



And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he, I Samuel 16:12.

The Choice of God

Lesson Subject: Christians should realize that God's selection of leaders may not be according to man's standards.

L106. Date: September 1973. **Text:** I Samuel 16:1-13.

Topic: David: Calling of.

Do you believe in a divine call to service? Do you understand what the expression, "divine call" means? A "divine call to service" means that God personally chooses a man to do a particular work for Him, convicting the person's heart so that he has no peace apart from the work which God has chosen. Now look at the question. Do you believe in a divine call to service?

When you think of a missionary's telling of his call to mission work in a particular land, or when you remember how your pastor recounts his experiences which led him into the gospel ministry, you might be constrained to respond, "Yes, I believe in a divine call to special service."

Have you considered how many different areas there are to which God particularly calls people to serve? Of course, God calls preachers and missionaries. Perhaps you know some teacher who testifies to a call of God for the ministry of teaching. The Bible declares each of those to be a valid indication of God's call, but those are not the only areas to which God calls people to minister in His name.

Can you imagine God's calling a man to be a political leader? The "call" is some what different from that experienced by people devoted to strictly spiritual ministries, but today's study clearly records how God selected men who were to be political leaders of the nation Israel.

Today's study aims "to cause one to realize that God's selection of leaders may not be according to man's standards." It teaches believers to

remain totally available to God in order that He may find them ready to do His will at all times.

I. SELECTION

The Lord God is the sovereign of the universe. He is able to work according to whatever method He chooses. He can create by speaking a word, Genesis 1. He can provide food by the fowls of the air, I Kings 17:4. He can provide shelter by the vines of the field, Jonah 4. He can do whatever He chooses. He is the sovereign of the universe.

The sovereign God has chosen to work among men by the agency of men. Therefore, through the ages He has selected certain men to be His representative to other men. That was the basis of the priesthood. This is why He called men as prophets through whom He announced His message. In all generations of human history, God has spoken to men by men. In time past, God spoke to men by prophets; in recent times, He spoke to them by His own Son. Even so, the Son of God was and is Man, a perfect man, of whom it is written “. . . God was in Christ. . .” II Corinthians 5:19.

God chooses certain men through whom he might give a blessing to other men. He chose Abram (later called Abraham) for that purpose; “. . . in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” Genesis 12:23. His is always a purpose which carries a blessing at its heart.

God's selection of men for particular purposes is never sudden not on the spur of a moment. God chose Jeremiah to be a prophet. He explained that such a ministry was purposed for Jeremiah before he was conceived in his mother's womb or had come to the time of birth, Jeremiah 1:5. When God calls you to service, be assured that He calls in view of His long-range purpose because you can receive and become a blessing.

It is against such a background that one should examine the selection of Saul to be the first earthly king over the nation of Israel. It is also against such a background that one should evaluate God's rejection of Saul and choice of David as king.

God's choice is personal; He selects each individually. God's choice is intelligent; He selects in view of one's capacity and His purpose. God's choice is progressive; each worker and each area of work is to move forward the redemptive purpose of God in the world. God's choice is deliberate; He is never hasty about such matters since He knows the end from the beginning. He finds no cause for hurry.

God's choice is sovereign; when He calls, one must answer.

Jesus said, **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and**

ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you,” John 15:16. When God calls one, He does so that he may bring forth abiding fruit in His kingdom. He has opened the door of answered prayer wide open that he may ask for and receive all he needs to be a fruitful servant of God. What a privilege. When He calls one should be ready to reply, “Here am I Lord, send me.” He ought to go when He sends, where He sends, for as long as He sends, and then his life will be a blessing.

II. EXCLAMATION

God used His prophet Samuel to anoint two different kings over Israel. Samuel did not want to do it either time. He hesitated to anoint Saul as king because he felt it was a rejection of himself and of God's rule over Israel. He hesitated to anoint David as king in Saul's stead because he was so sorry that God had rejected Saul as king.

Why did God reject Saul as king over Israel? Very simply, it was because Saul turned from obeying the Lord to a life of rebellion and disobedience, I Samuel 13, 15. When Saul left off obedience to God, his life become confused and disoriented. An evil spirit came upon him as the Spirit of God departed from him. (In the dispensation in which we live the Spirit of God does not depart from any believer.) Finally, in desperation for some information and guidance, Saul sought out a witch for a séance. That act was in such direct violation of God's law that it carried the death penalty. No wonder God rejected Saul as king.

The man selected by God to follow Saul to Israel's throne was not at all the one whom Samuel would have selected. Samuel made a long journey south of Jerusalem to the town of Bethlehem. The Lord had instructed him to seek out the house of Jesse. One of Jesse's sons had been chosen of God to be the future king of Israel.

King Saul was in a murderous mood. The purpose of Samuel's journey was not to be known. Therefore, he chose a heifer for sacrifice and invited Jesse, with all his sons, to attend a ceremony with him. That way King Saul would never know what really transpired.

Jesse had a large family of eight sons. One by one they each passed before the prophet Samuel. The eldest was such a fine young man that Samuel thought surely he must be the one whom God had chosen. God said to Samuel, **“Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart,”** I Samuel 16:7. The same judgment of God was pronounced over

each son: "I have refused him." At last, there was no other son of Jesse to stand before the prophet. **"Are here all thy children?"** he asked of Jesse. The father replied, **"There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep."** (The father never considered it important to have the youngest lad present.) Samuel replied, **"Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither,"** I Samuel 16:11. At last the youngest was brought in. Thus all eight of Jesse's sons stood before God.

The youngest son of Jesse was just a lad. He was red faced and of a "beautiful countenance." The Lord said to Samuel, **"Arise, anoint him: for this is he,"** verse 12. God chose the youngest to be the greatest. Do you know some preacher, teacher, missionary, or other Christian worker whom you are surprised to know that God has called? Then consider First Corinthians 1:26-29, **"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought to things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."**

God knows that success in a spiritual ministry does not depend upon man's ability but upon God's ability. Therefore, He chooses common people to do uncommon things that the glory might all return to God. That is why God's selection of leaders may not be according to man's standards.

III. QUALIFICATION

Consider these statements: "Whom God chooses, He calls. Whom God calls, He qualifies. Whom God qualifies, He uses." Do you agree?

God selected Saul to be the first king over Israel. How did He qualify Saul to be a political leader over the people of God? The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul that very day and God gave him a new heart, I Samuel 10:6, 9. From that time forth, Saul was a changed man. With such an endowment from God, Saul was qualified to be king of Israel. God designated Saul for a great task, but He made him competent in the Spirit to perform that task to God's glory.

God selected David to be the successor to Saul's reign over Israel. David, too, was divinely qualified to that office. How did it happen? I Samuel 16:13, **"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David"**

from that day forward.” The Spirit of God qualifies a man to serve God in whatever place and way He chooses.

God still endows His believing servants with all the qualities that they need to serve Him effectively. The promise of Jesus concerning the divine endowment which is available to you in God's Service is **“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth,”** Acts 1:8. He endows you for service by giving you the dwelling Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, confers upon each believer one or more of the “grace gifts” which are His to bestow. (Read I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4.) According to I Corinthians 12:4-6, the Christian believer is fully and adequately enabled of God for service. (1) The Holy Spirit creates in the believer the capacity for service, verse 4. (2) The Son directs the believer to the place and guides him in the use of his spiritual gift, verse 5. (3) The Father empowers the work and witness of the believer so that fruit results from his testimony, verse 6. All the way through, the sufficiency is of God.

Note this distinction: Though God has always worked among men through His Holy Spirit, there is a difference in the work of the Holy Spirit during the dispensation of law (the times of Saul and David) and the work of the same Holy Spirit in the dispensation of grace (the church age in which we live). An understanding of that difference is essential to a clear appreciation of today's lesson.

The Holy Spirit was personally present in the world during the Old Testament period; however, He did not indwell men permanently as He does now. God promised no Old Testament saint that the Holy Spirit would “abide with him for ever,” John 14:16. The Spirit was free to come upon a man for special service and then to leave him at another point without that marking the man as “saved” or “unsaved.” David's prayer, “. . . take not thy holy spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11) was a proper petition for that time, but it is not valid for a Christian to pray. The ministry of the Holy Spirit changed with His coming in power at Pentecost. From that time forward, the Holy Spirit has maintained unceasing presence with and within each child of God. Having sealed him unto the day of redemption, He never leaves him for a single moment. He sees him safely all the way into the presence of God. What a privilege to live in this day of grace! Do not feel, therefore, that Saul “fell from grace” when the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. It was not a matter of his being “saved” or “unsaved” but of his being used of God or not used of God.

IV. REALIZATION

God works on His own time schedule. Sometimes it seems to man that He works very slowly. Men even tend to get impatient when God does not move according to their sense of urgency.

David was anointed king of Israel. What did he do? He went back and began watching over the sheep again. It was several years after that before David actually sat upon the throne of his nation. There was never any question, through all those years, as to which Israelite would be the next king. God had determined that through His prophet, Samuel. What was decreed simply awaited execution.

David had many experiences between the time of his anointing and the time of his coronation. He killed the giant Goliath who had intimidated the armies of Israel. He was taken into the palace of King Saul to play music to soothe Saul's fits of depression and to relieve his mental illness. He was married to Michal, the daughter of King Saul, and he formed a strong personal friendship with Jonathan, Saul's son. He became a leader of Saul's men when they went out to battle. Finally, he had to flee from Saul because the king sought to kill him. Saul knew David was designated to follow him as king of Israel.

Upon the death of King Saul, the men of the tribe of Judah met David at Hebron and anointed him king over their tribe. The northern tribes set Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, as king over them. War broke out between the house of David and the descendants of Saul. Finally, rebellion in the ranks brought the death of Ish-bosheth, and the elders of the northern tribes came to David to ask him to become king over the entire nation.

At last it was done. Many years after he was anointed by Samuel, David became king over Judah. Seven years afterwards, he became king over the whole nation. God's purpose was fulfilled as expressed through His prophet, Samuel.

It was clear then! When Samuel anointed a red faced, smooth cheeked lad in Bethlehem, men wondered at the wisdom of it. How unlikely a prospect he was to be successful as sovereign king over the chosen nation of God, but the choice was not made by Samuel; it was made by God. God had said, **“. . . the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart,”** I Samuel 16:7.

Do not look down upon any man. You can see only what is on the outside. God can see things in that person which you never dreamed were there. On the other hand, do not close the door of spiritual opportunity to any person. It may be that from the most unlikely prospects God will raise up

His finest witness. Be content to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with each person you can, and leave the rest to God.

Questions

1. What is a divine call to service?
2. To what areas of service does God call men?
3. Why does God not follow our standards in selecting workers?
4. Why has God chosen to work among men by other men?
5. How does John 15:16 speak to you at this point?
6. Why did God reject Saul as king over Israel?
7. How was David selected to become king?
8. What truth is expressed in I Chronicles 16:7?
9. What divine endowment qualifies David to become king?