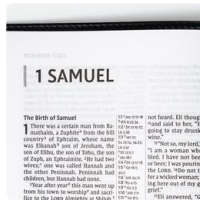


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1 Samuel 16



1 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In this piece, Steve Gregg discusses the events in 1 Samuel 16, focusing on David's journey to becoming king of Israel. He discusses the flaws and strengths of David, who was chosen by God to be king despite not being the obvious choice. Gregg explores the concept of forgiveness and the importance of dealing with anger and resentment before going to bed, as it can give the devil a foothold in one's life.

Transcript

So now we come to some, what people's favorite portion of 1 Samuel, and that is where David comes in. Certainly the story of David and Goliath, which is in chapter 17, is almost the best known story in the Bible. And a favorite of people of all ages.

It's got a charm to it, but the whole life of David has a charm to it. Not only to us when we read it, but we read that everyone seemed to love David. Even Saul did, initially.

And we read that Jonathan loved David, and Michael loved David, and all Saul's servants loved David. David was a lovable guy, and we tend to love him too, I think. Although there's times when he's definitely not the ideal man, and he's not always even a good man.

But in general, he's a real man. A man like perhaps many of us, who are flawed, but after God's heart. And that was what David had going for him that Saul did not.

That was the difference that Samuel noted when he said to Saul, God has rejected you from being king, and he's sought a neighbor of yours better than you. He sought for himself a man after his own heart. And that's what David was.

He was a man oriented toward God. His heart was the Lord's, but like every other man of God, he had human weaknesses, and even moments where he probably was not well motivated. Nobody I know is always perfect, and David certainly was not.

So there'd be times when we read about David, and it just seems like, you know, how could our hero do a thing like that? But it's because all the heroes in the Bible do things

that are not okay from time to time. That's because it's a real story about real people, and that's how real people are. But we come to chapter 16 now, and at the end of 15, Samuel has announced to Saul that the kingdom is taken from him, and will be given to another.

In verse 28, he says, so Samuel said to him, The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you. And then Samuel finished off the business that Saul had failed to do. He killed King Agag, and Samuel went to Ramah.

Saul went to his house at Gibeah in verse 34 of chapter 15, and they didn't really see each other anymore in their lifetime. And Saul was on Samuel's heart, still. Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul.

And it says in verse 1 of chapter 16, Then the Lord said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided myself a king among his sons. Now what's interesting is that God is speaking directly to Samuel about which house to go to, and directly what the order of business is to take oil and anoint a king among Jesse's sons, but for some reason he doesn't tell him which son.

And that becomes something that Samuel has to learn by trial and error. Once he comes to Jesse's house, he has to examine each of the sons individually and decide if that's the one the Lord is saying. So it's strange how there's a mixture of specificity and non-specificity in what God says to Samuel.

He tells him the father's name and that he'll be one of the sons, and it's in Bethlehem. But he withholds, even from Samuel at this point, who the individual will be. That will be revealed in due time.

And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me. Now it's interesting that Samuel would express for the first time fear of Saul, because he has twice stood and confronted Saul and rebuked him to his face and said, You are not going to be the king anymore. Someone else is going to be the king instead of you.

That's the kind of stuff that could get people killed in the presence of the king. But Saul has never dared to harm Samuel. At one point he reached out to grab Samuel to keep Samuel from leaving, but this was more out of desperation rather than an attempt to arrest him or take power over him.

And he actually tore Samuel's robe, and that's when Samuel said, Thus has the Lord torn Israel from you and from your kingdom. Now, at this point, Samuel is beginning to realize that Saul is going to be a dangerous man, perhaps even to Samuel. Although Saul still remained apparently somewhat fearful of Samuel, because whereas when David

eventually fled from Saul, he fled to Samuel and Saul knew it.

Samuel still remained immune from arrest. Of course, maybe because Saul couldn't get close enough to him. Every time Saul came near him, the spirit came on him and he fell down and prophesied.

So maybe he would have arrested Samuel, but just God didn't let it happen. Whereas when the high priest gave David some showbread, even innocently, not necessarily taking David's side against Saul, Saul didn't let him live. So Samuel knew Saul's nature was changing in such a way that he would kill anyone who seemed to be on the side of anyone else being king.

And of course, it would be treason in any normal circumstance, in any normal country, if you're going to choose a leader to overthrow or to undermine or to replace the king against the king's wishes, that's basically starting a revolutionary movement against the king. That would be treason and punishable by death, if not for the fact that God was the king still of Israel and God was the one who's deciding who's going to reign there. You see, if it were a mere secular political state, what Samuel would be doing would be treason.

But Saul was the one committing treason against the king. Yahweh was the king, and Saul was in rebellion against him. Samuel was acting in Yahweh's interest to anoint the king that God was choosing, and very legitimately.

But Saul was now thinking like an ordinary tyrant, not like a theocratic monarch. And Samuel could tell that Saul had developed this tendency and was afraid that Saul would kill him if he found out that he was on his way to anoint a replacement for him. And so the Lord said, Take a heifer with you and say, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.

And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. You shall anoint for me the one that I named to you. Now notice what God did.

He said, I'm sending you to anoint a king. And Samuel said, but if Saul finds out I'm going to do that, he'll kill me. So God says, well, tell you what, why don't you take a cow alone and sacrifice it when you get there.

That way, if anyone asks you what you're doing, just say, I'm going to offer a sacrifice. In other words, part of the truth, not the whole truth. Is this a lie? Is this a half truth? And God is the one telling him to do it.

This is interesting. And, you know, Brother Andrew used to smuggle Bibles into communist countries. Probably still does, if he's not personally retired.

He has an organization that still does those kinds of things. Open Doors was Brother Andrew. And he was God's smuggler.

He wrote a book called God's Smuggler back in the 70s about his activities that he'd been doing for some time previous to that in the 60s. And he would come to closed countries where there were communist restrictions against distribution of Bibles and such. And he would bring a carload of Bibles to the border.

And they'd ask him, what are you coming into the country to do? Well, in fact, he was coming into the country to distribute Bibles, an illegal activity in a communist country. But he'd always say, I'm coming to visit my brothers. Which, of course, was true also, because he was going to meet Christian brothers in Romania or Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia or Russia, wherever he was going.

And so he would just say, I'm going to visit with my brothers. And, of course, that is true, but not really the main reason he was going. The main reason he was going was to take Bibles.

But he didn't tell them that part. And some people thought that Brother Andrew was maybe not being honest enough, that Christians should be more forthright. But he never lied.

He just didn't tell them everything that was true. And his defense was, well, you don't owe all the truth to people who don't have any right to it, who are going to abuse it. And he wasn't lying.

He was just telling the part of the truth that was safe to tell. Now, in some cases, that would be just outright deceptive. But in some cases, apparently, when you're on God's errand and you're talking to God's enemies, you don't give your pearls to the swine.

You just let them know what you have to let them know and not more. And I know that when I've traveled for a while to other countries, I have to report at the border what I'm going to be doing in the country. And I know that if I say I'm going to be teaching for a missionary organization, the next thing they're going to ask is, are you going to receive any money for this? And if I say, well, possibly.

They sometimes will give an honorarium. Then that's going to complicate things. They're going to say, oh, well, then you need to fill out these forms.

You need to get a visa for working and so forth because you're going to be earning money and so forth. And I think, I'm not going in to earn money. I'm not in there charging.

This is not what they think it is. And so I just avoid all that. At the border, I'll just say, I'm here to visit friends, which is true.

And Y-Lambers are my friends. So that's what I always say at the border. So if any of the border guards ever hear this recording, they'll know what I'm up to.

But I don't consider that's deceptive. It's just not telling them everything that they might like to know. And if someone thinks that's deceptive, they have to ask, why did God tell Samuel to do something very similar? What he was really going to Bethlehem for was not to offer a sacrifice.

He's going there to do something much more controversial. But God gave him something else to do in addition and said, tell them about that, but don't tell them about the other thing. So it seems to be a legitimate course of action at times.

Okay, then Samuel did what the Lord said, verse 4, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming and said, do you come peaceably? Samuel had a reputation of bringing God and God's word with him. And if he visited a town that he didn't usually go to, they thought, uh-oh, a special occasion.

What's God sending Samuel here for? Is he here to pronounce some kind of judgment upon us? Samuel was known to make an itinerary between certain towns, Gilgal and Mizpah and some others and Ramah and Bethel, but Bethlehem wasn't one of them. Now Bethlehem was where Ruth and Boaz had lived. In fact, he was going to the home of their grandson, Jesse.

And Ruth and Boaz had had a son named Obed, and Obed had a son named Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David. And it was in Bethlehem that that story of Ruth took place. Apart from that, Bethlehem has not really been particularly significant in the Old Testament scripture, but it became significant because that's where the first king came from.

And therefore, the book of Ruth became important because it was a story of how David's lineage sort of began a few generations earlier, or at least how it developed. And so the people of Bethlehem weren't sure if he was coming for good, peaceful purposes or something else. And he said peaceably, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.

Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice. Then he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. Not sure what it means he sanctified them.

It may mean that he deputized them to help him officiate. You know, when you're going to butcher a cow, an old man doing that all by himself might, you know, that's a lot of muscular work it takes to hack a cow up and heft it onto an altar and even build an altar. So he may have had to sanctify Jesse and his sons to do the heavy lifting.

I mean, we sometimes read, you know, the priest offered a sacrifice and we don't picture what that really involves. You know, we're talking about killing a bull or in this case, a heifer or cow. You know, nowadays they do that with a .22 to the forehead.

Back then they had to slit its throat and drain its blood out and had to cut, you know, had to skin it. Had to cut through thick leather and skin this thing and then cut it into pieces

and heft the big chunks of carcass up onto an altar that had to be built out of stones. I mean, there was a lot of heavy lifting here.

And to say, well, Samuel just came and he offered a sacrifice, we have to realize there was a lot involved in that and he was an old man. So probably his sanctifying Jesse and his sons may have been simply deputizing them and cleansing them in such a way that they would be ceremonially clean so they could participate in helping to conduct this service probably. So it was when they came that he looked at Eliab, who was apparently the oldest son of Jesse, and said, surely the Lord's anointed is before him.

Now, I'm going to assume that the sacrifice was offered publicly, but this private conference with Jesse and his sons took place afterwards, probably in their house. Certainly Samuel would not want the public of Bethlehem to know that he anointed David to be king or anointed anyone to be king because there'd be a lot of loose lips around there. If they knew it, it'd be rumored and eventually it'd get back to Saul and Saul would come after Samuel for doing this.

So this, I'm assuming after the public sacrifice was over and the people dispersed, probably Samuel was being hosted in the home of Jesse and in the privacy of that house, the individual sons of Jesse were paraded before him to consider whether this is the one that God has chosen because Samuel still didn't know which one was. And Eliab, no doubt the oldest, was the first brought and there were others after him. And he was good looking and strong apparently.

Later he was working in the army of Saul. And Samuel's first impression was this is the guy. He said, surely the Lord's anointed is before him.

That means before God, that this young man is the Lord's anointed standing before God, ready to be anointed as king. But the Lord said to Samuel, do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature because I have refused him. Now Saul was chosen not because of but certainly in view of the fact that he was a handsome and tall man.

He was the tallest man in Israel. And for a king to be of impressive stature was considered to be a desirable thing because a king wasn't just a man who sat in the White House in the Oval Office and just kind of signed papers and stuff. He was a man who went out and fought battles.

He was usually riding at the front of the armies. And he had to be an impressive individual physically if possible. And so Eliab was impressive, apparently tall, probably muscular and all that.

I mean David who is much younger was those things. Probably the family had those traits. This man did.

And God said don't pay attention to his stature. This time I'm not going to choose the

man whose head and shoulders taller than everybody else. Did that before.

Didn't work out. I've refused this one. For the Lord does not see as a man sees.

For man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. Very well known scripture. And apparently since he was looking for a man after his own heart, though Eliab was a good looking, he didn't have that good a heart.

And that would appear to be true later on in the story of David and Goliath. He seems to be one to scold David and to despise David. He didn't seem to be that great a guy.

So Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, neither has the Lord chosen this one. Then Jesse made Shammah pass by.

And he said, neither has the Lord chosen this one. Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, the Lord has not chosen these.

Now this makes David, of course, who had not yet come in, the eighth son of Jesse. In the genealogies of Chronicles, I believe that David is listed as the seventh son of Jesse. So there's a slight discrepancy, apparently, whether Jesse had seven or eight sons total.

David was clearly the youngest, as all accounts record, but he was either the seventh or the eighth. Now one possible solution, though no one knows if it is the case, is that David was in fact the eighth son of Jesse. But at the time when Chronicles was written, one of the sons had died and David was then in position number seven.

And the dead son, of course, all the sons were dead by the time Chronicles was written, but it may be that the man had died young enough that he never amounted to anything, never had any offspring, didn't leave any family to record anything about. That's one suggestion. But apart from that, I'm not sure what to think.

There's always the possibility, because this does happen from time to time, that there could be a textual error that is a copyist error, that the text has come down corrupted. But we won't worry about this because there are other ways to solve it. It's possible that Chronicles has left out one of the sons, like I said, could have died young, left no offspring, and thus Jesse at a later time in his life had only seven, not eight sons.

And David was the seventh rather than the eighth of the surviving sons. Anyway, all seven came before Samuel, and Samuel was surprised that none of them were God's chosen one. And as far as Samuel could tell, that was all.

And Samuel said to Jesse, are all the young men here? Then he said, there remains yet the youngest, and there he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said to Jesse, send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here. So he sent and brought him in.

Now he was ruddy, which means red, with bright eyes and good looking. And the Lord

said, arise, anoint him, for this is the one. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went back to Ramah. Now, several things about David.

Why didn't they bring him in? Why was he not brought in when all the sons were supposed to come in? It may be an innocent assumption on Jesse's part that if one of his sons was going to rule, certainly God would not choose the youngest. And I mean, David could be called in if all the others were eliminated, but probably thought it very unlikely that all seven of the older sons would be bypassed and David chosen. Although in Israel's history, that's often what God did.

By natural primogeniture, generally speaking, the firstborn or the oldest is the one who gets the birthright, the one who ends up ruling over the family and so forth. It was just natural in that society for the oldest son to have the primary authority in the family. And so the idea that the youngest son would be in authority didn't seem very likely.

And so we need someone to watch the sheep. So let's just leave David out there, bring in the others. And David was brought in only after the others were eliminated.

But of course, in God's history, he often chose the younger son where the older one would be expected to be chosen. Abraham's two oldest sons were Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael, the older, was rejected and Isaac, the second, was accepted.

Of Isaac's two sons, Esau was the older and Jacob, the younger. But Esau was rejected and Jacob was chosen. Of Jacob's sons, the oldest were Reuben and Simeon and Levi.

All three of them were rejected and Judah got the birthright, the fourth son. And one of the youngest sons, Joseph, got another part of the birthright. And so God sort of has set a precedent of passing over the natural qualifications for leadership that one would have by birth.

The man who's born first would have the natural position of being chosen. And God passes over that and chooses the one who doesn't have that natural position. Which is no doubt a principle that God intended to drive home to the Jews.

And that is that being one of God's people, having those privileges, is not necessarily going to be something that someone comes into by natural birth. It's not by being Jewish by birth that you naturally become one of the chosen people. The Gentiles who came along later and did not have the qualifications of natural birth from Abraham might be in fact chosen.

Or at least the natural birth order does not confer any obvious or automatic privilege. And so it's just one of those things that shows that where man in society gives certain

privileges to people by their birth order or their station in birth, God kind of just passed over those things and chooses who he wants to based on the heart, not on outward considerations. And David was the one of the family least qualified by birth because he was at the end of the line.

He was at the bottom of a totem pole. And yet God said that's the one. He's got the heart I'm looking for.

Now there is a description of David's appearance and it says he was red or ruddy. Commentators seem to think this is not a description of his complexion but of his hair color, that he had auburn hair. That was something considered to be very attractive among the Jews because it was rare.

Most of the Jews, most Middle Easterners have black hair. And occasionally some will have auburn colored hair and it's considered to be unusually attractive. And so that may be what we're to understand.

He was red headed. And although it is also possible it's talking about his complexion, that he was a fresh faced boy, you know, with pink cheeks. But more commentators seem to think it's talking about his hair color.

He had bright eyes and he was good looking. And so Samuel, recognizing that from God that this is the one, anointed him and went his way. And the Spirit came upon David, a very important thing because that's what had happened upon Saul.

The Spirit had come upon Saul when he was anointed as king or even before that when he was chosen to be king. And we're going to find in verse 14, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. And instead an evil spirit from the Lord came and troubled him.

So Saul had been the man given the Holy Spirit and had been made another man by that experience earlier. But although God had made him another man, he by his own choices had made himself yet another man. Another man than the one the Spirit had made him, made him to be an evil man.

And so an evil spirit that suited him was sent to him. Whereas now the Holy Spirit, the anointing for leadership that had been on Saul was now on another man, David. It's not clear whether Jesse or David or the other sons knew what this anointing was for.

You might think that it would be obvious. However, it's more obvious to us than it would be to them. There was not really some kind of established pattern of anointing people to be king.

Saul was the only one that had ever had that experience. And that was privately. The pouring of oil over Saul's head happened privately between Samuel and Saul.

At the coronation of Saul publicly, there wasn't an anointing. So it might not even be generally known by people that Saul had oil poured over his head. And if not, then there'd be absolutely no precedent that anyone would have for thinking pouring oil over a man's head makes him a king.

That usually meant someone would be a priest. Now since Samuel had already consecrated Jesse and his sons to somehow participate in the sacrifice, it may be that the anointing of David in their mind meant maybe he's going to have some kind of priestly function. Maybe even prophetic.

Maybe they thought Samuel was inaugurating him into one of the companies of the prophets. I mean, the action occurred without explanation. And it seems likely that neither Jesse nor the others in the family, nor probably David, even knew that this was to be the king.

We don't read that Samuel said, I am anointing you king to replace Saul. If that was known, it hardly seems sensible that David would just go back to tending the sheep and, you know, minding his own business again. Or that the family would treat him with the kind of contempt they did at a later time.

If they knew he was to be the king, they'd treat him with a little more deference. It seems like the anointing took place. God knew what it meant.

Samuel knew what it meant. And we know what it means. But I'm not sure that anyone else involved knew what it meant at the time.

Because David does not, after this, conduct himself immediately with kingly bearing or even with any kingly ambition. He does not appear to say, okay, I'm the king now, so I guess it's time for me to act like a king. Instead, he kept acting like a shepherd, still watching sheep instead of people.

And so the event probably was not interpreted for them. They just saw an anointing. And it was clear that it didn't lead to any immediate change in David's activities.

Just like when Saul had been anointed, it didn't lead to an immediate change in his activity. He went back to follow the livestock of his father Kish. And he was apparently out plowing, still, in his father's fields, when the news of the siege of Jabesh came to him.

And he got infuriated and led the armies to war. He had been anointed as king, but that was private. No one seemed to know it.

And though Samuel had gotten up in chapter 12 and announced that Saul was the king, he had just still not done anything kingly yet. He was still doing the old activities until the time would come. So I guess we have, maybe in our own minds, images of royalty based on medieval kings and European monarchies and things like that.

We're talking here about Middle Eastern sheiks and chieftains and things, and kings who probably didn't live in palaces but in tents or something. Probably very, very simple. Kings' courts and such.

Not elaborate governments at all. And even when a man was made king, unless there was something obvious for him to do, he'd just go back and watch the animals. At least in this case.

But I'm thinking David probably didn't know at this point that this was for the kingdom, for him to be the king. However, we see that the spirit of God coming on David made him the true king. That's what happened to Saul.

When Samuel anointed him and the spirit came upon him, that made him the true king. It took a while for people to recognize Saul as king. Initially, the people, some of them at least, were not excited about Saul being king.

It wasn't until he'd done some things heroic that made them say, okay, we're going to accept him as our king now. But just the fact that God had made him the king didn't make everyone happy about it. In this case, God made David the king.

David was now the king, officially. In a nation where God is the king, the one that God says is the king is the king. Saul was not the king anymore.

The spirit of God left Saul. Saul was in a position of political authority, but he had no anointing. He had no approval from God.

His position, the momentum kept up because he had some momentum. Most people didn't know that he'd been rejected. Or if they knew he was rejected, they didn't know he'd been replaced.

They didn't know about David. This is all private. Now, David, of course, is a type of Christ.

That's one of the clearest things we know in the application of Old Testament stories to the New. That David is a type of Christ, if nobody else is. The anointing of Jesus as king took place at his baptism.

When the spirit came upon him in the form of a dove. And the voice said, this is my son, in whom I'm well pleased. God basically announcing him to be the Messiah, the king, and anointing him at that time.

But that was not done necessarily publicly. The impression I have when I read the baptism of Jesus is that mostly that was done just between the two of them, the baptism of Jesus. Because it says after all the people had been baptized, Jesus came.

Or when all the people had been baptized. It sounds like the people had come and gone,

and then Jesus showed up. And there was maybe a more or less private baptism of Jesus.

To which John testified, but which others perhaps did not observe. It's hard to know whether anyone else observed it. But it was a declaration of Jesus as king, officially, but not to the public.

And we still live at a time where Christ being king is not universally known by the public. We know it, but he is not taken visible in universal control yet. And there was that season between the anointing of David and his actually coming to the throne.

During which the public still viewed somebody else as being in charge, Saul. Saul was the popularly acclaimed and accepted king. David was the secret king.

And so also in the present time, the kingdom of God recognizes Jesus as the king. And we who follow him are his kingdom. As there were some who came to recognize David as king long before Saul's death.

And began to travel with him and even run away with him from Saul's persecution. 400 of them initially, then 600 eventually. These were the people who were David's kingdom before he was literally on the throne of Israel.

Before he was recognized publicly. And so today, we recognize Jesus as the king, but the world doesn't. The world still follows his adversary, the devil.

And Saul is like the devil. In fact, he's even animated by an evil spirit to perfect the type. David is filled with the spirit like Jesus.

Saul is filled with the demon like the devil. And so we have in these two kings, one legitimate and one no longer legitimate. A picture of the two kingdoms that exist in the world today and the age in which we live.

The time will come when Jesus is acclaimed universally as king. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus lordship. But that time has not come yet.

And so we are living in a time analogous to that of David after his anointing. But before his public enthronement. Now, David then is king whether he knows it or not at this point.

He may know it, he may not. But he doesn't act like it for a while. He just acts like a shepherd boy still.

But the spirit of the Lord, verse 14, departed from Saul and a distressing spirit. I kind of object to the new King James taking this mealy mouth approach. A distressing spirit from God, from the Lord troubled him.

The reason this is mealy mouth is because it actually says an evil spirit from God

troubled him. But the translators realized that most readers have a real trouble understanding why an evil spirit would come from God. And so they just have changed it from evil to a distressing spirit.

I think that this gives us a picture of how the spiritual realm really works. And tells us more about demons than we would otherwise be able to understand about their activity. Because when we read about demon possessed people in the New Testament, the word evil spirit is used.

The same word that is used in the Septuagint in the Greek of this passage, evil spirit. Evil spirits in the New Testament are also used synonymous with demon. And yet in the New Testament we find many people are possessed by demons.

But we are never told how they got that way. Or why they are that way. We find them being delivered through Jesus and the apostles.

But we don't find any case of them becoming that way. They are just that way when we first meet them in the narrative. So that we are left with curiosity.

How does one who is not originally demonized become demonized? How does someone come to have an evil spirit? And we are given no direct answers. But Saul is the quintessential demonized man in the Old Testament. And we do find the beginning of his problems.

We do find him becoming demonized. And in his case, it began with rebellion against God. And Samuel said to him, rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft.

It was as if he was participating in the spirit of Satan. The spirit of rebellion against God. And therefore, making himself open to God's adversary to take control of him.

Although it didn't happen immediately. However, later on, when God was truly done with Saul and anointed David. That's when the spirit of God did leave Saul.

And that's when the evil spirit seems to have come upon him from God. It's clear that this was a judgment from God. Now that God would be able to send an evil spirit might seem bizarre.

Since the evil spirits, we understand to be workers with Satan, not with God. That is, in the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The evil spirits are on the wrong side.

They are on the devil's side, not God's side. So why would we find God sending demons? Sending evil spirits? Well, the answer seems to be that no matter what side they're on. They are still subject to the sovereignty of God.

Demons are malicious things. But no matter how malicious they may be. They can do

nothing against God's people without God's leave.

Without God's permission. The most classic case of this, of course, is Satan coming to God in the book of Job. And desiring to do harm to Job.

But being restrained by this hedge that God has put around Job. And all those things. So that the devil, for all of his malice, is unable to do a thing.

He would love to destroy Job. But he doesn't have that option. He has to get God's permission.

Now, God is not malicious toward Job. And therefore, he has not allowed the devil to carry out his malice toward Job. But the time comes when God sees a purpose in allowing Job to undergo testing.

And so, he gives Satan some leave. Limited. He limits it.

But he gives him some access to do some harm that would test Job. In a way that God wants him to be tested. He's just exploiting the devil.

The devil is doing something out of malice toward God. But God is, in a sense, using the devil to get something done he wants. Namely, to have Job tested in a way that is desirable.

Just as the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. The devil wasn't desiring to fulfill God's purposes. He's an enemy of God.

He was trying to get Jesus to defect from God. But Jesus was led by God into that confrontation. Because God wanted that to happen.

So, the devil really can't get to anybody. At least we can say none of God's people. Without God giving specific leave.

Now, when we read of an evil spirit coming to someone from God. We have to assume that the evil spirit had to go and get permission from God. Before doing the thing it wanted to do.

And it may well be that we could see it correctly by saying. The evil spirits are continually petitioning God for permission to do things to Christians. And God's more often than not saying, no.

I'm not going to let you do that. You have to observe the hedge of God around them. But when it serves a purpose that God has to actually afflict somebody.

To try them or punish them or whatever. Then, to permit the demon to go through is something God can do. That demon then comes from God.

From the presence of God. Because that's where it had to go to get permission. Before coming to do its dirty work.

We see that very plainly in the end of 1 Kings. In chapter 22. Where a prophet Micaiah has seen a vision in heaven.

And declares what happened there. And he was speaking to King Ahab, the evil king. Whom God had declared a judgment upon.

That he would die at Ramoth Gilead in battle. But his false prophets who were not hearing from God. But were just saying what the king wanted to hear.

They were continuing to say, oh yeah, go fight at Ramoth Gilead. You'll win. You'll be victorious there.

But there was one prophet of Yahweh who spoke differently. Said you're going to die there. And the king complains.

This guy never says what I want to hear. And Micaiah says, listen, I'll tell you what I saw. He said, I saw God sitting in heaven.

Surrounded by, you know, attendants. And he said to those around him. Who will go for me and cause Ahab to fall and die at Ramoth Gilead.

And the prophet said one spirit said one thing. One said another thing. God was hearing different suggestions.

Apparently not approving any of them in particular. And he says finally a spirit came forward and said I will persuade him. And the Lord said how? And the spirit said I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets.

And the Lord said go and do so. And Micaiah the prophet said therefore know that the Lord has sent a lying spirit into the mouth of your prophets. Now this is probably the clearest picture of what's going on in heaven.

In this way that we could hope for. And no doubt the same scenario lies behind this instance of an evil spirit from God. Coming to torment Saul.

Saul is in heaven saying who will afflict Saul for me? He's come under my judgment. And some spirit says, an evil spirit comes and says I'll go and I'll afflict him. And God says go ahead.

God gives him the approval. Because Saul is under God's judgment. It's possible in some cases at least of demon possession.

People come under demon possession because they do things like Saul did. They're

rebellious against God. They get involved in the occult.

They flirt with the devil and with demons. And God says okay I think you need to learn a lesson. And an evil spirit from the Lord is allowed to come to them.

We do have of course that interesting parable Jesus taught. About the unforgiving servant. Where the king forgave him of a small debt.

Of a large debt excuse me. And he the servant who was forgiven refused to forgive a fellow servant of a small debt. The king was angry when he heard about that.

And said you should have forgiven your fellow servant. And Jesus said the king delivered him over to tormentors. Until he should pay all that he owed.

And you know that's kind of a severe ending to the story. But that's not really the end. There's one more verse.

In Matthew 18 verse 35. Jesus said so my heavenly father also will do to you. If each of you from his heart does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

That is each of you are required to forgive because God has forgiven you. Actually Jesus is not talking to the crowds. He's talking to his apostles here.

This was in a private time with his apostles. Where Peter said how many times must I forgive my brother. Seven times and he's answering Peter with this parable.

And he says well this servant was forgiven by his master. Like you Christians have been forgiven by God. But that person did not forgive someone else.

Like you a Christian who has been forgiven might fail to forgive your brother. If that's what you do then my father will do to you. What the king did to his servant here.

This is a threat made to Christians. To Peter and to the apostles. If you don't forgive your brothers.

My father will do to you what this king did to that servant. Well what was that? He delivered him over to tormentors. How does God deliver Christians or anybody over to tormentors? A lot of people think that's a reference to hell.

Well it may be but I'm not sure that we should understand that every Christian who is unforgiving. Is in danger of going to hell. I don't know that losing salvation is really what's in mind here.

Could be. But I'm not convinced of it. I think there's better suggestions.

Some think it's referring to purgatory. Because they'll be there until they've paid what they owe. The Roman Catholics actually use this verse as a purgatory proof text.

But again there's no necessity of saying that this is happening to the servant after he dies. He's tormented until he does what he's supposed to do. Until he pays what he owes.

Namely until he forgives. I don't have very much experience myself with demon possessed people. I've had a few experiences but very few compared to some.

But I do know I've talked to people who are much more involved in such things than I am. In casting demons out of people. They are almost always convinced that unforgiveness is one of the things that gives the devil or the demons a foothold in someone's life.

And in ministering to demon possessed people it's become common procedure to ask them is there anyone you haven't forgiven? And to require them to forgive before they can be delivered. I don't know. You can't base too much doctrine on what people do.

And what isn't stated in the scripture. But they would base it partly on that scripture that we just read. So we're going to see another instance similar to this when we get to chapter 17 I believe.

Or is it 18? It's chapter 18. Because as you look ahead here. In chapter 18 verse 7. After David had won his victories.

It says the women sang as they danced. And said Saul has slain his thousands. David his ten thousands.

They meant to praise both Saul and David. They didn't realize this was going to get David in a lot of trouble. Then Saul was very angry saying the saying displeased him.

And he said they have ascribed to David ten thousands. And to me they have ascribed but thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom.

So Saul eyed David from that day forward. Verse 10. And it happened on the next day.

That the evil spirit from God came upon Saul. Okay. So he got angry at David.

And suspicious of David. And nursed a grudge against David on one day. And the next day an evil spirit came upon him again.

And whenever I think of that conjunction of those two thoughts. He eyed David with suspicion from that day forward. And the next day an evil spirit came against him.

I am reminded of Ephesians chapter 4. Verses 26 and 27. Which says be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

Nor give place to the devil. My thought is that these two are connected thoughts. Don't

let the sun go down on your wrath.

Nor give place to the devil. As if going to bed angry. And not dealing with it beforehand.

Is that which kind of opens up and gives place in your life to the devil. Maybe I am seeing it wrongly. But it seems like a statement that applies very clearly to Saul.

He got angry at David. He didn't deal with it. And the next day since he had gone to bed with his wrath.

He let the sun go down on his wrath. The next day an evil spirit came to him. He gave place to the devil.

There are mysteries unexplained about this whole phenomenon of demons. Demon possession and so forth. But we don't have any clearer cases or evidences of a demon possessed individual in the Old Testament.

Than that of Saul. And remember when Jesus came it was still Old Testament times. When he arrived and he found a lot of demon possessed people.

So we might if we are asking how did these people get demon possessed. We might say well maybe it is similar to this prototype here in Saul. I don't know.

People rebel against God. People toy with the demonic occult. Maybe they are unforgiving towards someone.

And God decides to discipline them for that. We might think that causing someone to be demonized is a little severe discipline. Like you know I would spank my child if he did something worthy of being spanked.

But I wouldn't stick a rabid dog on him to tear him to pieces. I wouldn't put a demon in him. But we have to realize that our earthly parenting is only a shadow of something much more eternal and spiritual and loftier.

And what God is training us is for eternity. And sometimes the severity of his discipline is much greater than we would think normal. I mean the things that Paul went through.

The beatings he received and the shipwreck and all those kind of things. You know those are ways that God built him up and strengthened him and shaped his character. The persecution the Christians were going through that the writer of Hebrews was addressing in chapter 12.

He referred to it as the chastening of the Lord. He says you have not yet suffered to the shedding of blood in striving against sin. And then you've forgotten the exhortation that speaks to his sons.

Saying my son despise not the chastening of the Lord nor faint when you are reprov'd by him. For whom the Lord loves he chastens and he scourges. The word scourge means flogs.

Every son that he receives. That sounds pretty severe. Well God is not a cruel God.

God's a loving and sympathetic God. So if he uses very severe means of discipline there must be something very important at stake. There must be very little flex room about some of the things that have to be controlled.

And that we have to be trained for. And you know if we say well how could God justify having somebody be racked with pain all their life. In order that they might have some spiritual benefit in the next life.

Well the very question suggests you don't quite grasp the magnitude of the next life. And the smallness of this life. The way Paul saw it after he went through all those things.

He says this light affliction. He's talking about himself. He says our light affliction which is but for a moment.

Works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Now he's talking about all the tortures he's been through. He says our light afflictions.

They're light. They're only for a moment. They're just only for a lifetime.

That's like a moment. Those are working for us something. They're shaping.

They're bringing out something in us that needs to be brought out in us. They're working for us an eternal weight of glory. So I mean if you have Paul's perspective of eternity.

Then you have to realize that there's not many Christians in the first century suffered in all the ways Paul did. I mean he suffered more than any of us will. In fact if you take all of our sufferings put together combined.

We probably will not be able to equal. The kind of pain and suffering and imprisonment and abuse that Paul suffered. And he took all of that combined and said that's light affliction that's only for a moment.

And it's not even worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. So if we think well how could God turn someone over to an evil spirit to discipline them. I mean I would never discipline my child that severely.

Maybe from the point of view of eternity that's not so severe. It's only for a moment. It's only for this life.

The demon doesn't go with him to the next life. Unless of course they're not a Christian.

And I don't know where Saul went when he died.

I mean it seems like he probably was not saved. Although his most evil deeds were done under the influence of an evil spirit. And might not reflect the man that he would have been without that evil spirit.

It's hard to say. Much of what God was doing was a discipline upon him in removing him from his earthly position and privilege. I don't know what God saw in his soul or will see on the day of judgment.

I wouldn't be too confident that it's going to go well for him. But I can't say. The main thing is that God can if he sees fit allow horrendous things from our point of view to happen to somebody.

Because of the exceeding weight of glory that he knows is being worked by. We looked at what happened to Job. His kids were killed.

He was covered with boils. He lost all his property all in a short time. And he was a good guy.

Is that God testing? Isn't that a little over the top? Isn't that a little too severe? Apparently God didn't think so. And he's looking at things from the reality standpoint. Things can get really, really bad and still be, to God's mind, worth it.

Worth it for what's coming out of it. And because we're so time bound in our frame of reference, we think this is a long, harsh suffering. But Paul said, we do not look at the things that are seen but the things that are not seen.

The things that are seen are temporal. The things that are not seen are eternal. When your focus is on the eternal thing, then even a lifetime of suffering is only a blip.

Because a thousand years from now, and a million years from now, and a hundred million years from now, and a hundred billion and trillion years from now, you'll be able to look back at your lifetime and think, that was like a moment. That was like a twinkling of an eye. That whole lifetime of mine, that 90 years I lived, it was nothing.

As I recall, I think I'd suffered in it. I can't hardly remember. It's like I got an insect bite or something.

It stung for a moment. But I don't hardly remember it because it's such a brief period of time. It's like your infancy.

How much do you remember of it? Not much. It was such a small part of your life. So also, no matter how severe things are, even for a lifetime, from Paul's perspective, compared to the eternal, that's light.

That's small. That's momentary. And until we can look at the things that are not seen, which are eternal, until our perspective is like Paul's, in other words, we really probably cannot process our trials and our tests in a profitable manner.

So Saul's servants said to him, Surely a distressing or evil spirit from God is troubling you. That's chapter 16, verse 15. Let our master now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp, and it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the evil spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well.

So Saul said to his servants, Provide me now a man who can play well and bring him to me. Then one of the servants answered and said, Look, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person, and the Lord is with him. Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.

And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, a young goat, and sent them by his son David to Saul. So David came to Saul and stood before him, and he loved him greatly. That is, Saul loved David initially greatly, and he became his armor bearer.

Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight. So it was, whenever the spirit of God was upon, the spirit from God, I mean the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

Now, it was intuitive among Saul's servants that there could be something to relieve this condition. It would be music. If you can find someone who can play music well, this can relieve you of this distressing spirit, this evil spirit.

And they were apparently right. That tells us something about the nature of demons, is that they can be subdued or driven away by music sometimes. Maybe not just any music.

David was not only a musician, he was a psalmist. His music was scripture. He wrote inspired music.

And he probably sang some of the psalms that he had written. And this inspired music had a spiritual impact of driving the evil spirits away. And so there might be some hints for us there in dealing with demon possession.

At times, just worshipping the Lord and singing can be one of the things that maybe have an impact. Not necessarily a methodology that you can always count on working because there's different situations. But it's an interesting thing to put into your tool bag when you're thinking of how to deal with demonized people, that even these people who knew so little about things were correct in thinking, well, music can help.

Especially music from someone like David. Now, David was brought to Saul's attention by probably what I'd call a scout. We had earlier read that Saul, any time there was a man of valor seen anywhere in the tribes, that he'd recruit him into his entourage.

And so that means he had people out there scouting around for that type of qualified people. David was probably too young to be drafted into the army yet, so they hadn't called him yet, but he'd been noticed. The scouts had noticed this young man.

They'd heard him play music. They knew he was just tending sheep, but he was a mighty man of valor, a man of war. That is no doubt a reference to his potential because David hadn't fought any wars yet.

Now, he had killed a bear and a lion. It's possible that the news of that had gotten around. It's possible that that was quite a feat, almost like a Samson type of feat.

And if that news had gotten around, then it's possible that that's what they mean by he's a mighty man of valor, a man of war. But certainly a man of war would usually be someone who's actually fighting in wars, and clearly David hadn't done that yet. So it's likely that they're saying, if you're looking for a man of war, we found your guy.

This man is potentially the right stuff to be in the army, but he's also a good musician. You're looking for a musician. And he's also well-spoken.

He's prudent in speech. He's got it all. He's good-looking.

He's a musician. He speaks well. He is muscular and brave.

He's the ideal man. Bring him in. And so Saul said, well, okay, send for him.

And so Jesse sends David in, and David was available, not only to be a musician, but also an armor-bearer, because he was a mighty man of valor. Saul saw there's more talent in this boy than just music, and Saul apparently didn't need the musician all the time. The spirit came upon him, the evil spirit came upon him from time to time.

When that happened, they had to call in David to pull out the harp and start. It's like calling the doctor when, you know, someone's having a fit. So David had to be called in to remedy the situation, and it worked.

David's worship and David's music drove demons away. But the rest of the time, he apparently served as an armor-bearer. He actually was attached to the military.

But we have reason to believe David was still quite young at this point. They knew about him, the scouts knew about him, but had never really recommended that he be drafted yet, probably because of his young age. But they now recommend him because of his musical skills, and that was something that was needed.

But now he's there, they give him some attachment to Saul's bodyguard, really. But in the next chapter, David is clearly watching the sheep back at home again. He's not attached to the army, he's not attached to Saul.

In fact, he seems to be unknown to Saul. Because at the end of the story of David and Goliath in chapter 17, Saul asks Abner, whose son is this? Who is this guy? And it makes it sound like after David killed Goliath, Saul begins to wonder, who is this boy? Like he didn't know him before. Yet in chapter 16, he's well familiar with David.

He's his armor-bearer and his musician. That has been perplexing to commentators from time to time. Why does it seem that way? And we'll have to address that when we come to it next time, but we've run a little over the time.