

SAUL'S TROUBLED SPIRIT (1 SAMUEL 16:14-16)

THE DEPARTURE

The Bible tells us that after David was anointed, there was a significant moment in King Saul's life. In 1 Samuel 16:14, it says that "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul." This marked a turning point in Saul's reign, as he lost God's favor and guidance.

To understand the importance of this departure, we need to go back to Saul's anointing as king in 1 Samuel 10:6-7. At that time, the Spirit of the LORD came upon Saul, and he prophesied. This confirmed that Saul was chosen by God to be the king of Israel. The presence of God's Spirit showed God's favor and guidance.

David also recognized the significance of God's Spirit. In Psalm 51:11, he prayed not to be cast away from God's presence or to lose the Holy Spirit. David understood the consequences of losing the Spirit's presence.

It's important to note that during Saul's time, the Spirit of God wasn't seen as the third person of the Trinity, as understood in Christian theology. Instead, it was seen as the hand and presence of God Himself. The Spirit's presence represented divine favor, guidance, and empowerment. So, its departure from Saul had a profound impact on his leadership and relationship with God.

THE EVIL SPIRIT

Not only did the Spirit leave Saul, but instead, "an unsettling spirit from the LORD troubled him" (v. 14). In the 17th century, the term "evil" didn't only mean moral wickedness, but also referred to something distressing or harmful. In this context, "an evil spirit" implies a distressing or tormenting spirit rather than a morally malevolent one.

The Hebrew word used for "evil" here is "ra'ah." While it can mean moral evil, it also carries the connotation of adversity or distress. For Saul, this meant profound inner turmoil, anxiety, and emotional suffering. It troubled him and contributed to his mental and emotional instability, impairing his ability to rule effectively.

Saul's servants recognized that the troubling spirit was from God, indicating their awareness of Samuel's previous words to Saul about his disobedience. Their acknowledgment emphasizes the divine nature of the situation and the consequences of Saul's actions, which were evident to those around him.

To calm Saul's troubled mind, his servants suggested finding a skilled harpist to play soothing music. The term "cunning" player simply referred to a skillful musician. They believed that music had the power to influence emotions and provide comfort to a troubled soul.

In fact, scientific studies have shown that certain beats and rhythms in music can impact human physiology through a phenomenon known as "rhythmic entrainment." Music therapy, similar to what was recommended to Saul, is still widely used today for its calming and therapeutic effects.

SAUL MEETS DAVID - 1 SAMUEL 16:17-18

As Saul struggled with tormenting spirits, his servants suggested a remedy which Saul agreed to in 1 Samuel 16:17. Recognizing the healing power of music, Saul gave his consent, leading to a significant encounter that would change his reign.

Verse 18 introduces David, the chosen musician who would play a pivotal role in Saul's life and biblical history. This verse highlights six key characteristics of David:

- **Skillful Playing:** David was described as a skilled musician, proficient in playing the harp.
- **Mighty and Valiant:** David was known for his strength and bravery.
- **Man of War:** David's future as a warrior and leader was foreshadowed.
- **Prudent in Speech:** David displayed wisdom and prudence in his words.
- **Goodly Person:** David had an attractive appearance and demeanor.
- **And the LORD is With Him:** David had the divine favor and guidance of the Lord.

These characteristics foreshadowed David's journey from a humble shepherd and musician to the renowned King of Israel, guided by the Lord.

It is worth noting that there is a rabbinical tradition that presents a more negative interpretation of verse 18, suggesting that the servant who introduced David had malicious intentions. This tradition serves as a reminder that scripture passages can be understood in different ways.

This passage offers valuable lessons for those raising sons, as these attributes can be taught and nurtured from an early age.

DAVID'S ARRIVAL IN SAUL'S COURT - 1 SAMUEL 16:19-20

In 1 Samuel 16:19-20, we see Jesse's involvement in the events surrounding David. This raises questions about his prominence and his relationship to the community. Some rabbinical traditions suggest David's mother may have been Nitzvet, but the Bible confirms that Jesse is his father.

Despite being anointed as the future king, David continues his duties as a shepherd. Jesse sends David to Saul with bread, wine, and a kid, which may have been a customary practice. These verses provide insight into David's early life and the role of his family in Israel's history. It highlights the divine plan that leads David from a shepherd to the throne of Israel.

DAVID'S AMAZING MINISTRY TO SAUL - 1 SAMUEL 16:21-23

David came before Saul with his gifts, gaining his trust and becoming Saul's armor bearer. The role of an armor bearer was to carry and maintain the warrior's weapons and armor, offering support in battle. David's service to the king in his musical and armor bearer roles is not fully documented. However, it is clear that David had full access to the king's life and became a trusted confidant and bodyguard. Saul recognized David's favor and sought permission from Jesse to enlist him into service. David's ministry in music, including playing the harp to calm Saul during the presence of an evil spirit, became essential to Saul's kingdom. David's Psalms continue to bring comfort to many throughout history. David's role as a shepherd musician was crucial to the success of Saul's kingdom.