

I Samuel 16: A Day of Small Beginnings

Introduction

David's life is one of the most typologically significant lives in whole of Scripture. David is a new Adam, Jacob, Moses, and the father of the Son of David: Jesus. In this series I hope to show two things: First, David's life opens important vistas on the beauty of Christ and the shape of redemptive history. Second, the typology of these David stories are very practical, they instruct us as we seek to form our own world according to the pattern of the Scriptures.

- Theological approaches that are highly systematic have often treated the text as a repository of abstract theological truths that need to be organized and arranged in a logical way. Once this task is complete the assembled theology safely floats in "mid air" safely insulated from the problems and challenges of everyday life.
- On the other hand a kind of Historical Redemptive approach to theology sees great significance to the stories of scripture, showing how the unfolding work of God in history culminates in the person of Christ. This approach can often get so enamored with finding Christ in all of the nooks and crannies of Scripture that the task of showing how that typology informs and shapes our world is neglected.
- In Scripture type and antitype are not given to simply give us a mental buzz. They are meant to be the lens through which we read our own lives. Typological interpretation teaches us to see our world in light of the Biblical world. Our lives should be formed by Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David.

The Text

Then it came about when they entered, that he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of His stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." I Samuel 16:1-13

A Rejected King

The story opens by reminding us that Saul had been rejected from being king. Saul is Israel's first king, but in an important sense he is also a kind of last king. Like Israel who repeatedly rejected the Lord's word and seeks a king like all the other nations, Saul is a king who comes to embody the sins of his people (I Sam. 13:13; 15:22-23). He is a kind of Adam, who is given great gifts, but who comes to great ruin because he does not heed the word of the Lord.

- Rather than waiting for Samuel to perform a sacrifice or fully destroying the Amalekites according to the word of the Lord, Saul was swayed by circumstances.
- Rather than being a new beginning for Israel, Saul comes to the same end as so many of His predecessors. An impressive beginning but a pitiful end.

Man Sees not as God Sees

From this situation God raises up a new king. But the irony is that David, by every detail of this account, is an unexpected king.

- This is a story of surprise. David is not a pathetic weakling, quite the contrary (vs. 12), but clearly no one in the narrative expects him to be the Lord's choice. He is the youngest of eight brothers, disdainfully referred to as the "baby brother," and as such is given a lowly job: tending sheep. He is also overlooked when Samuel invites Jesse's sons to the

sacrifice. In this narrative we don't even know his name until after Samuel anoints him!! Humanly speaking, David's position is insignificant and small.

- Yet the Lord chooses David over all his brothers not because of his social or physical qualifications, but because of his heart. Now, we are not Gnostics, but it is important that we notice what the text says: Samuel favored Eliab because he was tall and had an impressive appearance (like Saul), moreover he was the first-born. But God does not choose him because of these qualities, in fact he is rejected *because* he did not possess what is called elsewhere in Scripture "a hearing heart."
- Physical gifts and abilities are not the whole story. Both Saul and Eliab *were* impressive men with important abilities, but because they lacked hearts which feared the Lord, they were *rejected*.
- Hani's words to Asa illustrate the same point (2 Chron. 16:7-10). Just like Saul, Asa was swayed by appearances rather than the word of the Lord.
- Young people: We live in a day where image is everything. Success is gauged by how much you have, who you know, or how you look. You will look in vain for the world to extol a heart that fears the Lord. But the story of David's anointing provides a startling reminder that all of these things without a heart that fears the Lord leads to disaster. David was the Lord's anointed, because he was a man after God's own heart. This is why Solomon warned his son in Proverbs 4 (with the words of his father David) to "watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life."

A New Israel

David's anointing marks the beginning of a new Israel. David is a new Adam; a king with a new heart leading a new Israel. This beginning highlights three themes that run throughout Scripture and anticipate the Son of David and the new covenant. They also provide important archetypes that teach us about how to see our own lives.

Small beginnings: David's life was insignificant: the youngest of 8 sons, a shepherd, and forgotten by his own family. But he is in good company:

- Noah, Abraham leaving, Jacob serving Laban, Joseph in a pit, Moses spared and floating in a basket, a barren woman's plea for a son (Samuel). The kingdom begins as a mustard seed.
- It is easy to miss the challenge here. Insignificance is never easy. If God has put you in a place that seems insignificant (family, job, opportunities) don't complain or grow bitter at those in a "better" place. Small beginnings are opportunities to give thanks and look forward in faith and expectation to the blessing of God.

The things that are not: Paul says that God has chosen the insignificant and the despised things, the things that are not to nullify the things that are (I Cor. 1:26-31).

- Clearly David's anointing is a story of an insignificant boy becoming the king of Israel (a story that reminds us of Jacob, Joseph, and Moses), but David as a man after God's own heart, obeys the Lord even when it is foolish by worldly standards.
- David is continually threatened by Saul and yet continues to "serve" him even in the presence of many opportunities to take vengeance into his own hands (at his followers' urging). Like Jesus, who refused Satan's temptations to a crossless victory, David waited

patiently for the Lord to exalt him. Emphasize the seeming foolishness of this!!! Such obedience makes no sense to the natural mind.

- Paul says that you have to become a fool to enter the kingdom of God, but the foolishness doesn't stop there. Serving your boss, putting others first, and refusing to praise yourself is not the way to a promotion in the world's eyes, but it is what pleases the Lord.
- The Lord's ways are not our ways and he blesses faithfulness and obedience even when we don't understand or see the desired outcome.

Hearts of Flesh: As we have seen the thing that separated David from Saul was a heart that yearned after the Lord and listened to His word.

- In Deut. 30:1-10 the Lord predicts that Israel would be sent into captivity because of their disobedience, but in the midst of that captivity Lord also promised restoration. At the center of that restoration was the promise of new hearts. "Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live." (vs. 6)
- David, the king after God's own heart, is a type of this fulfillment. Israel is reborn under the rule of a king who wrote in Psalm 40:8, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; thy Law is within my heart." This prefigures the birth of the New Israel under King Jesus whose heart was devoted to doing the will of the Father.
- God's new covenant people are people of tender hearts, hearts of flesh. One of the most evident characteristics of a tender heart is its willingness to receive instruction and respond to discipline. But a tender heart is also patient and willing to endure. David could have become bitter and resentful of the events that followed his anointing, but he endured (not always in silence!) and refused to turn away from the Lord.
- Do not let difficult circumstances slowly harden your heart!! Cry out to the Lord and cling to him! Allow Him to use the thing that is driving you crazy to change you into a man or a woman after His own heart.

Called by Name

The shepherd who is forgotten and uninvited, the nameless 8th son, the king of small beginnings who was chosen for his tender heart, is named and not by accident, *David, the Beloved one*. His name will grow into an epic history accompanied, as it is in vs. 13, by the Spirit of God. The "beloved one" is given the Spirit as a down payment on a promised kingdom. And turning to the NT that promise is finally realized when Jesus, the son of David, is anointed at the beginning of His ministry with the Spirit and pronounced the "Beloved son" of the Father. Through Jesus, the David's day of small beginnings is redeemed and transformed by the Spirit of God into a kingdom that fills the entire earth.