

## 1 Samuel (Sh'mu'el Alef)

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### Chapter 16

**1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul,<sup>1</sup> seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?<sup>2</sup> Fill thy horn with oil and go; I will send thee to Jesse (Yishai)<sup>3</sup> of Bethlehem (Beit-Lachmi)<sup>4</sup> for I have provided me a king<sup>5</sup> among his sons.<sup>6</sup>**

**2 And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul understands it, he will kill me.<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said, Take a heifer with thee and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.<sup>8</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel liked Saul, in spite of his mistakes. There were things about his personality that engaged him, possibly the memory of Saul's humility at the start when he was first anointed to be king. He had attached to Saul, quite willing to support him as the king.

Samuel had the capacity for natural affection, but he also had the example of Eli and his sons to show him that natural affections must not supersede the love of righteousness and loyalty to God.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel needed to detach from Saul and transfer his loyalty to the new person who God was going to indicate as the next king.

<sup>3</sup> David was descended from a woman of Moab. By the modern definition of a Jew, Israel's most famous king was not a Jew. In modern times, Jewish lineage is attributed to the mother, the reason being that a woman can lie about who the father is. It is also to compel Jewish men to marry Jewish women, if they want their children to be recognized as Jews. God, however, shows in His choice of David as king, that any descendent of Jacob, whether through their mother or their father, is legitimately an Israelite.

Modern DNA testing can erase the doubt about a person's genetics, and determine their eligibility to live in the land of their father Jacob, but there are probably billions of people who have a trace of Jewish ancestry, so there has to be some criteria for determining who can live in Israel. After all, it's a very small nation geographically.

<sup>4</sup> Carefully chosen birthplace of both David and Yeshua, for the root of Jesse, the Bread of Life (Yeshua) was to come from the House of Bread as a prophetic sign.

<sup>5</sup> Saul was provided for the people, to exalt the tribe of Jacob/Israel among the nations. David was provided for God, to do His will and glorify Him among the nations, particularly in bringing through David's lineage the Saviour of the world.

<sup>6</sup> God knew in advance the bad choices that Saul would make, so He had sent another soul into the world whom He knew would fulfill this call faithfully. This new person would be in line with the promise made to Judah that his descendents would rule the tribes and the Messiah would be from his lineage.

By giving the kingship first to Saul, God demonstrated that anyone was eligible for great honours, if they fulfilled the conditions, regardless of their tribe or ethnicity. Saul had his chance. His lineage could have merged with Judah's. In fact, it almost did, when Saul gave Michal to David for a wife, but Saul reneged on it and gave her to another man, whom she loved more than she loved David.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel is the prophet of God and he exercised his authority to rebuke Saul, when necessary, but he knew very well that Saul would kill him, if he did not appear to support his kingship. Saul probably had set spies around Samuel, to see who he visited, and what he did there, for Samuel had told him that God had chosen another man

**3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice,<sup>9</sup> and I will show thee what thou shalt do,<sup>10</sup> and thou shalt anoint unto me the one whom I name unto thee.**

**4 And Samuel did as the LORD said and came to Bethlehem.<sup>11</sup> And the elders of the town trembled at his coming<sup>12</sup> and said, Comest thou peaceably?<sup>13</sup>**

to replace him. He would have accused Samuel of treason, if he knew of him anointing someone else to be king, and he would have tried to kill that replacement before he could garner any support.

<sup>8</sup> It wasn't paranoia on Samuel's part. God confirmed that there was risk and told him how to allay Saul's suspicions. Also, it was fitting to offer a sacrifice for this event of anointing a new king, though it was not a public anointing and David didn't know what it was all about.

<sup>9</sup> Jesse was probably not the chief man of Bethlehem. It would be only reasonable to invite the chief to attend this ritual and eat dinner in his home, but God had to specifically tell Samuel to invite Jesse to the sacrifice. The chief probably would not need an invitation. He would attend the feast anyway.

Jesse was of sufficient standing that Samuel either knew who he was beforehand, or the townspeople would know who the Jesse was that Samuel was looking for. He would, at the very least, be a prominent man who sat in the city gate to judge cases.

Even if Jesse was not the chief, he probably was known to be a very godly man, which would make it a natural choice to invite him to the feast and visit his home. Also, Boaz had been connected to raising lambs for sacrifice, and this was passed on down through the family. Seeing as he was a religious man, it would not seem unusual for Samuel to seek the hospitality of one who was involved in this ministry.

When Jesus was born, it was in the birthing stable for these special lambs. Mary was sent there because women were considered unclean when they were giving birth, due to issuing of blood, so she was not allowed to give birth in Boaz's (later Jesse's) guest quarters where normally she and Joseph would have stayed. It could not have been where birthing women were sent normally, but probably the only place available because of the huge influx of visitors to Bethlehem at that time. It was a prophetic sign that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

<sup>10</sup> God gave Samuel the first step and told him to trust Him to tell him the next step. A lot of times, God doesn't give us the whole plan, but leads us only one step at a time, into the darkness of uncertainty, but the light is there to lead to the next step when the first step is taken. It is an exercise in trust.

<sup>11</sup> **H1035**

**בית לחם**

be<sup>^</sup>yth lechem

bayth leh'-khem

From H1004 and H3899; **house of bread**; Beth-Lechem, a place in Palestine: - Beth-lehem.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel had great credibility because of his faithfulness to the Lord, and how God subsequently backed him up. He had advised Israel on how to conduct battles that turned out successfully, and a storm had arisen on a sunny day, when Samuel had beckoned it at the Lord's command. This man was a kingmaker, also. He had great authority and power, and the Bethlehemites probably wondered if he had come to rebuke them and lay some penalty upon them. Samuel had probably visited other towns before to straighten them out.

It was much to their credit that they trembled. They did not pride themselves as so righteous as to be above reproach. They feared the Lord and His prophet. They did not disregard Him.

**5 And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons<sup>14</sup> and called them to the sacrifice.<sup>15</sup>**

**6 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab (Eli'av) and said, Peradventure is the LORD's anointed before him?<sup>16</sup>**

**7 And the LORD replied unto Samuel, Do not look on his countenance or on the height of his stature because I have refused him,<sup>17</sup> for it is not as man sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**

**8 Then Jesse called Abinadab (Avinadav) and made him pass before Samuel.<sup>18</sup> And he said, Neither has the LORD chosen this one.**

**9 Then Jesse made Shammah<sup>19</sup> to pass by. And he said, Neither has the LORD chosen this one.**

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<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, it may have been noted that Samuel didn't visit Saul or confer with him, as before, and astute people may have discerned that there had been a break between them. In which case, was Samuel there to stir up insurrection? The Bethlehemites might have been fearful of bringing down Saul's wrath on their city.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel personally oversaw the ritual cleansing of Jesse and his sons.

<sup>15</sup> It was a great honour for the prophet to come to their town, and a great honour to particularly invite Jesse and his sons. He probably went to Jesse's house to eat with them, in a private room. This would not be considered strange. Jesse's grandfather had been a wealthy and prominent man; they were probably the foremost family in Bethlehem. God must have prospered them more since Boaz's time, in preparation to give Israel a new king that they would accept more readily because he was from a prominent, reputable family. The story of Boaz and Ruth, though, would not have become so well-known, if David had not become king.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel was expecting a replay of Saul's selection, a man who looked kingly, who would appeal to the aesthetic tastes of the Israelites, but God had used Saul to demonstrate that, just because a man looks like their concept of a god, it doesn't necessarily mean that he will turn out to be a good ruler.

<sup>17</sup> Ironically, Eliab, whom God refused, refused David when David showed up to take down Goliath. He would not have been a good king. He was judgmental and short-sighted. He thought he knew his little brother well, based on David's rambunctiousness. He thought David had come to see the battle out of youthful curiosity, probably because David had been a lively, curious boy. He did not recognize that David's curiosity, and his excitement about engaging in battle, were qualities that God could use in a king.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel must have told Jesse that he came to anoint one of his sons, but I doubt that Samuel specifically told Jesse why his son was to be anointed. If Jesse had known that David was to be king, he probably would have treated him with more care and respect, but he seems to have treated him afterwards the same as ever, as young boy who needed to be kept out of the way.

This was probably the best way to go because, if Jesse treated David differently than before, it would have indicated to Saul's spies that David might be his rival. Also, if Jesse was called in for questioning, it was safer for him to not know that David was chosen to be the next king.

Samuel might have said that he was just anointing David for a life of consecration to the Lord, which one might infer that he was to be a prophet some day. After all, Samuel would be expected to have a successor. His brothers would be sufficiently incredulous to think of their little brother becoming a prophet that they would continue to treat him with disdain, thereby quenching any suspicion that they expected him to be made king. David was indeed a prophet/king.

<sup>19</sup> It was these three oldest who joined Saul at the Valley of Elah for battle, so Shammah was probably 20, and the other four boys between them and David were younger than 20.

**10 Again, Jesse made his seven sons pass before Samuel,<sup>20</sup> but Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD has not chosen these.<sup>21</sup>**

**11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are all thy young men here?<sup>22</sup> And he said, There remains yet the youngest,<sup>23</sup> and, behold, he keeps the sheep.<sup>24</sup> And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send for him, for we will not sit down to the table until he comes here.<sup>25</sup>**

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<sup>20</sup> Three of the other four are named in 1 Chronicles 2:14: Nathanael, Raddai, and Ozem. The other one may have died young.

<sup>21</sup> The other young men were probably not as tall or good-looking as Eliab, but Samuel is listening intently for the Lord's direction, willing to anoint any one of them, regardless of their stature or looks. He has informed Jesse that he has come to anoint one of his sons, but he may not have told Jesse, at that time, specifically what the Lord was choosing one of his sons for.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel is puzzled. God told him to anoint one of Jesse's sons, but none of the seven are whom God chose. He knew he had heard God, though, so there had to be one or more who were missing. Even if he was a baby only a few hours old, he should have been present, but young children were not considered to be as important as older people.

<sup>23</sup> David was probably not more than 16. When Jesse sent his sons to join Saul at the valley of Elah, he sent only his three oldest, though there was a national emergency. That means that the youngest of the three was probably twenty, just barely the age when young men were allowed to be soldiers.

There were three more sons between that one and David, so, unless they were twins or sons of other mothers (but the Bible does not indicate the latter), they would be no more than 19, 18, and 17. If David was born right afterwards, he would be only 16, but he may have been even younger.

My guess is that he was 15, or even 14, because of how his older brother spoke to him, like he was a bothersome, little brat. On the other hand, Josephus said that David was ten, and maybe he was right, but that would have made Michal much older than him. Still, older women have gone for very young men sometimes, and she was a princess who could get what she wanted.

<sup>24</sup> As Matthew Henry pointed out in his commentary, David means "beloved" and this was a foreshadowing of how God would send His beloved Son to be our Saviour.

Also, in keeping with the Messianic type, David was not considered of enough importance to include in such an important religious activity, just as the Pharisees were appalled that they were overlooked by God for the performance of miracles, whereas a carpenter was chosen for that ministry. They envied Jesus, and David's brothers very likely envied that he was singled out to be anointed by the most important prophet that Israel had since Moses.

David was not considered by his family to be of enough importance to call because he was maybe only 12 or 13 at this time. They probably thought he was a spoiled brat, a bit of a mischief. They had sent him out to the fields to settle him down and get him out of their hair. They certainly didn't want him around to embarrass the family with youthful antics when the prophet was their guest.

David was possibly also sent off to the fields to get him away from their eldest sister Zeruah, whom I think mothered him, as eldest sisters are inclined to do with the baby of the family. She had a fierce temper and probably came down pretty hard on her brothers, if they picked on David, but the sons probably all ganged up on their father and said he had to do something about the little brat.

**12 And he sent<sup>26</sup> and brought him in.<sup>27</sup> Now he was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance<sup>28</sup> and handsome.<sup>29</sup> And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he.<sup>30</sup>**

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I liked McLaren's commentary, which stated, "Probably the lad had the usual lot of genius,-to grow up among uncongenial, commonplace people, understanding him little, and liking him less. It is a hard school; but **where it does not sour, it makes strong men.** His solitary shepherd life taught him many precious lessons, and, at any rate, gave him the priceless gift of solitude, which is the nurse of poetry, heroism, and religion."

McLaren's commentary highlights that fact that David made a good choice about how he chose to respond to his family's slights. He did not let them make him bitter.

<sup>25</sup> Jesse probably had no idea why Samuel wanted to meet all his sons, but when he insisted that they would not sit down to eat, until he had seen ALL his sons, the reason for the feast, and Samuel's selection of his family to eat with, started to gain more importance.

<sup>26</sup> I like to think of the scene of David being in the fields, looking after the sheep, like any ordinary day. He probably did not even know that Samuel had come to town. He is just doing his usual thing when one of the servants comes running up to him. David must have wondered why he was running.

It is exciting news. Samuel, the great prophet, has come to Bethlehem. Not only that, he is dining with David's family and Jesse wants David to attend the meal! Wow! David is used to being pushed aside by his father and brothers. It was probably his mother who named him Beloved; it was no big deal to his father to have yet another son when he had seven already.

To David, Samuel's visit was likely more precious to him than to any of his brothers. He had zeal for God, which was probably lacking in his siblings. At any rate, David had the most, which is why God chose him to be the king. He is really excited to get to see Samuel. He may not have even known, at this point, that Samuel asked especially for him to be there.

He would have been so happy to just be close to Samuel, and maybe get to touch him, to get some of his anointing. But just think of it; he's going to get more than that. Samuel has brought a horn full of special oil and it's all going to get poured onto David. And David's heart is going to burn within him more than ever, and a greater boldness for battle than he has ever known, which, in his heart, he knows it goes beyond what he would normally be capable of, if he hadn't had that anointing.

<sup>27</sup> David must have had to go through the ritual cleansing, too, and Samuel likely sat and observed him, at first, seeing only a handsome child, and wondering if he has misheard the Lord about this errand. Israel needed a good king, and Samuel went to Bethlehem assuming that he would be an adult. He didn't realize that it would take a long time before Saul was replaced, because God was going to give Saul space to repent of his wilfulness so that, even if he missed out on having a dynasty and had to deal with a tormenting spirit, his soul could be saved.

<sup>28</sup> The Hebrew said that he had beautiful eyes, probably large and long-lashed.

<sup>29</sup> David was reputedly short, but he probably had a face like an angel in his youth. Ruddy doesn't mean rosy cheeks, though he had a beautiful complexion. It means that he had red hair. It was not foreign to Abraham's seed. Esau and Joseph had red hair. David probably had big, fat red curls, which added to his attractiveness; not frizzy hair, and he would have had a lighter complexion, rather than swarthy, unfreckled and clear. It is unlikely that he was subject to sunburn, as many redheads are, for David had to spend a lot of time outdoors, but it did not cause his looks to deteriorate. Painters would have gone crazy over this kid to paint his portrait. We know he was a skinny, wiry youth, as Goliath called him a stick.

**13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him<sup>31</sup> from among his brethren;<sup>32</sup> and the Spirit of the LORD prospered David from that day forward.<sup>33</sup> So Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.<sup>34</sup>  
14 ¶ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul,<sup>35</sup> and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.<sup>36</sup>**

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He probably had a straight nose that was not large, he had beautiful lips, high cheekbones, a firm chin, straight, white teeth, and thick, curly hair, glowing skin, and he had large, sparkling, long-lashed eyes. These were considered beautiful by his culture. The fact that he was so good-looking probably enabled him to get away with a lot when he was a little kid, except from brothers, who are never impressed with a little brother's looks, especially if he gets away with a lot.

David probably had natural grace of movement, considering his creative, musical ability.

<sup>30</sup> Regardless that he had been a spoiled, little brat, God knows what goes on in every child's heart. David had sensitivity to God. He was curious about God, open to learning more about Him, he wanted to be a good boy who was pleasing to God, he was tender-hearted, readily making pets of the lambs, and when he was sent away to the fields, because he was such a people person, he felt so lonely that he turned to the Lord for company, and developed a deep relationship with Him there.

If he dared to share his insights about God that he had learned at his young age, most people probably didn't listen and take him seriously, because they would have thought he was too young and flighty to know about deep stuff. If they didn't think about such things themselves, they probably saw no practical value in what David wanted to share with them.

<sup>31</sup> David's brothers may not see him being anointed. It would seem that Jesse brought each son into a private chamber where Samuel waited to oversee their ritual cleansing. As far as they knew, the cleansing ritual is all that went on there. Possibly only Jesse knew that David had been anointed, though he may not have known entirely for what purpose.

On the other hand, maybe they did see him being anointed, for it has been said that the Hebrew used for sitting down to dinner (they sat on chairs at the table, in those days) was that they would not turn around and sit down, until the youngest son joined them.

So, David's brothers may have witnessed the anointing, thinking it was for some limited task that would take place in the future, as Samuel did not state why he was anointing David. He was musical, so they may have thought it was for a musical ministry, which to their minds, would not be such a big deal. In any case, if only Jesse witnessed the anointing, the brothers would take their father's word for it that it happened.

<sup>32</sup> I don't think that David knew right away that Samuel was anointing him to be the king. That might have endangered his life. He probably told him that he would do mighty deeds for God.

<sup>33</sup> David probably was good at slinging stones before this, but the anointing upon him would have made him an excellent marksman, enough to be considered extraordinary for one so young. The sheep he was looking after probably became healthier under his care, as well as easier to manage, and some people took notice of his exploits in defending his sheep, such as the man who described him to Saul as a mighty warrior, though he was only a boy. He possibly also received presents from people who had not bothered with him previously.

The anointing has helped David to be more attentive to the Lord and able to hear Him more clearly, increasing him in wisdom and knowing how to answer people, as well as to inspire him creatively.

<sup>34</sup> Samuel went to Ramah, but the Bible does not say that David went with him. Some commentators think that David went to Samuel's school of the prophets from time to time.

**15 And Saul's slaves said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God<sup>37</sup> troubles thee.**

**16 Let our lord now command thy slaves, which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on a harp, and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt have relief.<sup>38</sup>**

**17 And Saul said unto his slaves, Provide me now a man that can play well and bring him to me.**

**18 Then one of the servants answered and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem, that is cunning in playing and a mighty valiant man and a man of war and prudent in speech<sup>39</sup> and handsome, and the LORD is with him.<sup>40</sup>**

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<sup>35</sup> Saul was now no more than like an ordinary, earthly king, having to depend upon his own wits to rule. He must have known that he was now missing the favour and abilities of God. Things didn't neatly come together, as they did before. He had to make things happen. Anxiety multiplied.

<sup>36</sup> A sense of condemnation was on him. He knew he had blown it with God and there was no turning back the clock. Even if he served God with all his heart from then on, none of his sons would remain upon his throne. He should have served the Lord with all of his heart, regardless of the penalty laid upon him, but Saul was petulant. He refused to bend to the discipline of the Lord. He became depressed, jealous, and paranoid. His rebellion against God opened him up to demonic oppression and the Lord allowed him to be afflicted in his emotions, to weaken him. It hindered his judgment, so that he would make irrational decisions, and not maintain a cool head when trying to eradicate David.

<sup>37</sup> Evil does not come from God, but when a person is to be judged, God will command an evil spirit to trouble the person. Saul was not allowed to continue on his merry way. If he was going to ignore God's commands, God wanted him to be reminded that the way of transgressors is hard. Even in this, there is mercy. It is so that the person will tire of their self-centred ways and repent. They may not recover what they lost of their inheritance, but their soul may still be saved.

<sup>38</sup> He needed someone who was anointed by God to play music, to drive the evil spirit off and keep its distance. It wasn't ordinary music that was required, but music that gave thanksgiving and praise to God.

<sup>39</sup> Even as a youngster, David had charm and good sense in how to talk to others. He had good sense about not being presumptuous. He had healthy self-esteem, which is very engaging, as well as a proper sense of modesty, rather than a false humility. Being prudent also means that he knew how to stay in the background and let others have their proper place and share of attention, but also he knew when to step forward when his skills were needed.

<sup>40</sup> God had brought David to this young man's notice. The word used indicates that he was not one of Saul's officers, but a young man. He knew that there was a boy who was mightily anointed of God, so much so that he was a warrior already, though but a youth. David had not been in any battles with men, but he had killed a bear and a lion with his bare hands. As far as this man was concerned, the boy was a man, and by describing him as a man of war, he let Saul know that, though David was beautiful, he was not merely decorative nor the type of boy who would welcome sexual attention from men. Saul would not have to fear that bringing David into his court would give people the impression that he had developed an attraction to boys.

Best of all, the Lord was with this young boy. The things he undertook prospered under his hand. Like Joseph in Potipher's house, David was likely to be a blessing to Saul's house. He would have been, if Saul had not let jealousy take root in his heart and drive David away.

This young courtier may have been a guest in Jesse's home and been there the day that either the bear or the lion was killed, and seen the carcass, stayed for supper, and heard David play on the harp for the family after dinner, and heard him sing with his beautiful voice. David probably looked and sounded like an angel. He was a talented,

**19 Therefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse and said, Send me David, thy son, who is with the sheep.<sup>41</sup>**

**20 And Jesse took an ass laden with bread and a bottle of wine and a kid and sent them by David, his son, unto Saul.<sup>42</sup>**

**21 And David came to Saul and stood before him; and he loved him greatly,<sup>43</sup> and he became his armourbearer.<sup>44</sup>**

**22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me, for he has found favour in my sight.<sup>45</sup>**

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graceful, well-mannered, wise-hearted boy who would be an ornament to the court. This man was able to see what David's brothers overlooked.

<sup>41</sup> A message was sent that probably surprised the household. David had been singled out to attend the king at court, though he was so young. If anything was to come of Samuel's anointing, Jesse likely thought that it would be at some time far off in the future.

<sup>42</sup> Jesse sends a gift that seems to signify that he is willing to sustain the king. It was not considered polite to come before a king without a present. A donkey, a loaf of bread, one bottle of wine, and a little goat does not seem to be impressive, considering these gifts were offered to a king, so it must have had symbolic meaning. Jesse is saying, "I am sending, not only my son to play music for you, but anything else you need to sustain you is but yours to ask." Of course, the king would have appeared to be crass, if he had taken this too literally and tried to exact more from Jesse than what was proper, and it does not seem that Jesse had great wealth, but rather was just comfortably well-off.

<sup>43</sup> Saul did not entertain the slightest suspicion that this boy would become the next king. Like Samuel did at first, Saul probably assumed that David was too short and skinny to be chosen by the Lord to be king. He found him attractive in his person and in his manners, as well as talented in music, and sensitive to his moods, and having a lovable, lively personality. All this made him want to have him around. At this point, he could not imagine that this lovable, young teen would ever be anything other than one of his satellites.

<sup>44</sup> Saul is so taken with David's beauty and graceful replies to his questions, so he is admitted to the ranks as a page who polishes Saul's armour and follows him around carrying his shield, looking beautiful and adding to the pageantry of the court in this manner. Saul has plenty of people around him, though, grown men with whom he talks, so David became just an accessory to him, whom he did not give much thought to, as he had more pressing things on his mind.

This position, though, fixed Saul in David's mind as the Lord's anointed, as he observed Saul's regal bearing, his duties, and the honour given to him by his servants. One day, he would be king. He didn't know it, just then, but he would know that, if he was a king, he would want his subjects to submit to his authority, so he upheld Saul's authority as far as possible, planting seed towards his own reign through his loyalty to Saul.

It's pretty much the same attitude as a good employee. A good employee works his job as if he owned the business, rendering the kind of service that he/she knows that they would want from an employee, if they were the owner of the business.

<sup>45</sup> Saul acknowledges Jesse's rule over David, particularly since David is so young and it is the responsibility of his parent to train his character in his youth, so he courteously asks Jesse for permission to keep him at court. It could be that it rankled David's older brothers that the baby of the family, whom they had bossed around, had found favour with the king, and it might, at some later date, put him in a ranking position above them.

**23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed and was better,<sup>46</sup> and the evil spirit departed from him.<sup>47</sup>**

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<sup>46</sup> David must have been greatly appreciated by everyone in the court, even if they didn't know his name. When Saul was in an ugly, unreasonable mood, they must have hurried to get David in there to play some music. I can almost hear people saying, "Get that boy who plays the harp!" They probably told him to stick around close by Saul at all times.

It wasn't just his talent, though, that soothed Saul. It was because David worshipped God from his heart, and the evil spirit in Saul couldn't stand that.

Each time that David played, as long as Saul let his soul flow with the Spirit of God in the music, he could taste of God's beauty and goodness. It was bait on a hook, to bring him to God. Just because God sent that evil spirit to afflict Saul, it doesn't mean that he could not ever get rid of it. He was being given a choice to either embrace God's spirit, or the evil spirit.

Saul eventually embraced the evil spirit, allowing jealousy to take over his soul, and then he turned to the occult as a source of spiritual power. He could have had it so good, with Samuel as his counsellor, but he drove Samuel away with his egotism and self-will. He didn't want Samuel telling him what to do. When he finally realized that he needed Samuel's counsel, that he needed Samuel to tell him what to do, it was too late.

<sup>47</sup> The affliction of the evil spirit served the purpose of bringing David to court, so that he began his education in the court at this young age, and was introduced in this way to some of the people there, to get them used to him.