

An Invitation to See Things God's Way
The Anointing of King David
Invitation to Leadership Series – Part 9

1 Samuel 16:1-23
June 27-28, 2025

Introduction

- Blinded by what we see
 - Limits of humanity - one of the strange things about being human is **how limiting it is**. Sure, we are blessed with a million times more ability than animals and the rest of creation, but when you think about it, we have so many restrictions: **we get tired, hungry, thirsty, have a million unanswered questions, frustrated with our lifespan and quality of life**. One of the limitations that is maddening is that **we can't and don't truly know one another**.
 - Not mind readers - I mentioned **last week** that **words are so important** because we can't read each other's minds or hearts. We have to listen to what people say and match it against their actions to try to figure out if they are lying or not. It makes human interaction tricky and a little scary to be honest.
 - Outside-in assessment – **another limitation is that we can't see the actual ability, quality, or meaning of another person so we have to judge a book by its cover**. We make judgments about people **based on what we see**. **But what if the external packaging is misleading?** What if someone is completely different on the inside than the outside? **Does that matter?** Absolutely. One of the creepiest things about the serial killer Ted Bundy is that he was described as handsome and charismatic (when you are played by Zac Efron in a movie you are probably pretty good looking). I think we all have been misled by what we saw and what we experienced in a person along the way of life. **God is never fooled or misled**. He knows exactly what He's dealing with. **That is why we need to look at life and people through His lens and listen to His direction**. One of those simple principles is:

In People: The INSIDE matters more than the OUTSIDE

- Last Week – **Saul was cut off** from God's favor due to disobedience. He is still going to be king of Israel and finish out his rule, but God's pulling his anointing and separating connection with him. If he thought that it was tough before, it's three times as difficult now.
- This week – **we meet God's replacement** and one of the greatest biblical-historical characters of all time and the third major figure of the book of 1st Samuel: **David**.
 - **We are in for a ride**. There are so many bizarre elements to talk about in this story. Usually I try to focus on one or two primary topics so we can all follow along, and I'll try to do that today, but this passage throws a bunch at us that is hard to just walk past. So, buckle up and here we go.

Lesson

- Nobody's Safe
 - Samuel is called to anoint another king
 - 1 Samuel 16:1-3 – *"The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse¹ the Bethlehemite,² for I have provided for myself a king³ among his sons.'* ² *And Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.'* And the Lord said, *"Take a heifer⁴ with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'* ³ *And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you."*
 - The Lord said to Samuel, - we always assume that when we read a statement like this that God was talking audibly to people and it was super clear. A deeper study will suggest otherwise. Sure, a few times and with a few people God did that and perhaps He did that with Samuel, but the phrase only means God communicated to them, not the method or conduit. The Bible is clear that God's preferred method of communication with the prophets was through dreams and visions, not audibly. I do have to say that I love the familiar and personal nature by which God connects with Samuel. It's as if they are friends of some sort. I would guess, due to the interaction and back and forth of the conversation that it was either audible interactions or vision interactions.
 - "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? – we don't know how long it's been since Samuel and Saul separated. It had to be long enough for God to poke him about it, but it couldn't have been too many years because Samuel is still stinging about it. And what was Samuel so upset for? It's not clear. Is he disappointed in Saul? Disappointed in the situation? Angry at Saul? Mad at himself for how things went down? I don't know but it really, really bothers him.
 - Fill your horn with oil, and go. – Samuel knew what 'fill your horn' meant. It meant get ready to go anoint a new guy to lead Israel. This would be both **bitter sweet** for Samuel, I would guess. He's bummed out about Saul and probably hoped it would go better but now it's time to move on and that's hard.
 - I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." – **Why Jesse? Jesse has famous grandparents: Boaz and Ruth. He is from the tribe of Judah (Jesus' tribe) and lived in the**

¹ "The name Jesse (yīšay; cf. 'īšay in 1 Chr. 2:13) debuts in the books of Samuel. It is not common among the Israelites; H. Cazelles suggests an Aramaic connection. Jesse is the grandson of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4:17, 22), and in 1 Chr. 2:3–12 he is mentioned as a Judahite of the house of Perez." NICOT

² "The term Bethlehemite also appears for the first time in Samuel. Bethlehem was the home of Naomi (Ruth 1:19; etc.). It is in Judah, about 10 miles from Ramah;..." NICOT

³ "David is not officially anointed as king until 2 Sam. 2:4 and 5:3; in fact, the expression "to anoint David as king" never appears in the present chapter." NICOT

⁴ "A heifer is literally "the young female (one) of the cattle" ('eglat bāqār; also Deut. 21:3; Isa. 7:21), which is grammatically an <adj. construct> + <genitive> like na'ar hakkōhēn "the young (one) of the priest" (2:13). A heifer was acceptable as a "peace offering" in priestly law (Lev. 3:1)." NICOT

Bethlehem area (Bethlehem is Naomi's hometown). Bethlehem is only about 10 miles from Samuel's hometown. Samuel is clear that he's going to get a king but he's not going to tell anyone that's what he's doing.

- And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." – Samuel knows that if anything is talked about a new king then Saul is going to come unglued and kill everyone involved. But what's funny to me is that he's talking to God who can do the impossible yet he's suggesting to God that there is a problem. I know that we do that all the time, but when you are talking back and forth directly with God it makes it sillier.
- And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' – The Lord tells him a plan and it seems awfully misleading but yet technically accurate. God says, just go under the pretense of wanting to do sacrifices to me. Now, Jesse will bring a heifer and will do a sacrifice (part of the feast mentioned later), but the point is to make it look like it's something else and not a direct anointing for political purposes so that Saul doesn't catch on or get told.
- When God misleads – One of the things that we struggle to accept is that God can do things that we can't. He's pure. We aren't. He can be jealous for Israel but we can't be jealous. He can kill anyone at any time but we can't. He can mislead in a holy way but we can't. But that's how it is. We are not equals with God. He's not bending the rules in a manipulating fashion, He is simply dictating how things should go and since He is pure and He is God (who created all and sustains all and is sovereign) He can do anything He wants regardless of how it looks to us.
- And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. – There's going to be a sacrifice and a feast that is going to be set up where all of this can go down and no one will be the wiser. Invite this Jesse guy and his family and God says I'll direct you from there.
- And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you. – God said, 'I'll tell you in the moment who I want you to anoint.' There's no clarity on the details before he goes on the trip. Why is that?
- Why doesn't God tell us more? – there's a million times when it seems like God holds out information from his people. He could have told Samuel all the details: hey, there's gonna be this guy with a bunch of sons. Just let them all go ahead of you and pass, but you'll choose the youngest named David. But when you anoint him he won't be official king for a long time. But I'll get him installed into king Saul's palace and close knit group. It's all good.' But God doesn't do that. It seems like He rarely does that. He tells Abram to leave to an unknown destination. The Holy Spirit tells Philip in the New Testament to go down a road and wait around. God COULD tell us so much more, but He doesn't. Why? It's not an accident or oversight. It's intentional. So, why? I don't know. My best guess is because of how we are made. My

guess is that: 1.) it keeps us dependent, and we don't get cocky. We aren't God and He has to keep reminding us of that. 2.) It keeps us together – if we know all the info we go off on our own and do our own thing. This life isn't to be lived alone. The point was to live it with God daily. 3.) we can't remember all the details anyway. 4.) We will mess up the plan and adjust it based on what we think is right. We aren't very good at obeying even when we know the details. I'm sure there are more reasons but those seem sufficient.

- Nope, Nope, Nope, Nope...
 - Samuel meets Jesse's sons
 - 1 Samuel 16:4-10 – *"Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling⁵ and said, 'Do you come peaceably?'"*⁵ *And he said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.'" And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.*⁶ *When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.'*⁷ *But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'*⁸ *Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.'*⁹ *Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.'*¹⁰ *And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.'*
 - Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. – Samuel's immediate obedience highlights what was so wrong with Saul. It was a risky assignment but Samuel doesn't balk. He does what God says to do. He did that as a kid and he's still doing it as an old man.
 - The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" – **Not clear why they were so afraid**, but when you have the highest level religious leader come to your town unannounced and you've heard about challenges with the king, you have to be a bit nervous that he's come with bad news.
 - And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." – Samuel calms them down and lets them know he's here on purely a religious visit and not a political one. Then he explains that he's going to have a religious service with a feast and sacrifice (which explains his cow) and invites them to be a part of it. **It's very possible that in that group of elders was Jesse** since the

⁵ "When Samuel arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the city (zīqnē hā'îr; see on 4:3; 11:3; also the city elders of Succoth, Judg. 8:14, 16) received him with trembling. It is not clear why they should "tremble." R. P. Gordon suggests they thought Samuel was making a "disciplinary visit." Baldwin explains that their fear may reflect Samuel's reputation and "the loneliness of his position."²¹ However, the elders rather felt something serious with Samuel's sudden visit to their city." NICOT

next line has him talking to Jesse. Jesse was probably one of the leaders due to influence and wealth.

- And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. – consecrating means, 'getting ready for God'. Usually it means ritual purification. This type of consecrating would be washing their clothes, washing their bodies and then letting Samuel anoint them gently in preparation for a holy meeting with God.
- When they came, he looked on Eliab⁶ and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." – **Things in the Middle East, even to this day, are usually done from oldest son to youngest. God set up a system early on that the firstborn son would be the most prized. It bled into everything they did. What's so strange is that over and over God broke that cycle intentionally:** choosing Joseph over his older brothers. Choosing Jacob over Esau. Choosing Isaac over Ishmael. And the list goes on. So Samuel is going to be prepped (humanly) to assume that the special one of the family is going to be the firstborn, but he is incorrect. He looks at this firstborn son of Jesse, **Eliab and he seems solid and big and like he could look like a good leader so he's assuming that's the guy.**
- But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." – This is key. God tells Samuel not to look at the outside but the inside (heart). It's a lesson for all of us to learn. God isn't impressed with outward trappings but about content of heart and integrity and faith. **Eliab looked the part but so did Saul.** God wasn't doing that again. He passed on Eliab. What can we learn from this?
- **Outward Appearances Can Be Deceptive** - Eliab's Impressive Appearance: Samuel initially judges Eliab based on his physical stature and assumes he is God's choice. This illustrates that physical attributes can be misleading and are not reliable indicators of a person's true worth or suitability for a role. Both men and women tend to make attraction determinations by external reasons: At their basic: men are visual about physical beauty while women are looking at external markers of a man being a prize to connect to. But what if the person is only dressing the part? What if the woman is altering her beauty by makeup? **If those simple external things can be manipulated then how could we possibly know if they are good on the inside and safe or life-giving to connect to? What about their honesty and integrity? What about their character and priorities? What about their walk with God?** What about all those things that are more important and affect life to a greater degree? Very few of those can be seen from the outside.

⁶ "he is called "Elihu" in 1 Chr. 27:18..." NICOT

- True Worth is Determined by Inner Qualities – **What made David the guy? He was someone that God could work with.** God made a lot of gifted men, but David had the **right heart and disposition** that God could draw close and rely on. The worth to the assignment (God still loves people who can't perform well) was dictated on whether or not the person would work WITH God or apart from God. David was predispositioned to work with God.
- Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." – Samuel had to go through the line of the boys from oldest to youngest and Abinadab was second. But nope. God passed.
- Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." – the exact same thing happened with the third: pass.
- And Jesse made seven⁷ of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these. – In fact all of the sons weren't the right one and Samuel must have been confused and called it out.
- Did I miss it? – **A common experience of walking with God is a constant challenge that we missed God's voice, God's plan, God's way.** When things don't fall in line like we think they should, we automatically assume we messed up. I would imagine that Samuel was thinking: shoot? Did I mishear God on this? That's going to be awkward. I have felt this way a ton of times: I must have missed it. But as time goes on and God reveals more, He explains that I didn't miss it, God was still revealing it.
- 7th or 8th son? - David would be the 8th son according to the way this is written. 7 sons passed by and David was not yet selected. Although it gets tricky with deeper study. It's not clear what the author is trying to convey (whether David was actually the 7th or 8th).
- Diamond in the Rough
 - Samuel meets and anoints David
 - 1 Samuel 16:11-13 – *"Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.'"*¹² *And he sent and brought him in. Now he was*

⁷ "The ideal number of sons in a family is seven: for example, Job's seven sons (Job 1:2; 42:13), Keret's seven sons (rather than "wives"), Baal's seven sons (or "lads") in KTU 1.5:V:8–9, etc., and "seven" good gods (KTU 1.23 [UT 52]), as well as 1 Sam. 2:5. Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law, is said to be to her better than seven sons (Ruth 4:15). David here comes after the other "seven" sons of Jesse. Hence, the text implies that he was the eighth son (also 17:12), while in 1 Chr. 2:15 he is "the seventh." Which was he? McCarter suggests that the tradition of the number of Jesse's sons was "mixed" or that "seven" is due to "careless fidelity" to the number seven, apparently meaning that the writer carelessly forgot to subtract David from the number in v. 10. Others conjecture that Jesse had a son who died. However, one might argue that David was actually the seventh son (so 1 Chr. 2:15) as well as climactically the "eighth," just as in Mic. 5:5 ("seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men" NIV); Rev. 17:11 ("the beast ... is an eighth but it belongs to the seven" NRSV). In fact, the number parallelism of "7"//"⁸" appears in Ugaritic poetic texts such as KTU 1.5 V 8–9; 1.12 II 44–45; 1.15 II 23–24; 1.23:66–67; etc. Therefore, the Samuel passages, here and 17:12, probably adopt the practice of epic writing, explaining the number of Jesse's sons as climactically "eight" even though the actual number was seven, while the Chronicle passage follows the usual practice of listing the actual number, that is, seven, of sons by name. It is certainly "worthy of saga," as C. H. Gordon holds, that the youngest son David eclipsed his "seven" older brothers." NICOT

ruddy⁸ and had beautiful eyes⁹ and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed¹⁰ him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David¹¹ from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah."

- Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." – Thankfully Samuel was secure enough to ask the question. You would have assumed that if a big dog prophet leader comes to your town and wants to see your kids that you would bring ALL of them. Nevertheless Samuel asks and gets the clarity that he's looking for. Jesse says, 'Oh, ya, I've got another one.' **I didn't bring him.** He's at home watching over the sheep. The obvious statement being made is that he didn't think Samuel would want to see the littlest one because he wouldn't be picked for anything important. There was a bias toward the firstborn and older. Also there was a bias toward older rather than younger. Their cultural standards left David as the runt in their minds. Don't both the big dog prophet with the runt.
 - **How old is David here?** – Likely **14 or 15** years old. For more in-depth explanation see below, "David's kingly timeline" section.
- And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." – Samuel knows his job here and he's not going anywhere until he sees this kid and checks with God on anointing him. The whole feast and sacrifice was a ruse to get to this very moment. There's no point in going forward without the kid. So, he says, 'we'll wait.'
- And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. – ruddy means '**reddish**' and **beautiful eyes is literally 'beautiful of eyes' or 'good of looking'** which can either mean his eyes are beautiful or he's good to look at with your eyes meaning handsome. Since handsome is mentioned the idea is clear: **he's a good looking dude.** Funny side note is that the term 'handsome' means 'good...' and you know from context what's good and pleasant about it:

⁸ "The adjective ruddy ('admôni) is also used of Esau (Gen. 25:25). In the ancient Near East, "red (actually reddish brown) is the color appropriate for men And two of the most heroic men of the Old Testament, Esau and David, are described as naturally red: showing that they were born to be heroes." NICOT

⁹ "The expression with beautiful eyes (y'pēh 'ēnayim) literally means "beautiful of eyes," which is grammatically <adj. construct> + <genitive> like good looking (tōb rō'i; lit., "good of looking"); also 17:42; Gen. 39:6. The expressions "ruddy countenance" and "beautiful eyes" are used for describing a happy king with a bright face in the ninth-century B.C." NICOT

¹⁰ "This verse is careful not to say David is anointed "king over Israel" (v. 1). To Jesse and other attendees there, the purpose of this anointing may not have been totally clear, even though it took place "in the midst of his brothers." As R. P. Gordon notes, as far as we know for sure, only Samuel knew the purpose of the anointing, which was done in a small group. As there were various purposes for anointing, the others present may or may not have known the significance. Eliab might never have associated David's anointing with his future kingship (see 17:28). David was anointed (*mšh) three times in his life: by Samuel (16:13) here at Bethlehem, by the men of Judah to be "a king over the house of Judah" (2 Sam. 2:4), and by the elders of Israel to be "a king over Israel" (2 Sam. 5:3)." NICOT

¹¹ "For the spirit of the Lord rushed upon (wattišlah rūah-YHWH 'el-), see 10:6; 11:6. For both Saul and David, after they were anointed king, the spirit of the Lord came upon them to equip them to carry out their commission. Compare Isa. 11:1–2; 61:1. Just as the spirit of the Lord rushed upon Saul "on that day" (10:9), that is, the day when Saul was anointed, so it rushed upon David from that day onwards. The contrast has been too much emphasized between the "spasmodical" aspect of the spirit upon Saul and the "permanent" endowment of the spirit upon David (see 2 Sam. 23:2; also Ps. 51:11). As the following verse (v. 14) notes, the spirit of the Lord had not yet left Saul by that day." NICOT

Good food, good looking, good season, etc. It's also interesting that a lot is mentioned of how he looks when it's already been stated that we shouldn't be looking at the outside for this task.

- And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." – God picks David. **It's not clear to the surrounding audience what he's being anointed for.** There is no mention of king (that would like set off alarm bells with Saul's reign and David would be instantly killed). Samuel anointed, that's it. The rest were left to wonder.
- Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. – I find it strange that God allows and sometimes provokes jealousy among siblings like with Joseph (although I think it was Joseph's personal error that caused most of that). It also has no mention of David being assume that he was going to change his role to king any time soon. He went right back to normal life.
- And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David¹² from that day forward. – This is the **Holy Spirit anointing and empowering** David for the assignment and office of leading God's people. Although he was not going to officially rule anything for another 15 or so years, the Holy Spirit was on him and **preparing him to be the man** that God called and built him to be. This 'rushing' of the Holy Spirit is similar to Saul's initial anointing and to Samson's experiences. It's a sudden arrival of the Holy Spirit with super power.
- And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. – Samuel went the 10 miles back home after the event. He was keeping a low profile and disconnected from Saul at this time.
- David's kingly timeline – strangely enough, although David is the most famous of Israel's kings, there is a lot of ambiguity about his kingly timeline. **David is actually anointed to be king 3x's.** The first one is here. The second is when the southern portion of Israel calls him their king (Judah is the name for the south but it consisted of Judah and Benjamin tribes. Although they didn't officially split until after David's son died). The third is when the whole nation acknowledged him as their king. Scholars are all over the place about when each of these things happened due to the Bible being fuzzy on it. The indicators that we have in Scripture is that it says David took the throne at 30, but it's not clear if that was only the southern throne or the whole throne. It also says that he reigned for 40 years, but that's not clear if it's both reigns or only the total nation reign. Based on those general ideas, people assume that David died around 70-71 years old. One last bit of info is that it seems that David led the south for 7 to 7 1/2 years. So, working backward, it seems best to assume that he dies at 70. His 40 year rule would be both reigns

¹² "David is the only person in the Bible of that name. The meaning of the name has been variously explained: (1) a connection with the Hebrew dōd, meaning "beloved," or even "uncle" (Amos 6:10; Hertzberg, p. 139); (2) the shortened form of a personal name whose theophoric element is a sun deity Dodo; however, there is yet no clear evidence that such a deity ever existed in the ancient Near East; and (3) the Akkadian term dawidum from Mari was previously taken to mean "commander" and connected with the name David, but the Mari word actually means "defeat." At the present time then, (1) is the most promising. The oldest extra-biblical attestation of David is in the ninth-century B.C. Aramaic inscription from Tel Dan." NICOT

together (meaning 7 ½ of south and then 32 ½ of the whole), and **he kicked off king of any sort at the age of 30** (Judah). Since only David's brothers were in the army by the time we get to the David and Goliath story and they were conscripted into the army at 20, we know that the remaining 4 or 5 boys were under 20. He was the youngest so if they had a kid every year, he was likely **around 15 or max 16 for Goliath**. This pushes his anointing by Samuel in this story further back in time and he would have been younger than 15 or around that age (perhaps 14).

- Let the Games Begin
 - Saul is tormented and told about David
 - 1 Samuel 16:14-18 – *"Now the Spirit of the Lord departed¹³ from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord¹⁴ tormented him. ¹⁵ And Saul's servants said to him, 'Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. ¹⁶ Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.¹⁵' ¹⁷ So Saul said to his servants, 'Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me.' ¹⁸ One of the young men answered, 'Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is*

¹³ "R. P. Gordon rightly notes that "Psalm 51:11 ('take not thy holy Spirit from me') may well reflect the psalmist's fear of Saul-like dereliction." NICOT

¹⁴ "The phrase a spirit of evil [or for evilness] (rûaḥ-rā'āh; also 16:15, 16, 18:10; 19:9) is grammatically a construct chain like 'anšê rā'āh "men of evil" (Prov. 24:1), that is, "men who do evil to others," not "evil men," which would be 'ānāšîm rā'im, and also rûaḥ šeqer "a spirit of deception," though it is often translated as "a lying-spirit." It does not mean "an evil spirit," with an adjective; see v. 23 and 18:10. Note that the term rā'āh is a f.s. noun ("evilness") here rather than an adjective ("evil"). Thus, Block's explanation hits the mark: "a bad Spirit of God ... is 'bad' because the effects of his possession are negative and destructive for object."⁶⁸ See Excursus (below). The expression "an Evil Spirit from the Lord" gives the impression that God's spirit can sometimes be evil. Various suggestions have been made in order to solve this theological problem. Keil and Delitzsch distinguish between "an evil spirit from Jehovah," which is a "demon" sent by the Lord, and "the Spirit of Jehovah," who is the spirit of the holy God. According to Vriezen, the fact that not only the good but also the evil comes from Yahweh indicates that he holds absolute authority over the evil too. Eichrodt also suggests that "the evil spirit from the Lord" is a spiritual power under God's sovereignty; hence it is not same as an "evil spirit," in contrast to a good spirit, in a pagan dualism. McCarter accepts that the evil spirit is "from Yahweh" and explains that even it plays "its part in the working out of the divine plan." Klein and R. P. Gordon also hold that the OT tends "to trace both good and evil back to Yahweh," thus ascribing evil to the hand of Yahweh in such texts as Deut. 13:2-4; Amos 3:6; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chr. 21:1; Judg. 9:23; 1 Kgs. 22:19-22; Job 2:10. However, this is not so much a theological as a linguistic problem. The translation "an evil spirit from the Lord" is not adequate for the Hebrew original. We would like to suggest that the phrase rûaḥ-rā'āh, which is usually translated as "an evil spirit," should be taken as a construct chain, "a spirit of evilness (or disaster)," since rā'āh cannot be an adjective in rûaḥ hārā'āh (16:23) and rûaḥ YHWH rā'āh (19:9). This might be supported by the fact that the noun rûaḥ is followed by another noun 128 times, in comparison with about 20 times when it is modified by an adjective (according to acCordance). So, rûaḥ hārā'āh and rûaḥ YHWH rā'āh are better translated as "the spirit which brings forth disaster" and "the spirit of Yahweh which brings forth disaster," taking rā'āh as "objective genitive" (or "genitive of effect") as in the cases of 'anšê rā'āh (Prov. 24:1), which means "men of evil" (i.e., "men who do evil to others"), not "evil men," and 'ēšet z'nûnîm (Hos. 1:2), which means "a wife of whoredom" (NRSV), that is, "a wife who will, as a result, commit adultery," not "an adulterous wife" (NIV). Now a spirit of evil [or, for evilness] arrived "as though rushing into the vacuum Saul's loss of favor has created" (McCarter) and began to terrorize him. Hoftijzer aptly explains that this situation is "not only a state of fright, but also a state of being (partly) incapacitated."⁷⁴ This spirit is from the Lord and hence "will play its part in the working out of the divine plan."

¹⁵ "Spinoza said, "Music is good to the melancholy," and all ancient societies used music against demons. The servants thus propose to find a musician to relieve Saul's melancholia and to keep the spirit from troubling him. It was believed that in the ancient Near East the lyre (kinnôr) had divine power, and a deified knr is listed in the official pantheon list of ancient Ugarit. However, there is no direct biblical evidence of deification of instruments in Israel.⁶⁶ See 1 Sam. 10:5. The fact remains, however, that music has a therapeutic power." NICOT

skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war,¹⁶ prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him."

- Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, - The Holy Spirit left Saul. **That's how things worked in the old covenant and with certain offices.** The office of king got the relatively constant anointing presence of the Holy Spirit to do the herculean job. A prophet would get the Holy Spirit (not always constant but sometimes). But **the Holy Spirit would move away based on obedience and loyalty and also when the assignment ended.**
- **Can we lose the Holy Spirit today? – If we are children of God** (saved by Jesus Christ = automatically becoming a child of God and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit), **then no.** The Holy Spirit can be quenched and shut down (meaning He decides not to act further due to disobedience) from active moving through our lives perhaps, but He doesn't leave. The Bible says, He will 'never leave nor forsake us.' It's a different covenant era. The first covenant with Israel was one of temporary status and merit-based (earned). The Holy Spirit would come and go based on assignment and obedience. This is why the famous Psalm 51:11 says, 'please don't take the Holy Spirit from me.' David saw it happen to Saul and didn't want it to happen to him. The 2nd Covenant is based on grace and relationship. This means that the Holy Spirit indwells permanently in relationship.
- and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. – although we can and should figure out how God works with demons and angels in history, this one seems to be a bit more easy to reconcile. **Linguistically it's more accurately read: 'a spirit from God who came to cause bad things to happen.'** It's not a statement of the nature of the spirit being bad, only that what it's doing is going to be bad to the person it's acting upon. Therefore **it could simply be an angel doing God's will** to harass Saul for a grand purpose (just as angels kill people on God's behalf but we don't think of them as evil, only good angels that kill).
- And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, - **What was happening to Saul was clear to those around him. He knew that it wasn't right.** He knew the Holy Spirit left. He knew that what he was experiencing was spiritual and not just melancholy or the pressures of work. What I find interesting is their solution to the problem. **They had a solution. It was to get a musician to fix it. How in the world did they know**

¹⁶ "The phrase a powerful person (gibbôr ḥayil) refers to a member of the ruling class; see 9:1 on Kish. The other phrase a man of war ('iš milḥāmāh) denotes "a trained fighter." If this phrase refers to David, it contradicts with 17:33 where Saul says to David, "you are young while he has been a man of war from his youth." Hence, scholars usually think, like Klein, that the present part has a different tradition history from ch. 17. However, the two phrases, a powerful man and a man of war, may refer to David's family background rather than his own ability ("to play lyre skillfully") and personality ("excellence in speech and form"). He is a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, who is a member of ruling class like Kish and a trained fighter. The information that David was a skillful lyre-player was the primary information necessary to Saul in the present context; all the other items were additional. It may be that the servant either assumed David to be a powerful man, a man of war since he was the son of a well-to-do person, several of whose sons were actually engaged in wars (see 17:12–13) or meant that Jesse was a powerful man, a man of war." NICOT

that? Music has been in almost every culture on earth and many times it's tied to supernatural things. The lyre was specifically considered a spiritual instrument for some reason.

- and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well." – they assumed that if they got the right musician to play the right stuff, it would fix his problem and chase away the harassment.
- So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me." – Saul was desperate and agreed. Let's get someone to do that.
- One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, - **One of the servants had heard of, or personally knew David.** Remember, they are all living in southern Israel (Samuel, Saul & David) so it's likely they all knew about each other to some degree. **David had a reputation** of being a great musician. We know in retrospect that David was not just great on the lyre but he was a song writer and led a massive movement of praise and worship to God during his lifetime. Music was a part of who God made him.
- a man of valor, - There is some question whether or not some of these compliments and descriptions were added after the fact when everyone knew what kind of man David turned out to be. Could we say that David was a man of war (see next) if he was never in an army or in a war? Or are these **general statements about his bravery** (man of valor and war) and being willing to get in a fight and finish it? I would guess the latter and they were perhaps cleaned up and renamed later on after the fact when the book was compiled and edited.
- a man of war, - See above for more explanation but it means everyone knew that David was a tough kid.
- prudent in speech, - **David knew how to talk with people.** He knew how to hold his tongue and to be bold.
- and a man of good presence, - he **carries himself well.** He's mature and had integrity.
- and the Lord is with him. – they knew that **he was anointed**, and God's favor was upon him. **How awesome to be known for being connected to God deeply.**
- Prepared to be used – **When God called on David, David was ready.** He had done all the things necessary to use his gifts rightly, hone his skills, spend time with God, developing the right heart and all without knowing that he was going to be called upon.
- For Such a Time as This
 - David enters Saul's close-knit circle
 - **1 Samuel 16:19-23 – "Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." ²⁰ And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them**

by David his son to Saul. ²¹ And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. ²² And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." ²³ And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him."

- Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. – Jesse loads up his son with gifts and sends him to work. He sends him to Saul.
- And David came to Saul and entered his service. – it's not clear if David moved into the town because the next story he's back at home again and bringing supplies. So, it seems like the gifts and visit was an initial visit and he was **on call from back home**.
- And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. – Once Saul met David (with no clue about his kingly aspirations or anointing) he fell in love with the kid (in a respect, camaraderie way, not romantically). David was instantly promoted to another role: armor-bearer. A king would have multiple **armor bearers and they served the king as both servants and body guards**. David was super young (if this is chronological with David and Goliath – that story calls Saul 'old' but still calls David a 'youth' so it's confusing when this happened.) to do it, but he must have been gifted for it.
- And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." – Saul seems to be asking the dad for David to stay with him permanently but again, see above for the analysis. I think he was a **permanent employee but on call** from home depending on the season. There wasn't a palace per se to live in at this time since kings were new to Israel.
- And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him. – The bottom line was that David was able to be called upon and knew the gig when needed. **Saul would have an episode** (whether demonic or agitated by an angel) **and David would come and play music** (it doesn't say that it was what we call **worship music**). It could have been any kind of music but knowing that David had a heart for God perhaps he flowed in that groove). God would take the agitation away from Saul when David played (another way to endear David to Saul according to plan). Saul would feel better and the harassment would stop.
- When God uses bad stuff to draw us closer – It's tricky to talk about what God instigates and doesn't. God will never sin. But **God will use all sorts of things good and bad to draw His kids close to Him and that even means using bad stuff to knock us into desperation**. Is it God forcing a drunk driver

into an accident to get them to get a DUI to hit rock bottom? Maybe. Is it God causing illness so that someone becomes dependent and reaches out to Him? Maybe. Could it be God allowing the enemy to go do what it always wanted to do, so the outcome would happen? Maybe. It's complicated. The bottom line is that God works through all things to get His plans accomplished.

Conclusion

- Self-Improvement – Many of us are doing a lot to make our appearance better and align with the vision we have for ourselves in our heads. That can be really good. But *if the inside is neglected for the outside, we have the cart before the horse. Outside is good but inside is more important.*
- Preparing for the invitations from God – there's no way to read this story during the year of Invitation without realizing that *God called David out of nowhere, but David had done the prep to be ready to be used. Have we done that?* Or if God tapped us on the shoulder would we need to go get ready internally to handle it? It's our job to be alert and ready for our commanding officer and not distracted or lazy with our own lives.