

1 Samuel 16 v 1-13: Chosen to be King

In the 21st century, obscene amounts of money are spent on image, on *looking* good. Alas, a fine appearance can at times mask less than wonderful thoughts and ambitions. What is on the inside is far more crucial than the outside image!

The descendants of Abraham through Jacob, twelve tribes of them, have settled in the 'promised land' of Canaan. After a period of God being their 'king', administering protection and justice through a series of 'judges' like Samson and Gideon, the young nation is moving into a period of monarchy guided by 'prophets', spokesmen for God.

The first prophet, Samuel (whose memorable calling by God while still a young boy is recorded in 1 Samuel 3), anoints the first king. Saul is both patriotic and on occasions heroic, but lacks self-confidence and worse, is careless about obedience to God.

So God sends Samuel to anoint a successor, David, youngest son of Jesse from Bethlehem. David is elsewhere described as a man 'after God's own heart'. Not infallible, he has nevertheless always been regarded in Israel as one of their finest and favourite kings. He is the author of the famous 23rd 'Shepherd' Psalm. He gives Israel their capitol city Jerusalem, wise judgement and leadership for forty years and famously in chapter 17 of this book, while still a youth, he kills the Philistine giant Goliath!

This passage is perhaps most famous for verse 7: 'Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart.'

Jesse had eight fine sons but God chose the one with the pure heart most loyal to Him to be the leader of His people!