

Samuel Chooses a New King

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Most people know who King David is, but not many know how he actually became king of Israel. In fact, although most of the people in Israel didn't know it, David had already been chosen as the new king before the young man fought Goliath! The original story is recorded in 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

The first king of Israel was a man named Saul.
In all the land
he was the tallest and most handsome.
He looked like a good king should,
like a powerful king should,
like the kind of king the people wanted...
but he turned out to be a bad king
who wouldn't do what *God* wanted.

Finally God said, "Enough is enough!"

He told the prophet Samuel,
"Go and choose a new king,
a king who will rule My people
as I Myself would rule them
if I sat on the throne of Israel.
Go to the town of Bethlehem,
to the house of Jesse;
the man I have chosen lives there.
And carry a horn full of olive oil with you
so you can make him king right then."

But Samuel said, "Saul will be angry
when he learns what I've gone to do.
He'll kill me before I get to Bethlehem!"

"Saul doesn't need to know," God said.
"Take with you a young cow that has never borne a calf;
use it to make a sacrifice to Me there.
Invite Jesse and his family to join you,
and I will show you which of them
will be My new king."

So Samuel left his home in Ramah
and went to Bethlehem
where he learned that Jesse had a very large family!

One by one, Jesse's sons came in.
The first was Eliab, tall and handsome,
and Samuel said to himself, "This must be the one!"
But God said no.
"Men look at the outside," He said,
"but God looks at what a man is on the inside."

Then the next one came...
but God said no.

And the next...
but God said no again.

Seven sons came to stand before Samuel
and seven times God said no.

Then Samuel asked, "Have you any more sons?"

"Well, yes," Jesse said, "there's my youngest son
but he's out in the field tending sheep."

"Well, send for him now!" Samuel said.
"We can't go ahead without him!"

So the youngest son came. He was redfaced but handsome
with eyes that were wide and friendly.

His name was David and, the moment he arrived,
God said, "Yes, Samuel! This is the one!"

So Samuel pulled out his horn full of oil and,
right there in front of David's older brothers,
he poured the oil over David's head
and they all felt the Spirit of God come over him.

Then Samuel went back to his home in Ramah.
And the new king of Israel?
He went back to tending sheep.