

THE MORNING OF THE MONARCHY  
STUDIES IN FIRST SAMUEL  
LESSON 7

**"THE MAKING OF A KING"**

**I Samuel 16-18**

**I. THE CHOICE AND ANOINTING OF DAVID 16:1-13**

**A. The Command of God 16:1-5**

We do not know how much time elapsed from God's rejection of Saul to His instruction to go to the house of Jesse. God does not tell Samuel which son he is to anoint king. God had already identified him as "a man after God's own heart" (13:14) and "one of Saul's neighbors" who was "better than he" (15:28).

*David had been chosen from eternity past to be ruler of Israel. The rejection of Saul did not force the Lord to a new course of action. Rather, God's action followed His omniscient plan in such a way as to use Saul's disobedience as the human occasion for implementing His higher plan.*

(Merrill, The Bible Knowledge Commentary).

Saul was in a difficult position. He was still king by popular acclaim, though rejected by God. Samuel had presided at the inauguration of the monarchy and had placed Saul on the throne and now was commanded to anoint Saul's successor. The decision to reject Saul undermined his authority but by no means curbed his power. For Samuel to anoint another man was an act of courage, but to Saul it was an act of treason, if word of it ever reached him. Recall that Saul, too, had undergone a secret anointing ceremony, though for quite a different reason (9:27-10:1). In order to keep from raising Saul's suspicions and anger, God told Samuel to combine the anointing with the business of sacrificing. The elders in Bethlehem may have wondered if Samuel had come for judgment.

The anointing marked the man who was to be king, though he did not take the throne immediately. The scene emphasized that the man who would in due course replace Saul was from start to finish God's choice. This time the leaders were not demanding a king; there was no casting of lots. Instead God directly chose the tribe of Judah (Bethlehem made that point clear), and then the family, and finally, the individual.

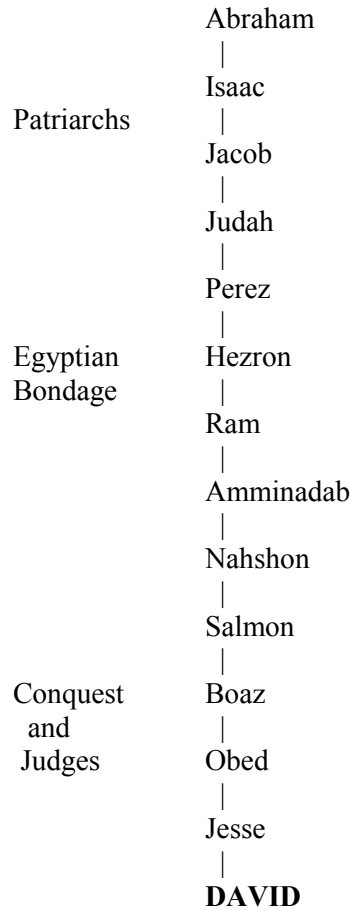
**B. The Criteria of God 16:6-11**

Samuel assumed that God would again choose someone with the physical build of Saul. But God had a different agenda. His basic principle is in 16:7, "...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." After the seven older sons of Jesse were disqualified, David was singled out by the Lord and anointed by Samuel. Although the criterion was a heart for God, David is also described as exceptionally handsome. "Ruddy" can mean a man who is a warrior (has all of the natural ability), or a fair complexion and red hair. This was looked upon as very handsome coloring in the ancient world, especially since most of them were brunette.

**C. The Choice of God 16:12-13**

The anointing, like Saul's, was accompanied by the coming of the Spirit of God mightily on David. This was the supernatural authentication of God's will. The ceremony could be public or private. Here it was David's home. He was actually anointed three times: here, then later as king over Judah (2 Sam.2:4), and then over all Israel (2 Sam.5:3). The word for anointing is the same word translated "Messiah." David was both the ancestor and prototype of Christ.

DAVID'S ANCESTRY FROM ABRAHAM



*God's beginning of the kingdom of His church in the house of David, was, as it were, a new establishing of the kingdom of Christ: the beginning of it in a state of such visibility as it thenceforward continued in. It was as it were God's planting the root, whence that branch of righteousness was afterwards to spring up, that was to be the everlasting King is called the "branch from the stem of Jesse": "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa.11:1). "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper" (Jer.23:). So Christ, in the New Testament, is called "the root and offspring of David" (Rev.22:16).*

-- Jonathan Edwards, Work of Redemption, 1757.

**II. DAVID AT SAUL'S COURT 16:14-23**

**A. Saul's Depression**

The same Spirit Who came upon David, left Saul. As in the book of Judges, the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament says nothing about salvation, but only that He empowered the men for service (cf. Jud. 3:10; 13:25; 1 Sam. 10:10; 16:13).

God sent a demonic, satanic instrument (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6; 1 Ki. 22:19-22). God, Who is the blessed controller of all things rules also in hell (cf. Isa. 45:7; 1 Ki. 22:19-23). In his troubled state Saul sought relief in music, and commanded that a musician be found. God arranged that David be the one and he soon proved indispensable to Saul, becoming his armor bearer or personal squire. He entered Saul's permanent service and was at hand when the king's disorder recurred.

## B. David's Qualifications

The most important quality in the young man's description of David was not David's musical abilities, though exceptional in a king. All of the qualities were required for royalty. Saul had earlier displayed several of them. The most important quality, however, was that the Lord was with him. This meant two things: that awareness of God's presence, without which no man can successfully lead God's people, and that inner experience which was translated into something visible to others. Qualities of leadership must be apparent to other people or they are useless.

## C. Saul's Response

Even Saul could not resist the winsome personality of his new courtier (16:21). This point is important, since it shows that Saul's later hatred of David was pathological. When he was still unprejudiced against David, Saul thought highly of him and was glad to receive help and service from him.

It is important to see that David did not engineer his position at the palace. David was no ruthlessly ambitious man determined to climb up the social ladder, any more than Saul had been (chapter 9). God brought it about through the sheer chance (it seemed) that one of Saul's men brought him to Saul's attention. It was God, not David, who was responsible for his first steps towards the throne.

## III. DAVID'S TRIUMPH OVER GOLIATH 17:1-54

### A. The Challenge

In this chapter we find David back with the sheep and Saul fighting the Philistines. The armies were drawn up on opposite sides of the Valley of Elah, a few miles southwest of Jerusalem. Apparently intimidated by each other, they decided that the outcome should be determined by a contest of champions who would engage each other in combat, a Grecian way of settling the war. The Philistines set forward Goliath, a giant (about 9'9" tall!), who wore a bronze helmet, a coat of scale armor weighing 5,000 shekels (about 125 pounds) and bronze leg armor. He was armed with a bronze javelin, and a long spear with a 15 pound tip. Israel had no one to match him, not even Saul. This was the practical result of Saul's loss of God's presence and God's Spirit, and it becomes clear that both were vital to the leadership of the nation, and indeed to the nation's welfare. Evidently no one volunteered for Israel, so Saul sweetened the pot (17:25).

### B. The Volunteer 17:12-40

David and his family are introduced as if for the first time; apart from verse 15 there is no hint that Saul had met him before or that he was a warrior (see 17:33-36 and contrast with 16:18, 21). By omitting David's earlier history, the writer does heighten the dramatic effect of the story.

*David is the unknown man who saved the day for Israel, the shepherd who defeated an experienced soldier, the young lad who laid low a giant, and the country boy who married the princess. But it would be quite wrong to dismiss the story as legend. An exploit such as this is needed to account for David's prodigious rise from obscurity to fame, acquiring a reputation which caused Saul to be jealous of him.*

-- Payne, 1 and 2 Samuel

David, having been sent to the camp of Israel with provisions for his brothers, heard of the dilemma and begged Saul to let him fight the Philistine. Verse 17:28 sounds like David's brothers treated him like Joseph's brothers had treated him. David's answer probably had the tone of "excuse me, forgive me for living!"

### C. The Dialogue

The dialogue that ensued is full of practical lessons for any time.

#### 1. When you defy (neglect) God's people, you defy (neglect) God (17:26).

In the New Testament, Jesus asked Saul of Tarsus, "Why are you persecuting Me?"

#### 2. The shepherd can protect his sheep and so can the greater Shepherd.

In 17:34 "when" should be "whenever." (David is no child -- 17:34-35.)

#### 3. Past victories give present courage (17:34-37).

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Saul probably is saying, "Go, and may God help us." Look at your past. That same God Who has brought you this far will continue to be with you in the future.

### **4. Danger must be seen in the perspective of God's purposes.**

What are the giants in your life? If you are in His will, you will know ultimate victory.

### **5. Use God's ordained weapons.**

David is more likely about the size of Saul, but he is unfamiliar with armor and cannot really move with it, so he takes it off. Use weapons:

**a. That are yours. Do not borrow from others.**

**b. That are appropriate to you. Use your testimony, His Word, your talents and abilities.**

**c. That glorify God.**

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands" (17:45-47).

### **6. David had two things in His favor: a dedicated trust in God, and deadly aim with a sling shot.**

Do the best with what God has given you to use. Our Savior defeated Satan by using the Word of God and the power of the Spirit.

## **D. The Victory**

The victorious champion disarmed and beheaded the enemy. The Israelites routed the Philistines, pursued them to Gath and Ekron, and plundered their camp. David put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent; Goliath's sword was later in the Tabernacle (1 Sam. 21:9). Bringing Goliath's head to Jerusalem must have been done after David's capture of that city (2 Sam. 5:6-9).

## **IV. SAUL'S PUZZLING RESPONSE 17:55-58**

Saul seems to be asking about David's father for contractual reasons. Saul had promised (verse 25) his daughter to whoever vanquished Goliath. Asking into the pedigree of the king's potential son-in-law seems quite appropriate.

Another view is that David's previous service may have been brief and intermittent and now several years had passed since Saul had seen him. If David had been only 12 years old when he came as Saul's musician and had stayed off and on for only a year or so, he might have been 17 or 18 by the time of the Philistine episode and no longer recognizable to Saul. This view is strengthened by the fact that after David joined himself to Saul, the king did not let him return to his father's house (18:2). This implies that David's previous tenure had not been permanent. In any event, the different accounts are not irreconcilable.

## **V. DAVID'S FRIENDSHIP AND SUCCESS 18:1-25**

### **A. David's Friendship with Jonathan 18:1-4**

After David's dramatic victory over Goliath, Saul brought him into his palace again, this time as a commander of his army (18:5). This favored position was further strengthened by the affection felt for him by Saul's eldest son, Jonathan. So close did friendship become that Jonathan, though heir apparent to the throne of Israel (cf. 20:31), stripped himself of his own royal regalia and placed it on David in recognition of David's divine election to be king (18:4; cf. 23:17). More than once the covenant of friendship between the two men would work to David's advantage.

#### **1. The Virtues of True Friendship**

##### **a. Harmony 18:1, 3**

The basic reason for their friendship was that they had a common faith in God and so could encourage one another (1 Sam. 23:16). It takes both unity and difference to make harmony. Friendship is two people facing outward absorbed in a common interest. Chapter 14 told us of Jonathan's courage. Both were modest and courageous.

##### **b. Unselfishness 18:3, 4**

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David was poor; Jonathan was rich. Jonathan was willing to make a one-sided covenant.

### c. Loyalty Chapters 19 and 20

Friends are an end in themselves. It is too easy to treat friends as a means to an end.

## 2. The Value of True Friendship

It gives:

a. Comfort

b. Counsel

c. Companionship

## B. David's Success 18:5-7

Meanwhile David became so effective as a military officer that his victories were celebrated in song: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (18:5-7, 16). Now an uninitiated novice at the time of his anointing, David was eminently equipped to be king of Israel at his coronation some 15 years later.

## C. Saul's Jealousy 18:8-25

### 1. The Reasons

David's education was not always pleasant. With his rising popularity among the people came a deterioration of his relationship with Saul, for the king became insanely jealous of Israel's new hero. The song in verse 7 meant that between them they had slain myriads of the enemy, but Saul resented the implication that they were equal. It came down to Saul's self-will instead of God's will. Jealousy is a fear of loss and the root of it is always selfishness.

### 2. The Results

a. It always blinds you to the facts.

Saul refused to see that David loved him.

b. It imputes wrong motives.

They always twist the facts; you can never win.

c. It creates misery - always destroys the jealous person.

Though still jealous, Saul needed David's support, so he sent him to the front lines of battle as commander of a thousand men, a post of honor as well as of danger. Again David was successful and universally popular.

d. Finally, because of all these, it will breed more sin.

The answer to jealousy is to understand the providence of God.

## VI. DAVID'S EXPLOITS 18:17-30

### A. David's Trust

David's success is summarized in 18:5, 14, 15, 30. His trust, however, enabled him to be brave and also to trust people. He saw the best in people, even in his enemies (18:17-19; 26:19).

### B. David's Humility 18:18,23

Saul cheated David out of his daughter's hand in marriage, but David retained a humility. He always seemed to have an attitude of gratitude over what God did for him.

### C. David's Responsibility 18:5,20-27

You see David doing what he has been told to do, what is expected of him. We have a four letter word for that: DUTY.

## VII. SAUL'S PLOT 18:17-30

Saul knew that he could not destroy David himself so he plotted to let the Philistines kill him. He offered his oldest daughter, Merab, as a prize for fighting the battle (Saul had already reneged on one marital promise to David (17:25)). David protested here (v.23) that he was a commoner and had no sufficient bridal price (18:25, mohar, not "dowry" as in KJV and others). Again Saul reneged and Merab was given to another man (18:19). Saul offered his second daughter, Michal, who at that time loved David (18:20; cf. 2 Sam.6:16). With pretended generosity, he asked only that David kill 100 Philistines and bring back their foreskins.

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*At a time when the fighting with the Philistines probably consisted of border skirmishes rather than pitched battles, it would have been no quick and easy task to amass this marriage present; but David achieved twice what was asked of him! Thus Saul's hope that David would take one battle risk too many was thwarted. David survived, and emerged with an enhanced reputation as a soldier second to none (18:30). At that time leadership of the nation required great military abilities; and David had them. --- Payne, I and II Samuel.*

Saul had hoped that David would be killed, but David became Saul's son-in-law and his military success and his popularity increased. Saul became more afraid.

*David, as has been seen, was not only chosen from eternity to be the founder of the messianic dynasty of kings, but he was also providentially prepared by the Lord to undertake his royal responsibilities. David had served as a shepherd in the fields and had the loving protective heart of a shepherd, a fitting attribute of a king. He had learned responsibility and courage by confronting and slaying wild beasts that threatened his flock (17:34-36). He had learned to play the harp, a skill that would make him sensitive to the aesthetic side of life and that would help him compose the stirring psalms which extol the Lord and celebrate His mighty exploits. David had been brought into the palace of the king as musician and warrior so that he might acquire the experience of statecraft.*

- Merrill, The Bible Knowledge Commentary

David never took any direct action against Saul.

*God's control over affairs could be seen in the fact that even Saul's hostile actions resulted in greater success and greater reputation for David. Events consistently proved that "the LORD was with David" (16:18; 18:14).*

- Payne, 1 and 2 Samuel

## THE MORNING OF THE MONARCHY, LESSON 7

### Studies in 1 Samuel - Lesson 7

#### QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 8

READ LESSON 7:

1. Share what was helpful or challenging to you.

2. What ugly emotion started Saul's hatred of David?

READ CHAPTER 19:

3. List the three times Saul tried to kill David in Chapter 19.

4. How did Michal save his life?

5. What do you see of Michal's character from that story?

6. What was Saul's strange behavior at Naioth? What do you think the prophesying was?

READ CHAPTER 20:

7. What was the covenant between David and Jonathan in 12-17?

8. By what sign was David to know that it was safe for him to return to the palace?

9. What was Saul's reasoning in his plea to Jonathan to turn over David?

READ CHAPTER 21:

10. Who was the bread for that Ahimelech gave to David (see Lev. 24:5-9)?

11. How does Jesus use this incident in Matthew 12:1-4?