't have the Spirit of God.

We might be tempted 2 judge David's ministry 2 Saul as futile, knowing it won't be long b/4 Saul hates him & seeks 2 kill him. But look at it in light of our own ministry 2 the world around us. Just as Saul will hate David & just as he is rejected by God yet sustained by David's ministry; so 2, the world hates God's people & yet, in its condemned state, it is only benefitted by them. We're the salt of the earth: we keep society & culture from rotting into complete decay, we keep the world from being worse than it is. We are the divinely-appointed restraint on the world's putrefaction; we keep the world from drowning in it own vomit, which, oddly enough, it longs 4. This is part of our ministry 2 the world. The blessing & curse of God's people 2 the world: they can't stand 2 live w/ us yet they won't survive long w/o us.

Does this describe your life? Are you a source of comfort & relief 2 the terrors & distresses that plague the world? You may be the constant butt of jokes around the workplace b/c of your faith or your convictions or both but if you continue 2 trust in the Lord & stand firmly on His word, the day will come when the bottom will drop out of somebody's world & you will be the 1st person they will turn 2. Does your walk w/ God invite others 2 seek peace? It should, if you've been filled w/ the Spirit of God, you have the capacity 2 fulfill the task He's called you 2 do. If you are a believer then you are equipped 4 it. The only question is: are you submitted 2 it? Are you prepared 4 it?

It may seem strange that God would look 4 the new king of Israel among the sheepfolds but if you think about it, it's no less strange than having the Savior of the world be born in a stable, laid in a manger & raised in a carpenter's

shop. We have no right to question the means by which God provides His grace, no matter how surprising it is; we only have the right to accept it or reject it. Just know that it honors God when we revel in His surprises of grace. 😊