

Sunday School Notes for 27 June, 2021: God prepares the next king

When he first became king, Saul seemed to be just right. He was tall, handsome and brave. But although he started well, he seems gradually to have done what he wanted and not what God wanted. So God told Samuel to say some terrible words: "The Lord has rejected you from being King." Although Samuel was very sad about this, God eventually told him he must stop mourning over Saul and start preparing the new king who would take over from Saul.

Samuel knew how Saul acted when he was cross and he knew that if Saul heard about an action like this, Samuel's life would be in danger. However, God promised to protect him. So he went to the town of Bethlehem as God told him to offer a sacrifice there. This wasn't a town Samuel usually visited so the people there were very bothered when he arrived. Possibly they thought he had an uncomfortable message from God for them. They certainly didn't realise that this was the start of Bethlehem's fame nor did they know Samuel was looking for God's next chosen king!

God told Samuel to invite a local farmer, Jesse, and his sons to attend the sacrifice at Bethlehem. During the ceremony each of Jesse's sons was introduced to Samuel. They were all good-looking and strong. Each time Samuel thought that the man in front of him would make a great king. But God was teaching Samuel an important lesson. God had not chosen any of these men because God was looking at their hearts, not at what they were like outwardly. God knows that the ugliest or smallest and least talented person can be closer to God than one who looks amazingly beautiful or handsome.

Eventually Samuel had met all 5 of Jesse's sons – and yet God had chosen none of them. "What now?" Samuel wondered. Then he decided to check if these were all Jesse's sons. Jesse replied that there was one other, a young teenager so unimportant that he hadn't bothered to call him in from the fields for the sacrifice. Samuel instructed Jesse to call him at once and so they sent a servant out and David came running. He changed out of his work clothes and came to meet Samuel. At once the prophet knew this youngster was the one who God had chosen to be the next king. And he anointed him although the others there didn't know what this meant..

From that day on David's life changed because God had to prepare him to rule. The first change was that David went to live at Saul's palace some of the time. By chance (it seemed!) Saul was looking for a musician to soothe him when he had mad attacks. David was chosen to do this and so he could watch and learn all about how a king should work.

All sorts of people serve God in all sorts of ways today. If anyone loves God and is willing to serve him, he will make sure that even the most unimportant teenager can serve him in a special way. This was a great adventure for David. Will you trust God to use you too?

Readings:

Monday: 1 Samuel 16: 1-5

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 16:6-10

Wednesday: 1 Samuel 16:11-13

Thursday: 1 Samuel 16: 14-17

Friday: 1 Samuel 16: 18-23