



READ: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13; 2 Samuel 5:2b (NIV)

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD." 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, but the LORD looks at the heart."

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?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him..." So he sent for him and had him brought in.

He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. 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...

And the LORD said to [David], 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

ENTER THE STORY:

Back to Bethlehem we go to find a new king from Jesse's family. Surely it must be the oldest brother, right? The tallest, the best looking, and the smartest? **NOPE!** It was David, the youngest of all his brothers. He wasn't the tallest, or the smartest, or the best looking, but God wasn't looking for those things. God was looking for someone who loved him more than anything else, and David did. 1 Samuel 13:14 says David was a, *"man after God's own heart."*

God didn't just want another king, God wanted someone to be a **SHEPHERD** for his people, and David was **VERY FAMILIAR** with sheep! After all, it was his job to take care of the sheep every day. Sheep are funny animals, aren't they? They aren't very smart, they are really, really stubborn, they can't protect themselves if predators attack them, and they don't make good decisions when they are hungry.

Does that sound like anyone you know? Of course it does. It's US! We are just like sheep! That is why God needed someone who would be a good shepherd and lead his people the right way. The first king, King Saul, did NOT do a good job, but David would be different. David would love God's people and show them how to worship and follow God.

David was the most famous king in all of Israel's history, but God chose him to prepare the people for an even **BETTER** King that would come much, much later. This King would come from David's own family tree, which means he would come from Jesse's tree. He would fulfill ALL of God's promises to Adam and Eve, and to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and to Moses and David too. He IS the shoot that will come from the stump of Jesse, and when he comes, he will be a Good Shepherd to God's people, and he will love God with all of his heart and show us how to love God too.

Do you know who this BETTER King will be? It's Jesus, of course!

Jesus tells us this himself! In John 10:14-15, Jesus says, *"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."*

Samuel went to Bethlehem looking for a new king...and he found what he was looking for, but this won't be the last time someone travels to this town looking for a new king.

Soon, we will see many people make the journey to Bethlehem: wise men, shepherds and many more, but they won't go to a house or a fancy palace. They will go to a stable outside because this tiny, baby King will be wrapped in swaddling clothes and sleeping in a manger, nestled among the animals. It's not what you would expect for the arrival of the king of the world, but God's way is always *BETTER*!

PRAY: *God, thank you for sending us your Son, who is the Good Shepherd and the perfect king. May we always follow him by loving you with all of our heart. Amen.*