

# Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 10, 1 Samuel 15-16

© 2024 Robert Chisholm and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 10 on 1 Samuel 15-16. Saul Forfeits His Throne, The Lord Chooses a New King.

In this lesson, we'll be looking at 1 Samuel 15 and 16. In 1 Samuel 13, we saw that Saul, because of his disobedience, forfeited his dynasty.

Here in chapter 15, he's going to forfeit his throne, and the Lord will announce to him that he is going to be removed eventually from his position as king. So once again, disobedience can deprive one of the special privilege granted by God. So, the chapter begins, Samuel said to Saul, I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel.

So, listen now to the message from the Lord. So, there's a reminder that the Lord has authority over the king. And so, Saul just needs to remember it was the Lord who chose him to be king and anointed him as king, and so Saul is subject to the Lord's authority.

This is what the Lord Almighty says. And then the NIV translates, I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. That is a possible translation.

The Net Bible has, I carefully observed how the Amalekites opposed Israel along the way when Israel came up from Egypt. In the Hebrew text, the verb form actually is perfect, which often indicates completed action. It's possible that it could refer to something that the Lord is going to do, I will punish, with some certainty behind it.

But it may simply be saying that the Lord in the past has visited literally or observed what has gone on. But it's clear that the Lord wants to punish the Amalekites for what they did to the Israelites when the Israelites came out of Egypt. And so the Lord says, now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them.

Do not spare them, put them to death, men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys. That sounds pretty severe. So, we need to stop and talk about this a little bit.

First of all, what did the Amalekites do to justify this kind of punishment? Well, if we go back to Exodus chapter 17, we see that the Israelites were traveling through the wilderness and the Amalekites saw that they were tired, and exhausted, and the Amalekites attacked them ruthlessly. The Lord allowed the Israelites to win a victory

that day, but the Lord also said that he wanted the Amalekites destroyed for what they had done. And in fact, we read in Deuteronomy chapter 25, verse 17, Moses writes, remember what the Amalekites did to you on your way from Egypt, how they met you along the way and cut off all of your stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired.

They were unafraid of God. They had no fear of God. And I think that may be part of the problem here for the Amalekites.

They are a people characterized by no fear of God. So, when the Lord your God gives you relief from all the enemies who surround you in the land, he is giving you as an inheritance, you must wipe out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven. Do not forget.

The NIV translates that you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget. So, they had attacked the Israelites and because they had no fear of God and had this kind of attitude toward God's people, the Lord decreed that he wanted them wiped out as a people.

And of course, this is problematic. When we read in 1 Samuel 15, what the Lord essentially tells Saul to do is wipe them out, man, woman, child, right down to the infants, totally destroy them. That's genocide.

And so, some people would look at this and say, the God of the Bible, the God of love would never command anyone to do this. Of course, the Lord told the Israelites to do the same thing to the Canaanites. So, we seemingly have a problem here.

But there are a couple of factors we need to take into play. You're never going to come to grips with this emotionally, I don't think. The image of destroying a people entirely.

At an emotional level, you're never going to feel comfortable with that. But we can't go on the basis of emotion sometimes. We have to look at things as God looks at them.

And in this particular case, the Amalekites had committed a heinous sin against him and his people. And God is in a different category than we are. It would always be wrong for us to commit genocide, to destroy man, woman, child, and babies, because we don't have the authority to do so.

But who is God? God is not just another human being. God is God. He's in a different category.

There's a category distinction that we have to make here. God is the creator. He is the one who creates life.

And all life comes from him. And therefore, as the source of all life, he has authority over everyone. And as the creator, can decide to take away a life that he gave.

See, we don't have that authority because we don't give life. We are not the creator. And so, God is unique.

And God can decide that you're going to forfeit your children. I gave you those children. All children are a blessing from God.

They're a gift from God. And God can decide to take away his good gifts if he so desires. He does this with Israel on occasion.

He said because you're worshipping Baal because you're worshipping this false Canaanite fertility God so you can have a lot of babies, guess what? I'm going to take your babies away from you. That seems harsh, but God has the right to do that. So we need to remember who God is.

He's the creator, the giver of life, who has every right to take away life when he deems that just. Also in the Old Testament, God thinks very corporately. We tend to not do that.

We tend to focus more on individuals. But in ancient Israelite thinking and in God's thinking, he often thinks in terms of a group. Our doctrine of original sin is really a corporate kind of doctrine.

We sinned in Adam. It's our connection with Adam that makes us sinners. We have no right to object to God.

Well, I wasn't there in the garden. I didn't eat the fruit. I deserved to be in a different category from Adam.

No, we're connected to Adam. Biologically, we are connected to Adam, and like it or not, the consequences of his sin come to us because that's the way it works corporately. In our culture, we think corporately sometimes, but not in this area.

For example, being a sports fan, I'll use this example. Let's say we go back to a little bit in the history of the NBA and the Chicago Bulls have won another NBA title, and they're lined up getting their championship rings from Commissioner Stern at the time, and they're in their black and white uniforms, and all of a sudden Charles Barkley and Patrick Ewing, remember them? They were great Hall of Fame caliber players who never won a championship ring because the Bulls were winning all of

them. And let's say they get in line with their uniforms for their teams on, and they come up to Commissioner Stern and hold out their hand looking for a ring, and what's Commissioner Stern going to say? What are you guys here for? You're not wearing the black and red.

You have no right. You have no right to a ring. This is about the corporate entity.

This is about the team, and they might object, yeah, but Bill Wennington and Judd Buschler, you know, these relatively minor players who were not even close to the ability of Ewing and Barkley, they're getting rings, so why shouldn't we? And Commissioner Stern would have to say it's not about the individual, fellas. You guys won awards, but this is about the team. Or it'd be like going into work, and you discovering that the company's gone under, and you demand that your office be opened, and you be allowed to continue to work because you got an A-plus rating as an employee last year, and you don't deserve to lose your job.

You were a really good employee, and so the company should stay open and pay you. No, no, no. It's not about you, the individual.

It's about the entity, the corporation, and so we can understand the corporate way of thinking. It's just that we don't typically think this way when it comes to morality, and right and wrong, and judgment and punishment. We tend to see that as individualized, but God sometimes looks at people groups.

Israel is his chosen people. The Amalekites were the enemies of Israel, and God views them as a corporate entity, in his thinking as the creator, the giver, and taker of life, he decrees that he wants them wiped out. He does not want any more Amalekites on the face of the earth.

Amalekites breed more Amalekites. He wants them gone, and I know that sounds harsh, and as I say it, I kind of go like this, but it's the reality from God's perspective, and so he tells Saul, we need to do something about this. Another problematic dimension of this is that these Amalekites lived long after the time of Moses, and so what we have are later generations of Amalekites that are going to be punished for the sins of their ancestors, and we tend to not think that way.

After all, the Old Testament law says don't punish a child for the sins of the father. Nevertheless, there are many places in the Old Testament where God does just that. In fact, I wrote an article on that recently for Bibliotheca Sacra Journal.

I'll put in a plug for that when God punishes the children for the sins of the fathers. You can find it in that recent issue of BibSac, as we call it, so I've thought about this subject some. There are plenty of places in the Old Testament where the children are punished for the sins of the father.

God doesn't want humans doing it in human courts, but he himself, as the creator, the giver and taker of life, can sometimes decree that the children will be punished for the sins of the fathers, and that's what's going on here. And by the way, as we read through the account and we get down into the story, we discover that these Amalekites that were living at this time are no different than the Amalekites from Moses' day, because we get down to verse 18, and Samuel reminds Saul, he sent you on a mission, go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites. So, they are still wicked people, and this is often the case.

Cultures get corrupted in this fallen world, and one generation just passes on to the next all of the corruption that it possesses, and so the Amalekites continue to be enemies of Israel, a wicked people. So, Saul looks as if he's going to be obedient. He summons his army, goes to the city of Amalek, he sets an ambush, but before he does this, he wants to warn the Kenites.

Who are the Kenites? Verse 6. They are people who showed kindness. In contrast to the Amalekites, they showed kindness to Israel when the Israelites came out of Egypt, and so Saul wants to warn them. He says, go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them.

They lived close to the Amalekites, and the Israelites, and when they launched the attack, they may not have time to figure out who's a Kenite and who's an Amalekite. So, Saul warns the Kenites, you need to get out of town for, so to speak, for a bit because we're going to attack the Amalekites, and we don't want any of you people to die during this attack. So, you can see the Lord is making a distinction here between the Kenites and the Amalekites based on their attitude toward Israel.

So, Saul attacks the Amalekites in verse 7, and in verse 8 he takes Agag, king of the Amalekites, alive. That's a problem right there. He was told to wipe everybody out, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword.

So, Saul makes one exception here. He keeps the king, Agag, alive. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs, everything that was good, they were unwilling to destroy.

That's very important. They were not willing to do what God had told them to do. They were unwilling to destroy completely.

So, it's an act of the will on their part, no confusion. But everything that was despised and weak, they totally destroyed. So, we're okay with this ban on the Amalekites' livestock, as long as it's the sickly ones.

But we're keeping the good ones alive. Well, this doesn't look good, and you might expect trouble to follow. So, the word of the Lord came to Samuel in verse 10, and notice what the Lord says, I regret.

I regret that I have made Saul king. It's almost as if the Lord is saying, I wish I hadn't done that, which of course creates problems for our view of divine omniscience, because the Lord knew this was going to happen. I think this is more of an emotional response on God's part.

I, at an emotional level, feel the kind of regret that human beings feel when something just doesn't go according to the ideal. I regret. I don't think it implies that God didn't know that this was going to happen.

I regret that I have made Saul king at that emotional level. I'm going to have to get some water here. Excuse me.

There, that's a little better. It's always good to get lubricated because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions. Samuel was angry.

It doesn't tell us who he was angry at, and he cried out to the Lord all that night. But I have a hunch Samuel was upset with Saul, too. There's no indication that he was angry with the Lord.

He was just upset at the situation. And he cries out to the Lord. There's no indication that he was interceding, trying to get the Lord to change his mind.

It may have just been a cry of pain and lament. So, Saul's sin has brought God to the point of regret, Samuel to the point of anger, and I think sorrow. So early in the morning, Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, and he was told, this is interesting, Saul has gone to Carmel.

There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal. So, Saul is thinking pretty good thoughts about himself here. He's setting up a monument to honor himself.

He's come a long way from the hesitant Saul that we saw in earlier chapters. It's all about Saul now. Look at me, what a great victory I won.

Well, Samuel reaches him and Saul says, the Lord bless you. I have carried out the Lord's instructions. Saul seems to think that he's been obedient.

And I think Samuel's response is humorous. What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear? So, Saul is basically saying, I obeyed the Lord. We wiped them all out, man, woman, child, right down to the animals.

And Samuel is saying, well, why am I hearing sheep and cattle then? So, Saul answered, the soldiers brought them from the Amalekites. They spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest. I think there's a little more to it than that.

But notice again, Saul, true to form, what is he focused on? Ritual. Religious ritual. You know, I decided Samuel to freelance a little bit here.

The Lord wants everything wiped out, but I thought it would be better if we saved the very best and did a super duper sacrifice to the Lord. Wouldn't he like that? What we're going to discover in this chapter is you don't freelance with the Lord. When the Lord tells you he wants things done a certain way, you do them.

You don't try to improve upon God's command and God's will. Well, I got a better way. I got a better thought about this.

No, no, no. The Lord expects radical obedience right down to every detail. Enough, Samuel said to Saul, verse 16.

Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night. Tell me, Saul replied. Samuel said, although you were once small in your own eyes, remember when he was chosen, when Samuel first chosen, he said, who am I? Little old me from little old Benjamin, from our little old family.

Who am I? Did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. Another reminder of the Lord's authority over him. The chapter began this way.

He sent you on a mission saying, go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites. Wage war against them until you have wiped them out. What is unclear about this? Total destruction.

They are a wicked people. I have declared that they should no longer be alive on this earth. Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord? Well, Saul's not ready to agree with Samuel yet.

In his thinking, he did what was right. But I did obey the Lord, Saul said. I went on the mission the Lord assigned me.

I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag, their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle. Now he's bringing the soldiers in here.

The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal. He's slipped the soldiers in there now, just in case. Needs to cover himself.

And Samuel is going to reply to that argument. And he asks the question, does, verse 22, does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? This is a very important principle that we see in the prophets. Isaiah 1, classic text.

The Israelites are bringing sacrifices to the Lord, and the Lord says, I'm fed up with them. Up to here, I'm up to here in sacrifices. I want obedience, not sacrifice.

When you're disobedient and you bring sacrifices, it just adds one sin to another. Hypocrisy to disobedience. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

There is a place for sacrifice in the Old Testament, but sacrifice is not the Lord's primary concern. Obedience is. This is a classic text.

It's obviously the key theme in this passage. Samuel goes on, for rebellion, so he's suggesting what you've done is a rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance is like the evil of idolatry. What you've done is, it's as bad as divination and idolatry.

You might as well worship another god because you have rejected the word of the Lord. He has rejected you as king. See the correspondence there.

You reject the Lord, he rejects you. You rejected the word of the Lord, he's rejected you as king. Then Saul said to Samuel, well, he realizes he can't win this argument, and he says, I have sinned.

So, he admits his sin. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions, and now we discover a new fact here. I was afraid of the men, and so I gave in to them.

Makes me wonder if the men really wanted to just offer a sacrifice, or if they wanted to keep some of this livestock for themselves, but Saul was afraid of them. Kind of a la Aaron, you know, when the Israelites put the pressure on him, and he threw all the gold into the fire, and lo and behold, out came this calf. Now I beg you, forgive my sin, and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.

He's still obsessed with worship, and he begs for forgiveness, and he wants Samuel to endorse him, so he can worship the Lord. But Samuel says to him in verse 26, I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel.



He repeats that. Just in case you didn't hear Saul, listen. Then Samuel turns to leave, and Saul catches hold of the hem of his robe, and it tears.

Samuel turns to him, and these prophets are always ready to teach a lesson. They're always ready for teaching moments. This is one of those, and with his robe torn, Samuel is going to make a point.

He's going to use it as an illustration. Samuel said to him, the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel. Just as you've torn my garment, the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors, to one better than you.

At this point, we realize, well, this neighbor, this one better than you, is probably the same as the one who was referred to earlier as the man after God's own heart, but we don't yet know who this is. In this particular case, we're going to learn who it is pretty quickly, in the next chapter, that kind of goes hand in hand with this. So, he who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind, for he is not a human being and he should change his mind.

Now, it's interesting because the verb used here is used many times in the Old Testament, where God does, as it were, change his mind. He relents. In fact, Jonah says to God in Jonah chapter 4, I knew this would happen.

I knew that Ninevites would repent, and you would let them off the hook and not judge them because that's the kind of God you are. You are the kind of God who typically changes his mind, who relents from sending judgment when people repent. In Joel chapter 2, you see this affirmed as well.

The prophet characterizes God as one who typically changes his mind. There are many cases where God does just that. He relents.

Changing his mind may not be the best phrase, because it suggests that God is uncertain, but he changes his state of intention. He alters that in light of repentance. So, which is it? Does God typically relent, or does he not relent? Some people will take a passage like this and trump those other texts with it.

I don't think that's correct. I think we need to look at contexts. Typically, God will relent.

That's the kind of God he is. He's a forgiving God who's merciful, and when people repent, he will relent from sending the judgment upon them that he warned them about. In fact, prophecy is often designed to move people to repentance so that God will be able to relent.

So, God relenting doesn't mean that he's unchanging, or a changing God. No, he is unchangeably merciful, and to be that kind of God, he has to relent. But there are times when people cross the line, and then God decrees that judgment is coming, and he will mark those kinds of statements with a statement like this.

I am not a man that I'm going to change my mind. It's not going to happen. Human beings will change, but there comes a time I'm willing to alter judgment and relent from judgment, but sometimes I decide, no, it's too late for that.

And when he does that, he'll say something like this, and in this particular case, no, in this situation, it's not going to be like a human being who would relent. I am not changing. It is decreed.

You are not going to be king anymore. So, Saul replies at that point, I have sinned. He admits it again, but please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel.

Come back with me, so I may worship the Lord your God. He's still obsessed with this worship, although notice he's not asking for forgiveness at this point because I think he realizes Samuel just marked the judgment speech as unconditional and irrevocable. He understands the implications of that, but he still wants a favor from Samuel.

So, Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord, but Samuel had something else on his mind. Samuel said, bring me Agog, king of the Amalekites. Notice that Saul doesn't go and say, I better kill Agog.

I sinned, so I better do something about that. No, no, no. So, they bring Agog to him.

He's saying, surely the bitterness of death is past. He thinks he's going to be spared, but Samuel sees it as a matter of justice. Your sword has made women childless.

You evil Amalekite, you have murdered people, and so your mother is going to be childless among women. And Samuel puts Agog to death before the Lord at Gilgal. So, there's a tragic story.

With some important lessons that we see as Saul forfeits his throne. Disobedience can deprive one of a special privilege granted by God. Same lesson that we saw in chapter 13, that we saw with Eli.

Another important lesson in this is the Lord places greater priority on obedience than he does religious formalism, and that's important to remember. It really is. I remember a time when I and some other leaders in the church went to confront a

woman who had been unfaithful to her husband, and she said, don't you guys start preaching at me.

I have my devotionals every day. Well, sorry. Devotionals, that's kind of religious formalism.

It does you no good if you're blatantly disobeying the Lord, violating the Lord. So, obedience, not sacrifice. God puts priority on obedience, not religious formalism.

And when God announces judgment unconditionally, irrevocably, he will not alter his decree. Fortunately for us as sinners, so often he is willing to relent when we repent. But for some, there comes a time when it's too late.

And we see that in this particular passage. Now Samuel gets up and leaves for Ramah. Saul goes to his home in Gibeah, and the text says that until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again.

And Samuel mourns for Saul, and the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king. So, Saul's sin has brought great grief to Samuel, and it's brought regret to the Lord. The Lord did mention, however, that he had a replacement in mind for Saul, a neighbor, one who is better than Saul.

And we're going to meet him in chapter 16. So, 1 Samuel 16, the Lord chooses a new king. And we're going to see that the Lord is going to give priority to inner character, not outward appearances, as he chooses this new king.

So, in chapter 16, the Lord says to Samuel, how long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? This has been going on long enough, but we need to move ahead. Fill your horn with oil and be on your way. The implication seems to be oil, that is for anointing.

We're going to anoint a new one. I'm sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.

But Samuel said, how can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me. And what you need to realize is the trip will take him right through Saul's town. And so, questions might be asked.

As I've said in my commentary on this, the Teach the Text commentary on 1 Samuel, to complicate matters, the 10-mile trip from Ramah to Bethlehem would take the prophet right through Gibeah. And so how is the Lord going to respond to this? If I go through, they're going to ask me questions. What am I supposed to say? I'm on my way to anoint a new king.

They'll kill me. So, the Lord said, take a heifer with you and say, I've come to sacrifice to the Lord. So, this is deceit.

Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate. So bottom line, the Lord says, just tell him you're going to offer a sacrifice, which is true, but it's not the whole truth.

And this is deceptive. And so it may make you wonder, well, what's with that? Does the Lord endorse deception sometimes? And the fact is that he does. There's a really good book by Matthew Newkirk called Just Deceivers.

In this book, Newkirk studies the theme of deception in regard to God. He looks at each passage in its context and tries to develop some principles for when we realize that deception is negative, and on other occasions, it's neutral or maybe even positive. The fact of the matter is that God sometimes uses deception as a form of judgment and that sometimes individuals can forfeit their right to the truth because of their immorality.

And so Saul is a would-be murderer, and he has forfeited his right to the truth. He has disobeyed God, and so the Lord sees nothing wrong with deceiving him and depriving him of the truth. But if you want to read more about that whole theme and see it studied very, very thoroughly, and I think in a convincing fashion I endorse the book for Matthew Newkirk, I would recommend that book to you.

Matthew Newkirk, Just Deceivers. So, Samuel did what the Lord said, and when he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. There's something scary about Samuel.

Prophet comes. Is he coming to announce some kind of judgment? Are we in trouble? And they asked, do you come in peace? And Samuel replied, yes, in peace. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord, just as the Lord told him to say.

Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me. Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. So, what we're doing here, we're auditioning for a new king.

And when they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord. He sees Jesse's son Eliab, and he's tall, he's impressive-looking, like Saul. And so, Samuel is thinking that way.

Samuel is thinking about outward appearances. And notice what the Lord says to him in verse 7. But the Lord said to Samuel, do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at.

People look at the outward appearance. And actually the Hebrew text says, Look at the eyes. But the Lord looks at the heart, what's on the inside.

People look at what's on the outside, specifically the eyes in this case. The Lord looks at the heart. So, a different standard here than what was used when we chose Saul.

I think when the Lord chose Saul, he just decided, Well, I'm going to discipline the people through Saul because of their wrong motives in asking for a king. And I'm going to choose the kind of king that they would choose. Not this time.

Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. Samuel said The Lord has not chosen this one either. Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, Nor has the Lord chosen this one.

Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to him, The Lord has not chosen these. So, he asked Jesse, Are these all the sons you have? Well, they're still the youngest, Jesse answered.

He's tending the sheep. Samuel said, Send for him. We will not sit down until he arrives.

I've got to see every one of your sons. So, he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

In fact, the text says he was ruddy with beautiful eyes and a good of appearance. Then the Lord said, Rise and anoint him. This is the one.

So, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. And from that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. But let's go back to this description.

Why does the storyteller, the narrator, the author, right after hearing the Lord say, I look at the heart, not the eyes, why, when David arrives on the scene, does he say this? I would have expected him to say, David was a man after God's own heart. David was one who had a heart pure before God. And that's what God saw.

No, no. It's like, have you been listening, storyteller? Well, yeah, I've been listening. I'm the one who told you the story.

He focuses on David's eyes as if he didn't hear. Well, he did hear, obviously. He's the one who told us all this.

So, what's going on here? I think people have had different opinions on this, and some of them are quite funny. Some will say, well, yeah, God looks at the heart, but he doesn't want an ugly king either. I don't think that's what's in view here.

Or some people would say, yeah, God looks at the heart, but the outward appearance, David's impressive features, and his good looks are a sign of divine blessing. I think they're missing the point. I think what the narrator is doing, there's something foreboding about this.

And I think Walter Brueggemann, in his writings on Samuel, has captured this the best I've seen. David is a man after God's own heart, and that's what counts with God. But David has some qualities that make him attractive in the eyes of people.

And people may look at David the wrong way. In fact, David's fine appearance could be a problem and a temptation for him someday. There's a tension here.

David is a man after God's own heart, but he's also very good-looking. And as a good-looking person, he may be susceptible to pride and the power that goes with it. And I find it very ironic when he sees Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11.

She is described in a way beautiful of appearance that pretty much matches the way David is described here. And so I think this is the narrator's way of saying, yeah, God is making the choice on the basis of what he sees inside David. But you need to realize that David has a lot of human qualities that are attractive and could cause people to gravitate to him for the wrong reasons.

And if he gets focused on some of that, he himself could run into trouble. So sometimes your strengths that God has gifted you with can be a problem if you allow them to become weaknesses. I think it's more along those lines here.

There's a tension that the narrator is introducing. But Samuel anoints David as the king. The spirit comes powerfully upon David to energize him.

Because if you're going to be a successful king in the Old Testament, you have to have the spirit of the Lord. Now Saul had the spirit, but he wasn't following the lead of the spirit most of the time. So, notice what happens in verse 14.

Now the spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. So, what the Lord does is he takes his spirit from Saul, and now he gives it to David, and in place of his spirit, he sends an evil spirit upon Saul to torment him. The usual assumption is that this evil spirit is some kind of demonic entity, and it may be.

But it isn't necessarily that if you look at the Hebrew. It's because the word that's translated evil can sometimes be, ra'ah, can sometimes be used for calamity and judgment, disaster, that kind of thing. So, it might just simply be that this spirit is sent to accomplish that in the experience of Saul.

In other words, he's a spirit sent to judge, a spirit sent to bring judgment. It wouldn't necessarily imply that the spirit itself is evil. It is sent to bring calamity and disaster upon Saul.

So, we're not really sure what's going on with this spirit here. I think it would be wrong to just assume that it's a demon. But at any rate, the spirit has been sent as an agent of God's judgment against Saul.

That's the main point here. And then in the verses to follow, and we're going to have to move quickly here, what happens is this spirit is tormenting Saul, and so one of his attendants says, we need to get somebody who's good at music, somebody who can play a lyre, and when the evil spirit comes upon you, we can play that music and calm you down. And so Saul says, yeah, that sounds good.

Why don't you find someone who can bring me this peace when I get tormented by this spirit? And then one of the servants says, well, I've seen just the guy, a son of Jesse of Bethlehem. He knows how to play the lyre. He's a really good musician.

David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, in the Psalms we have plenty of music that he wrote. He's a brave man, and he's a warrior. Now he may be speaking a little prematurely here.

Later when David meets Saul in the next chapter, you get the impression that he's pretty much of a shepherd. He wasn't called to the battle as a warrior like his brothers were. So, this may be a little proleptic.

It may be anticipating things, but what we do discover in chapter 17 is that David has demonstrated great bravery and prowess in a warrior-like fashion. He's killed lions and bears with his hands. He's killed lions and bears when they've attacked the sheep.

So maybe he hasn't actually faced off against a Philistine yet, but hey, I'm going to put money on him if he can take out a lion or a bear. I think he'll do all right against the average Philistine soldier, or maybe the not-so-average Philistine soldier, as we'll see. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man.

See, there it is again. And the Lord is with him. So Saul sends messengers to Jesse and says, I'd like your son David to come and serve me.

And so, David enters into Saul's service. And what we see here is Saul likes him very much. He becomes one of his armor-bearers.

But nevertheless, we discover in chapter 17 that David kind of operates this way. He works for Saul as a part-time lyre player and armor bearer, but there are occasions when he goes back home to Jesse. And chapter 17 tells us this.

Some scholars see a contradiction. They see different accounts of how David met Saul. We'll talk more about that when we get into chapter 17.

But in this particular case, David sometimes goes home. So, what the author is doing, he's basically saying Saul has been rejected by God. He has forfeited his throne, chapter 15.

God has taken his spirit away from him and brought in this evil spirit, the spirit that's going to bring judgment upon Saul. In the meantime, he's chosen David as the new king, placed his spirit upon David, and now what we see God doing providentially is bringing David to Saul into the proximity of the royal court where the Lord can launch David's career. And so God is working to promote David's interests and to bring Saul down.

But the next chapter that we'll be looking at is chapter 17 in our next lesson, probably the most famous chapter in the books of Samuel, David, and Goliath, and certainly one of the most famous chapters in the entire Bible. It's a long chapter and we'll be looking at it in some detail and I'll be saying some things that might be new in your understanding of it. I don't think it's a case of a little underdog defeating a big powerful giant as much as it is a wise servant of the Lord who trusts the Lord to help him execute skills that the Lord has already given him.

But more on that in the next lesson.

This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 10 on 1 Samuel 15-16. Saul Forfeits His Throne, The Lord Chooses a New King.