

## When God Chooses the King

**Opener:** What physical characteristics tend to attract public attention and inspire respect?

**Scripture:** The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”<sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” The Lord said, “Take a heifer and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’”<sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders trembled and asked him, “Do you come in peace?”<sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.”<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.”<sup>10</sup> Jesse had 7 of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The Lord has not chosen these.”<sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”<sup>12</sup> So he had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. I Samuel 16:1-13 (condensed)

### Discussion Questions

1. In response to their demand for a king, Samuel had anointed Saul as Israel’s first king. I Sam. 15:11-12 and 16:1 tell us that God regretted making Saul king because he was disobedient and had turned away from Him. Samuel is angry and can’t stop mourning over Saul. Why do you think Samuel is mourning? What can we learn from God’s instruction to him to move on when we are wallowing in grief and anger?
2. Samuel was afraid of Saul; the elders were afraid of Samuel. Was the sacrifice a ruse to avoid Saul’s wrath, or was it a shrewd way of dealing with a difficult situation? What’s the difference? I Samuel 16:2-5
3. Biblically, the heart is our spiritual core. A pure heart is a sustained openness to God. Our heart acts as a filter or channel for what gets through to the life people see. With that in mind, what does it mean that God “looks at the heart”?
4. Can we tell what’s in someone’s heart? If so, how? What are some ways we judge others without considering who they really are? What can we do about that? I Samuel 16:6-10
5. David was an unlikely choice. He was the youngest, the one no one considered important. But the Lord saw he had the heart of a king who would love and follow Him. Why was it important for Samuel to anoint David then, knowing he was too young to assume the kingship at that time? I Samuel 15:11-13
6. David was different than the man Samuel expected God to choose as king. Have you ever expected one thing, but God delivered something totally different? Or have you been in a role where, like David, you were the opposite of what people expected? How did it work out?

**Wrap Up:** The whole nation, including Samuel, had pinned their hopes on Saul. But ultimately Saul failed to lead God’s people because he failed to be led by God. In 1 Samuel 13:14, Samuel told Saul, “The Lord has sought out a man after His own heart, and appointed him ruler of His people.” This was fulfilled in David. By the way, this is the first time David appears in the Bible, but from I Samuel 16:13 forward, his name will appear nearly 1,000 times, and the last place he is mentioned is in Revelation 22. All because he had a heart after God.