

1st Samuel 16

Verses 1 - 5

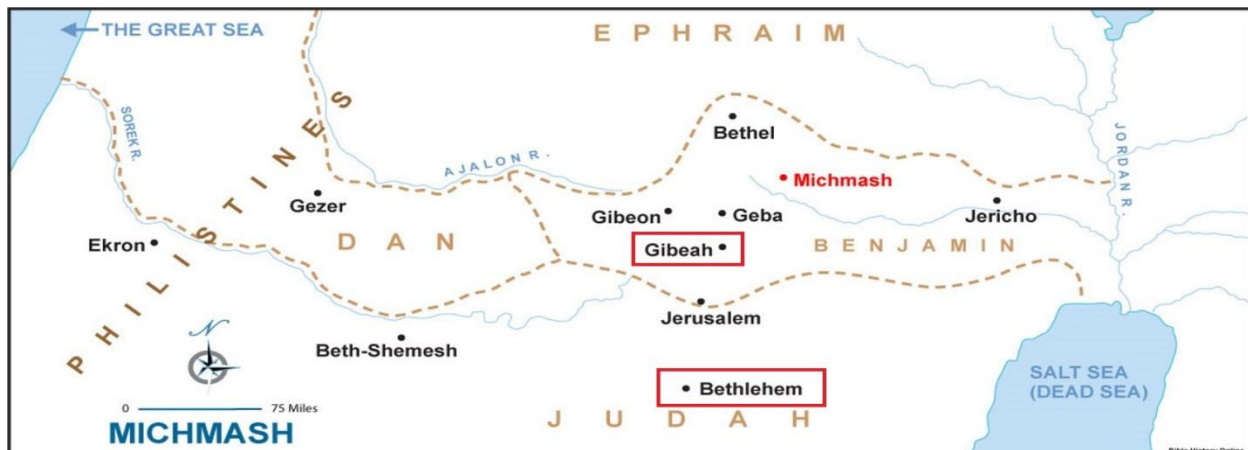
Now the Lord said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, because I have chosen a king for Myself among his sons.”² But Samuel said, “How can I go? When Saul hears *about it*, he will kill me.” But the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’”³ And you shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.”⁴ So Samuel did what the Lord told *him*, and he came to Bethlehem. Then the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in peace?”⁵ And he said, “In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

Now the Lord said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, because I have chosen a king for Myself among his sons.

Samuel truly cared for Saul and didn't want to see him fail but it was time to move on.

The first king of Israel was from Gibeah in Benjamin and the second will be from Bethlehem in Judah.

See map 1605



David was the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth. The events that took place in the Book of Ruth occurred around 1110 to 1100 BC. David will become king in 1010 BC. These two events are separated by 100 years.

² But Samuel said, “How can I go? When Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” But the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’” ³ And you shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.”

God gives Samuel a solution to this dilemma. However, the solution sounds like a deception because the sacrifice was a ploy to hide the truth about why Samuel was really there.

There are numerous excuses that commentators use to justify the action taken here but none of them are satisfying. Here are a few examples.

1. “No man, in any circumstances, should ever *tell a lie*, yet in all circumstances he is not obliged to tell the whole truth”.
2. Samuel was under no obligation to publish the whole object of his mission, and therefore, by the counsel of the Lord himself, he prudently conceals his chief design. In this there was no falsehood, no deception.
3. This was strictly true; Samuel *did offer a sacrifice*; and it does not appear that he could have done the work which God designed, unless he had offered this sacrifice.

None of these “solutions” are satisfactory explanations for this dilemma.

Is there a better explanation? You can be the judge.

Using deception to save one’s life supersedes the command not to tell a lie. However, one has to be careful not to misuse this principle. Telling a lie to take advantage of others or to avoid a truth that reflects poorly on your reputation is not life or death.

⁴ So Samuel did what the Lord told *him*, and he came to Bethlehem. Then the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in peace?”

Why might the elders be concerned?

1. God might be sending Samuel to pronounce a judgement on them or the city.
2. If Samuel is coming to anoint a new king, they might incur Saul's wrath

Verses 6 - 11

⁶ When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is *standing* before Him.” ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God does not see as man sees, since man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass before Samuel. But he said, “The Lord has not chosen this one, either.” ⁹ Next Jesse had Shammah pass by. And he said, “The Lord has not chosen this one, either.” ¹⁰ So Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.” ¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are these all the boys?” And he said, “The youngest is still left, but behold, he is tending the sheep.” So Samuel said to Jesse, “Send *word* and bring him; for we will not take our places at the table until he comes here.”

⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God does not see as man sees, since man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

It is a little ironic that God tells Samuel not to look at the outward appearance but when He picked Saul to be king the text said the following.

See 1 Samuel 9:2

² He had a son whose name was Saul, a young and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome man than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.

God will also choose David and what does the text say about him? See verse 12.

Now he was reddish, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance.

The writer makes a good point about not judging people by their appearance but the message is diminished somewhat because the facts don’t seem to coincide with the message.

¹⁰ So Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel.

David had not appeared before Samuel yet so we know Jesse had eight sons.

However, in 1 Chronicles 2:13-16, only seven sons are named.

¹³ and Jesse fathered Eliab his firstborn, then Abinadab, the second, Shimea, the third, ¹⁴ Nethanel, the fourth, Raddai, the fifth, ¹⁵ Ozem, the sixth, and David, the seventh. ¹⁶ Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail.

Perhaps one of Jesse's sons had died.

¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the boys?" And he said, "The youngest is still left, but behold, he is tending the sheep." So Samuel said to Jesse, "Send *word* and bring him; for we will not take our places at the table until he comes here."

Someone had to watch the sheep and who better than the youngest of the boys.

Verses 12 - 13

¹² So he sent *word* and brought him in. Now he was reddish, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." ¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

Even though his brothers saw David being anointed, they don't seem to have understood its meaning. After the anointing, no one acts like David is King or that he will become the King.

Perhaps God did not allow his brothers to understand the implications of this act so that Saul would not here what took place at this gathering.

The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David

In the very next chapter David will kill Goliath who had humiliated the King and all of Israel for 40 days.

Then during the next 10 years David will be on the run from King Saul for 10 years but always find a way to outsmart Saul and his army.

More than any other king of Israel, David had to earn the kingship by going thru numerous trials and even then it took another 7 years to be king over all of Israel.

Verses 14 - 23

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the Lord left Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrified him.

¹⁵ Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrifying you. ¹⁶ May our lord now command your servants who are before you. Have them search for a man who is a skillful musician on the harp; and it shall come about whenever the evil spirit from God is upon you, that he shall play *the harp* with his hand, and you will become well." ¹⁷ So Saul said to his servants, "Now select for me a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me." ¹⁸ Then one of the young men responded and said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a valiant mighty man, a warrior, skillful in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him." ¹⁹ So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, "Send me your son David, who is with the flock." ²⁰ And Jesse took a donkey *loaded with* bread and a jug of wine, and *he took* a young goat, and sent *them* to Saul by his son David. ²¹ Then David came to Saul and attended him; and *Saul* greatly loved him, and he became his armor bearer. ²² So Saul sent *word* to Jesse, saying, "Let David now be my attendant for he has found favor in my sight." ²³ So it came about whenever the *evil* spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play *it* with his hand; and Saul would feel relieved and become well, and the evil spirit would leave him.

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the Lord left Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrified him.

We will find out shortly that this evil spirit comes and goes so it seems unlikely that this is similar to the demon possession that we see in the N.T. times.

¹⁸ Then one of the young men responded and said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a valiant mighty man, a warrior, skillful in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him."

Here David is a valiant mighty man and a warrior but in the next chapter Saul will say that David should not fight Goliath because he is only a youth.

Also in David's reply to Saul he does not claim any military experience but rather some amazing exploits in killing a lion and a bear while watching his father's sheep.

This is why we know that the events in verses 14 thru 23 must take place in the future.

There is more proof for this conclusion in verse 21.

²¹ Then David came to Saul and attended him; and *Saul* greatly loved him, and he became his armor bearer. ²² So Saul sent *word* to Jesse, saying, “Let David now be my attendant for he has found favor in my sight.”

Could Saul love David and made him his armor bearer and then in the next chapter not know the name of David’s father?

See 1 Samuel 17:55 - 58

⁵⁵ Now when Saul had seen David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is this young man?” And Abner said, “By your life, O king, I do not know.” ⁵⁶ And the king said, “You *then*, ask whose son the youth is.” ⁵⁷ So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine’s head in his hand. ⁵⁸ Then Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?” And David answered, “*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

²³ So it came about whenever the *evil* spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play *it* with his hand; and Saul would feel relieved and become well, and the *evil* spirit would leave him.

The right kind of music can sooth the soul and put a person at ease.