

### INTRODUCTION

In chapter 16 we have a new beginning; the old has gone, Saul has been rejected and the new is about to dawn. But it is not a nation that has rejected the old and appointed the new but almighty God himself has spoken, Saul has been rejected and David will soon be anointed as King over Israel.

#### 1. A NEW HOPE IS DAWNING (vs.1-5)

We are not told why the elders (leaders) of Bethlehem trembled when they saw Samuel walk into their town (v 4), such visits were not unheard of for Samuel visited many towns in order to make various judgements (7:16), but this visit was certainly unexpected. Had Samuel heard of some injustice that was going on and he had come to correct it? Perhaps their terror was more political for they may well have heard that Samuel has rejected Saul and so if the people were to welcome Samuel would Saul come and clamp down on them with his supporters?

They must have been glad to hear that Samuel had come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord (v 5). But there was more to it than that, none of the locals dreamed that God would choose the next king from someone in Bethlehem but that is exactly what God has chosen to do (v 1). Samuel had no idea which of Jesse's sons would be anointed king that will be revealed at the appropriate time. This is why Samuel is told to stop brooding over Saul's failure (v 1) for a new dawn was breaking.

Saul no doubt was mourning because the people had now been left without any leadership and he probably feared that the nation would disintegrate without a King, every group of people needs leaders otherwise they are in danger of self destructing. No wonder poor Samuel is in mourning would Israel's enemies take the opportunity to attack them and would Israel itself break out in civil strife? But God is in control and He has already put his plans into place as He sends Samuel to Bethlehem to appoint the next King over Israel (v 2). Samuel goes to Bethlehem consecrates Jesse and his sons and invites them to the sacrifice as instructed by God (v 5)

There are two lessons that are worth noting before we move on:

**a) Look What Samuel Was Mourning About** – Samuel was not mourning because his football team had lost the league or his nation had been knocked out of the world cup. He is not upset because someone has scratched his car or trampled on his flowerbed. No! He is mourning over the welfare of God's people, over their condition and future. I wonder do we ever mourn over such things. Do we will ever sorrow over the state of God's true church today?

Do we mourn for churches that are lacking that pastoral oversight that is needed? Do we mourn over the prayerlessness of so many professing churches? Do we mourn when we hear of a promising young man like Saul who blows it and rebels against God and is removed from leadership? Do we ever mourn over the great biblical ignorance that exists within God's church, is there anything at all within the church that moves us to tears and to mourning apart from our own personal comforts and our personal security? There is something very commendable about the distress that Samuel displayed if only we displayed the same grief over the church today then perhaps God would hear and answer us and come among us to help.

**b) Look At God's Concern To Provide Leadership** – Many churches today fail to have a Pastor; many long for one but at the minute they are without one. But we must remember that God is concerned to provide leadership for churches sometimes that is in the form of a full time Pastor but on many occasions it is in the form of Elders who work full time in secular employment but who seek to give spiritual leadership in the time they have available.

One thing is clear God is concerned to provide leadership for his church He knows what we are like, He knows that we are vulnerable to the attacks of the evil one and that the church has a tendency to self implode without good leadership so God raises up men to take the lead in churches. Of course Jesus Christ is the supreme leader of his church; He is the Head of the church but He appoints under shepherds through whom He exercises his rule. Therefore we ought to pray for churches that are seeking a Pastor that God will lead them to the right man and pray for churches that have no leadership at all that God will raise up Elders to be under shepherds for God's people. One thing is for sure we know that God is concerned to provide leadership He did it with Israel and He does it for the church.

Pray for the men in theological establishments that God will guide them to the right church and pray that God may call many more men into full time training and ministry.

## 2. THE WISDOM IN GOD'S CHOICE (vs. 6-12)

As Jesse's sons come to the sacrifice Samuel's eyes were fixed on Eliab and immediately he had a hunch that this must be God's choice, this is certainly the one that Samuel would choose if the decision was left to him but thankfully it wasn't (v 6). Samuel choice was based on first impressions; what he saw impressed him but the Lord tells Samuel not to taken in by impressions for the Lord's assessment of people is not outward but inward.

What is in his heart is more important than what the next king looks like (v 7). We can all understand Samuel's impression for Eliab must have looked like a King, he would no doubt have been tall with a good build he looked like a warrior; a perfect king whom nations would look at and fear (v 7). But God's assessment of leaders is so different for God is not impressed with outward appearances. Some people chose their leaders within the church mainly on outward appearances. They look for a man with a winsome personality, they must have a good degree as if somehow a good degree makes one a good Pastor.

Perhaps they look for someone who has good business skills for they assume that running a church is like running a business. Don't get me wrong, it is not that outward appearance and skills are not important at all, for there is nothing spiritual about being ugly or having little education or doing a menial job but the point being made here is that outward appearances do not qualify or disqualify someone from leadership in God's kingdom it simply does not matter.

What matters is what is in someone's heart; do they love the Lord and his people? When the church looks for leaders the questions that should be considered should concern the individual's spiritual life. I know it is impossible to make a perfect assessment of someone's spiritual well being but there are some things that help us for what is in our hearts always comes out. If we listen to how someone prays then that will tell us about their concerns and loves. Look at their evangelism and that will tell us about how they view sinful people and so on. Look at the sort of activities he

spends his time on, for that will tell us about his inner discipline. Many churches look for men who are smooth and slick in the pulpit, dynamic in the community and resourceful.

If those gifts come with a spiritual man then that is all the better but what really matters in the wisdom of God is what is in someone's heart. If you look at qualifications for eldership in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 we see that all these qualifications require a man to have a heart for God. A man with these qualities is a man who loves God loves his truth and loves his people.

Therefore when any church is looking for a future leader we need to ask God for wisdom; but we need to look carefully at those who we are considering and we need to look at their gifts and qualities and then ask what they show us about the man's spiritual well being about his inner spiritual life. Remember God is not like us we look at the outward but God looks at the heart and because the Lord does that his choice can always surprise us and that is what happened with David.

Even Jesse had formed an opinion about who God should chose for he brings all his sons before Samuel except for David. Why did he leave David tending the sheep? Jesse probably thought that as he was the youngest he is not going to be the next King; but when God rejects all the other sons (vs. 8-10) Samuel asked if these are all his sons. Perhaps Samuel was a little confused considering he has been told in verse 1 that God had chosen a son of Jesse's to be the next king.

Jesse is forced to admit that his youngest son is absent for he is looking after the sheep (v 11). David is sent for and when he arrives he would not be looking his best after working with sheep but God tells Samuel to anoint him for he is the man that God has chosen. He is not only fine looking man (v 12) but more importantly He was a man of God in his heart. David is anointed and the Spirit is upon him empowering him for his role as King.

What a surprise, no one expected David to be the one, certainty not Samuel or Jesse but that is how God works. He so often chooses the unlikely ones in his service, He often chooses the ones that no one in the world would chose as a leader yet God because He looks at the heart chooses unlikely people to be leaders in his church. But that is true for every one of us in the church. Who would you chose if you want to establish the church of Jesus Christ in this world? We would choose the influential and the powerful the movers and shakers in our society. But who does God chose, the weak and the nobodies of this world to shame the so called wise (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). But the key is that David knew the power of the Holy Spirit and so does everyone who is chosen by God to be one of his people.

His Spirit indwells us and empowers and equips us to accomplish his purposes in this world and the end result is that all the glory goes to him. He takes the weak and fragile and makes them powerful so that He alone receives the glory due to his name.

### 3. THE PREPARATION OF GOD'S CHOICE (vs. 14-23)

When David Cameron received the most votes at the General Election on 6 May 2010 he expected to become Prime Minister sooner rather than later. If his party had only received another 20 seats he would have become Prime Minister on Friday morning but instead he had to wait until his negotiations were over and was appointed Prime Minister on Tuesday evening the following week. However although he had to wait longer than normal he did not have to wait too long.

But although David has been anointed King over Israel he would still have to wait for another decade before he actually took up his position. After his anointing David would go back to his day job as a shepherd, perhaps wondering if his anointing was real would he really be King one day. What we have in this chapter and the rest of the chapters in 1 Samuel is the preparation of David for that future day when David actually becomes king (2 Samuel 2).

God is aware that young David had much to learn in the meantime and He also knew that He needed to confirm to David that he really is the anointed and chosen King over Israel. But God's way of preparing David for future kingship is not our way. God has rejected Saul and the evidence of his rejection is that the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul (v 14).

This means that the Spirit that came upon him to equip him for his task (10:10) has now left him. Saul no longer has those God given resources that he needs to be king. However that Spirit is replaced with an evil spirit or a spirit that does harm (v 14 NIV margin). We are told that this spirit comes from the Lord (v 14). This has caused much debate from scholars over the years but we have to understand how the Old Testament believers understood the sovereignty of God. He controls everything because He is completely sovereign and therefore everything comes from him whether good or bad. God either actively brings it about or He permits it and sanctions it.

With this in mind and with the Lord's hand removed from Saul he is now left open to the attacks of the evil one and it seems that what happens here is not so much that he becomes possessed by an evil spirit (although that could be the case) but that he is left to his own devices which of course the evil one exploits and so Saul becomes a tormented soul brought about by his own sin and the withdrawal of God's hand as well as his failure to obey God.

There has been much debate among biblical scholars about what exactly is wrong with Saul many feel that he is suffering from depression brought on by the involvement of the evil one working through his sinful nature. Perhaps he is loaded with guilt at his missed opportunity but the point is that he is tormented; whatever the exact cause does not really matter.

Saul's attendants who worked for him suggested some music therapy, a therapy that is recognised today as being able to help people with mental problems (v 16). Saul asks the question if anyone knows of a good musician (v 17) and there just happened to be someone among Saul's servants who knew that David was a very good musician. Obviously Saul has no idea that David is to be the next King so he sends for him and indeed this therapy works (v 23) and Saul is very fond of David (v 21).

He asks Jesse if David could stay in the service of Saul; he makes him one of his armour bearers (v 21) which meant that he would become very close to Saul and so God in his wisdom gives David an opportunity to see the working of a real king long before he would get the opportunity to take over from Saul.

This also is confirming to David that he is the anointed king; here as King he becomes the saviour of Saul who is deranged and next time we will see how David becomes the saviour of his people by slaying the giant Goliath. But the point being made in this section is look how God works in preparing his servant David for his future service as King of Israel. That is true of us all.

God chooses his people before the creation of the world and He works in our lives and circumstances in order to prepare us for the service of God long before we even were converted

and joined God's church. He gives his church all the gifts and graces that are needed at any given time. He places each one of us in families that would mould us into the people we are through our good and bad experiences. He gives us the skills and experiences that we need so that we can use them in the service of God and He does this often long before He converts us to himself. This church has the people the gifts and the graces that it needs for this moment of time.

We would all like to see other people with different gifts join our church but at present God is equipping us with all we need; but what we do not know is who He is preparing now for future service in this church. We also do not know how our experiences in this church will equip us for service in another church or in another country. God is the one who chooses his people, He is also the one who sets them apart for his service and equips them by the power of the Spirit to service him.

But He also prepares every one of his people for future service and the exciting thing about the Christian faith is that we do not know who God has been preparing for service in this church. That person may not yet even be converted but they have been chosen by God and are being prepared through their experiences to be useful servants of the Lord in this place through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore may God help us to trust and depend upon him alone? He is sovereign He chooses his people before the creation of the world. He prepares each one for service and then He empowers us with his Spirit so that we will become effective servants and He does all this so that He alone receives the glory.

Amen