

October 26

Scriptures: Read 1 Samuel 16

Key Verse: “For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Overview

From the time of Samuel’s pronouncement of God’s rejection of Saul, the process began which led to his personal downfall. God’s Holy Spirit was taken from upon him, and he lost favour in God’s sight. He became alienated from God and from Samuel, who mourned for him as though he was dead (15:35). In fact, Saul’s spirit, which had once been alive, was now dead because of hardening his heart against God.

The condition of Saul worsened and he became mentally unstable. In Hebrew thought, both good and bad things that happened to anyone were attributed to God; therefore, Saul’s affliction was called “a distressing spirit from the Lord” (16:14). This was actually because the Lord allowed Saul to be troubled in such a way. Since God’s Spirit was no longer upon him to strengthen and empower him in body, mind, and spirit, and since Saul had rejected God, he opened himself up to attacks from the enemy, Satan. Mankind has an innate need for a relationship with God, but when there is alienation from God, mankind suffers.

God was raising up another man, one after his own heart, to replace Saul as king, so His plan of salvation might be accomplished. David was God’s chosen instrument. When the time came for Samuel to anoint David, it had to be done in secret so that Saul might not know of it. Samuel’s concern and fear of Saul’s jealousy and violence was later proven to be well-founded (18:10-11; 20:33). The purpose of Samuel’s trip to Bethlehem therefore had to be concealed, especially since Saul would have no doubt heard about it, because the road from Samuel’s home in Ramah to Bethlehem passed right through Saul’s hometown of Gibeah.

When Jesse’s sons were presented to Samuel, he naturally thought that the mature, tall, and handsome eldest son, Eliab, would be God’s choice for king. God instructed Samuel, however, that He does not look on the outward appearance as man does, but rather He looks at the heart. The choice was to be totally from God and Samuel was faithful in heeding God’s voice. When the youngest son, the shepherd boy David, the most unlikely candidate, was presented to him, Samuel immediately knew he was the one to be anointed. This was to be Samuel’s last official act. God saw that David had a pure heart that longed after Him. What does God see when he looks at our heart? For all of us, this should be the most important matter of concern.

The anointing of David symbolized God’s Spirit upon him which would prepare, guide, protect, and empower him to be a great king under God. In the providence of God, David received further preparation for his kingship, for Saul ironically and unknowingly invited his own replacement into the royal court to be his personal musician in an attempt to soothe his troubled spirit.

David was honoured by God because he gave honour to God. He was greatly blessed, for through him the Messiah was to come. David, the anointed future king whom God had chosen for the salvation of Israel, typified our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s chosen One, the Anointed coming King, who would accomplish God’s plan of salvation for the whole world.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for looking on the heart and not just the outward appearance. You know that our hearts long after You. We rejoice in Your presence this day for You have cleansed our hearts from sin and Your Holy Spirit is upon us.