

1st Samuel Chapters 16 – John Karmelich

1. My title for Chapter 16 is “waiting on God’s timing”.
 - a) One of the difficult things a Christian has to do is learn to discern God’s timing.
 - b) Remember to be a follower of Christ is to submit to His will. A big part of His will is having the patience to work on God’s timing and not ours.
 - c) This leads to the natural question: What is God’s timing? When do I wait? When do I move forward? When I do stand still?
 - d) This gets back to the idea of understanding the concept of “God’s will” for our lives.
 - i) God’s will is not for example lying in bed and praying, “OK, Lord, is it your will for me to get up and brush my teeth today?” ☺
 - ii) God’s response is “I gave you a brain, now use it”.
 - iii) God’s will is for us to:
 - a) Pray “regularly” (to me, that is daily) for God’s will to be done in my life. That is part of the Lord’s Prayer. (Matthew 6:10, Luke 11:2)
 - b) Another part is to “regularly” study God’s word. We study the patterns in the stories and study the direct commands as to how to live our lives.
 - c) We also spend regular time with other Christians. This is to help us be accountable to each other, help us mature each other and work together all for God’s glory, as well as to corporately praise God.
 - d) With that said, we can then do what we want. If we are truly seeking God through these methods, then we can go about our lives knowing we are living “God’s will” by being obedient to his commands.
 - e) The next step is to combine our abilities, our passions with our God-given talents for His Glory. If you are not sure what they are, ask people and ask God. Ask people, “What am I good at?” You may get examples of how you can be of service to God.
 - f) Finally, as we go through life, we have opportunities “open and shut” in front of us. That is another way of discerning God’s will for us.
 - (1) For example, as you study Paul’s missionary journeys in Acts, he rarely got “heavenly messages” as to his next step. Often, he just kept moving and let God worry about the results.
 - e) Which gets us back to the concept of “timing”.
 - i) There are situations in life that simply require patience. Remember that God answers all of our prayers. Sometimes the answer is “no” and sometimes the answer is “not yet”. That is a big part of discerning God’s timing. You may shoot for a spiritual goal and one must wait on God’s timing for that to happen.
 - ii) For example, the pastor of one of the largest churches in California had to work at over 50 different locations with the same flock until God finally gave them a permanent location of their God. God was working with that pastor, teaching him patience. He learned to live on God’s timing and God has blessed him.
 - iii) In today’s lesson, we’re going to read of Samuel and David learning to wait on God’s timing. The verses in this chapter are full of examples of success because they waited on God’s timing and setbacks due to the failure to wait on God.
 - f) This is one of those chapters that are best understood by reading it first. I’ll come back to the topic of God’s timing after I wrap it up. With that said, let’s go to the first verse.

2. Chapter 16, Verse 1: The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel?
 - a) To understand this verse, it might help to look at the last sentence of the last verse of Chapter 15 here: "Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." (1st Samuel 15:32 NKJV)
 - i) Remember that in the original text there were no chapter breaks.
 - ii) Here was Samuel grieving. God had announced awhile back that Saul would no longer be king. Samuel was grieving over that fact. In Verse 1 of this chapter, we have God saying in effect, "OK Saul, how long are you going to grieve anyway? Get over it and let's go anoint the next guy".
 - b) The "why" of Samuel grieving is speculation.
 - i) Most believed it was out of his love for the Nation of Israel. In Chapter 12, Samuel believed a big part of his ministry was to pray for that nation (See 1st Sam. 12:23).
 - ii) Some argue that Samuel developed some sort of affection for Saul. Because Saul was the anointed King of Israel, and Saul failed to be obedient, it grieved Samuel to see what happened to it.
 - iii) Remember the bible rule: "The plain things are the main things and the main things are the plain things". That means here that if the bible does not say why Samuel was grieving, then that issue should not be our primary focus.
 - iv) What should be our focus is what the bible does say: It tells that God wanted to Samuel to "get on with his life" and stop grieving for Saul.
 - c) This leads to the topic of long-term grieving. First of all, the bible is not "anti-grieving":
 - i) "(There is) a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance". (Ecclesiastes 3:4, NIV)
 - a) That means there is an acceptable time period to grieve when one is hurting. At the same time, that time is not meant to go on forever.
 - b) There is a time to "get over it". I saw a great t-shirt message a few weeks back that summarizes this: "Build a bridge and get over it".
 - ii) The exact length of an acceptable grieving time is up to the individual. My point is simply that when one is hurting, one needs to take some time and emotionally deal with it. At the same time, God does want us to get on with our lives. Once we do that, we are no longer focusing or obsessing on our past and getting back to what God called us to do.
 - iii) This is what is happening to Samuel right here. God is telling Samuel, "OK, Sam, enough grieving. I know you're hurting over this. Remember that I called you to be my prophet to Israel and I don't have a retirement plan of you." ☺
 - a) Samuel once tried to "retire" back in Chapter 8 and put his sons in charge. That was a disaster as his sons were not obedient to God.
 - b) I take the view that we are never to truly retire from being a witness for God. Even when we get to the point where we don't have the physical strength anymore. The main purpose of the Christian life is to live it out for God's glory and not ours. We never stop serving him. Even if we can't physically do much, we can still pray or praise God.
3. Verse 1, (second sentence, God is still speaking to Samuel): "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."
 - a) If you remember, the way a new leader was anointed in Israel was to take an empty horn (like a ram's horn) and fill it with oil, and then pour it on the head of the new leader.
 - i) An animal's horn is the source of their power. Thus it is a symbol of power.

- ii) "Oil" is representative of the Spirit of God working in one's life.
 - a) Think of oil as a "lubricant" to make things run smoothly.
 - b) Also think of oil as "soothing", especially in a desert climbing. In both word-pictures, it represents the power of God in one's life.
- b) What is interesting to think about is the name "David" has yet to be mentioned.
 - i) Notice God did not say to Samuel, "Go to Bethlehem and there is a guy named Jessie who has eight sons. The youngest is named David. Go get him and anoint him as the king. Do this a week from Tuesday." ☺
 - a) Some of you are thinking, "Is that the same Bethlehem where Jesus was born?" Yes it was. David and Jesus were born in the same town. More on that topic another day.
 - ii) Back to my point: God "only" told Samuel to go find "Jessie of Bethlehem" because one of his sons will be king.
 - iii) Why did God only give Samuel limited information? The answer is that God wanted to teach Samuel and us a few lessons about "His timing", which just happens to be our theme for this week. ☺
 - a) The first is that God often works with us on a "need to know" basis. If God told us His plans for us in detail for the next say, twenty years, it might kill us. God only reveals what He wants us to know at that moment. Often God works in stages like this as He is trying to teach us something. That "something" is usually obedience. Once we have obeyed a particular instruction, God then gives us the next set of instructions.
 - iv) The next lesson God wanted to teach Samuel is that God still has a wonderful redemptive plan for the Nation of Israel. King Saul was disobedient and lost, and will lose his kingship. That's not the end of the story. The story ends with the promise of a redeemer to help Israel. David will lead the Nation of Israel to conquer all of its surrounding enemies and lead it to its peak of power.
 - a) If I had to pick one word to describe the bible as a whole, I would use "redemption". The whole of the bible is based on the promise of a better future day as God "redeems" His people.
 - b) To paraphrase God some more, "Hey Samuel, I know you're hurting about Saul and the fact the nation is disobedient. Don't worry, I have good news. I've got a plan. I know you don't know that plan, but I do. I have a great future planned for You and your people. Even better, I want you to be a part of that plan. Come one, follow me and let's go anoint the next leader".
 - c) Some of you can see where I'm going with this. ☺ God has a wonderful plan for our lives. He doesn't want us to grieve forever. God is saying, "Hey come on, follow me. Let me "use you" to be a part of my redemptive plan. Come follow me, submit to My will and watch the great things that I'm about to do!"
 - d) If you think God can't use you, think about these guys:
 - (1) Samuel was a baby given to the priesthood because her mother struck a deal with God because she couldn't get pregnant.
 - (2) Saul was looking for the family donkeys when God picked him.
 - (3) David, who will get to, is the youngest of 8 boys and watches the sheep. He had no idea how God was going to use him.
 - (4) With a few exceptions, God usually picks "nobodies" to be used greatly by Him. We'll discuss this some more in verse 7.
- c) OK, I just spent two pages on one verse. God's timing is for me to move on. ☺

4. Verse 2: But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."
- a) For those who think the prophet Samuel is a perfect person who never sinned, take a close look at Verse 2.
 - b) God just said in Verse 1 to go to Bethlehem and anoint a "Son of Jesse" to be the king.
 - c) Samuel's first words in Verse 2 are about fear. He is afraid that King Saul will find out about Samuel anointing someone new and try to kill him.
 - i) First of all, those fears are real. We'll read in upcoming chapters about King Saul's temper. Several times he tries to kill David. I suspect Saul had a temper for a long time and Samuel knew about it.
 - ii) The point is Samuel forgot the proverb: "Where God leads, God provides".
 - a) If God gives you a command to do something, don't you think God is going to make it possible for you to obey that command?
 - b) One of my favorite short stories in the bible is about the time Jesus was in a boat with the disciples. The waves were roaring and the boat was tossing. Where was Jesus? He was asleep! (Mark 4:38). Why was Jesus asleep? Because in Mark 4:35 Jesus gave the command to go to the other side of the lake. Again, "Where God leads, God provides". Jesus knew he would make it safely to the other side, because it was God's will.
 - d) Notice God does not scold Samuel for doubting him. God does not say to Samuel, "I just told you to go to Bethlehem. I don't see your feet moving. Get going!" ☺
 - i) The rest of verses 2-3 are God "compromising" with Samuel. For Samuel to get to Jesse in Bethlehem, the only road goes right past where Saul lived, and therefore, Samuel was afraid Saul would kill him if he found out what he was up to.
 - ii) God gives Samuel a plan. That plan was to bring along a heifer to sacrifice. For When Samuel was passing by King Saul, Samuel needed to tell Saul "something". That plan was to tell Saul that he was going to Bethlehem to do a sacrifice. King Saul would "shrug his shoulders" at that one as Samuel regularly traveled from location to location as being top-minister to the people of Israel.
 - iii) God often "works on our level". If we refuse to obey God without question as Samuel did in these verses, I find that God often says, "Sigh, ok. I want to teach you to trust Me. If you can't handle the direct order to go to Bethlehem without further instructions, then I'll give you a plan to get past King Saul."
 - iv) This verse shows that God never stops working with us to build up our faith in Him. Samuel has been obedient to God for a long time. Yet, in a moment of doubt, God does not punish Samuel, but works on Samuel's level.
 - v) If you remember in the last chapter, Saul gets ousted as king for disobedience. Samuel told him that he would no longer be king because he refused to kill all the Amalekites. So why isn't Samuel punished here for doubting God? The difference is Samuel still agrees to go to Bethlehem. Saul was punished for lack of obedience. God will work with our fears as long as we keep moving and keep following Him. It is when we deliberately disobey God is when we "get in trouble".
5. Verse 4: Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"
- a) Samuel was in fear about the wrath of King Saul.

- b) The residents of Bethlehem were in fear about the wrath of Samuel! ☺
 - i) Why were the residents afraid? Remember Samuel is the one who scolded all of Israel for wanting King Saul. He validated his message by having rainfall during a time when there was no rainfall. The people “trembled” at Samuel then. (Reference 1st Samuel 12:17-18).
 - ii) One has to remember that Israel at this time was not in “revival mode”. ☺
 - iii) They wanted Saul as king “because they wanted to be like the other nations”. (Reference: 1st Samuel 8:5 and 8:20).
 - iv) The application to us is the times of our lives where we are ashamed of what we are doing from God’s perspective. For example, ever notice we are on our best moral behavior when the pastor/priest comes over for dinner? We tend to forget that God is always watching us, yet we are embarrassed when our “religious friends” catch us doing something we shouldn’t be doing.
6. Verse 5: Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.
- a) Samuel comes to Bethlehem and organizes a town-wide religious sacrifice to God. Samuel specifically looks for a man named Jesse and invites him and his sons.
 - i) To “consecrate” Jesse is a Jewish ritual that involves washing and cleaning of the clothes. The concept is similar to the idea of “clean yourself up to go to church”.
 - b) Notice what Samuel did not say, “I have come here to pick the next king of Israel. Now for the rest of you, do whatever you want, and I’ll be about my business”. ☺
 - c) Samuel was told by God to do a sacrifice in Bethlehem. Even though that was not the prime intent of the visit, Samuel was fully obedient to God’s instructions.
7. Verse 6: When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."
- a) Here is Samuel checking out the oldest son of Jesse and Samuel mentally thinks, “This is the guy. He’s strong, good looking. God must want him to be the next king of Israel.”
 - b) What we are going to read in a matter of verses is that the father Jesse had a total of eight sons. David is the youngest of the eight. All seven older brothers were brought before Samuel before David was brought to him.
 - c) It must have been a shock to Samuel that God would pick someone so young. After all, if God was going to get rid of King Saul, Samuel expected someone who was old enough to be king. That is why Samuel probably thought the oldest one was God’s choice.
 - i) The lesson here has to do with learning to be obedient to God’s timing (there’s that word again! ☺) and not our timing.
 - ii) Samuel saw the oldest son of Jesse and thought, “OK, God is going to replace Saul now, and therefore I need a replacement who is old enough to be king”. The problem was that was not God’s plan at all. Samuel made a bad assumption because Samuel was thinking about “His timing” versus God’s timing.
8. 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 man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
- a) Here is your memorization verse of the week. Just like the last lesson, I’ll even make it easier for you. ☺ Just memorize the last sentence: “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

- b) One of the purposes of this whole ritual was not just to pick David, but to teach Samuel (and us) a lesson about how God works.
 - i) First of all, God works in stages in our lives. God reveals information one step at a time. When we are obedient to the first step, God reveals the next step. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem and then God reveals who is the next king.
 - c) The next lesson for Samuel (and us!) is how God chooses leaders.
 - i) God is not interested in how good looking or how strong a person is. God is interested in the heart. The Jewish concept of "heart" refers to the inner being. Just as the heart pumps blood to all parts of the body, so the word picture of "heart" is the inner-self that "makes" the person alive.
 - ii) This alone is a great lesson that should build our self confidence. In this sense, God does not care if we are too old or too young, or whatever excuse we have. God does not care if we have a handicap or some deformity. God is interested in our "inner self". God picks people to lead based on our inner character.
 - a) God is always looking for people who are willing to say, "I want to make myself available for God, as opposed to showing God our "ability". God is not impressed by your resume. God is interested in our availability to be of service to Him.
 - b) If we make ourselves available, then and only then does God say, "terrific, here is what I want you to do and I will make it possible for you to do it".
 - c) Does that mean if you tell God, "Hey God, I want to pastor a church of 200,000 people", it will happen tomorrow? No. First of all, you are telling God what You want and not what He wants. That is not His will, but your will. Second, if God does have a grand scale plan for you, God usually has a "100-steps" to get there as to train you for that large-scale ministry. Every person in the bible used greatly by God had to go through lots of steps to get to that point. (Remember, it's all about God's timing!)
 - iii) Next, God does not measure success in "quantity" as much as "quality".
 - a) I'm convinced that when we get to heaven some of the greatest rewards will go to say, a mother who's sole job was to raise her child up in the Lord. She prayed for him or her daily and worked with that child to be a great follower of Jesus. God is looking for success in life, but the way God measures success is different from the way the world measures success.
 - b) God is looking for people to live a life that is significant for Him. That means to make an impact upon people. Again, God could call you to minister to one person or millions. It is not the quantity of the results, but the quality that God is interested in.
9. Verse 8: Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ⁹ Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰ Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"
- a) The father Jesse had a total of eight sons.
 - i) David was the youngest. Apparently, David wasn't even invited to the feast.
 - ii) The father made all seven older brothers "pass by" Samuel.
 - b) We don't know how God communicated to Samuel, just the fact that he did. Too many commentators obsess on the "how" God communicated to Samuel and ignore the "why" issue. Ever since Samuel was a little boy, God somehow spoke to him. It was probably "audible in Samuel's head". The point is Samuel knew how to distinguish the voice of God from his own thoughts and knew when God was speaking.

- c) OK, so how do we know when God is speaking to us?
- i) The best clue I know comes from Peter. Jesus asked Peter who he (Jesus) was. Peter responded that Jesus was the Messiah. "Jesus (then) replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." (Mathew 16:17 NIV)
 - ii) Jesus is saying God the Father told Peter that Jesus is the Messiah. My point here is Peter did not have a deep booming voice from heaven tell him that God was speaking to him. Peter just said what was in his heart and Jesus told him that God himself revealed that information to him.
 - iii) Therefore, hearing "God's voice" is not a special audible voice in your head.
 - a) God does speak to individuals today. I'm convinced of that. You know it is God telling you by 1) There is no violation of the Word of God and 2) I usually find there is some validation to support that "urge" to do what you believe is God's will.
 - b) For example, if a voice in your head says to steal your neighbor's TV, you know it is not God because it violates God's commandment to not steal.
 - c) Let's say you have been praying about a situation and have this "urge" to go take some action. There is no way of knowing whether or not it is God's will. Getting back to Peter, he rebuked Jesus a few verses later. Jesus said, "Get behind me Satan" (Matthew 16:23) as to teach Satan himself told Peter to make that statement. My point here is to be cautious of "urges".
 - d) On the other hand, I write these lessons because "I can't stand not writing them". I can't explain how I know it is God's will for me to do it, but somehow, I just know. Further, these lessons are "bearing fruit" for God and as best I can, I'm not violating any biblical principal.
 - e) When you study the Book of Acts and Paul's travels, you don't read of God every three verses telling Paul, "Now turn left here, go ahead one mile and go preach to this town". Paul just moved. Sometimes it was successful and sometimes it wasn't. The point was "God's will" for Paul was just to go preach the Gospel. Paul just went forward to wherever he believed was the best place to go and God used that situation for His glory.
- d) Meanwhile, back to Samuel. ☺ Samuel told all seven (of eight) of Jesse's sons to pass before him. Samuel knew that God has not spoken to him to anoint any of them.
- i) This makes me wonder how much Samuel told Jesse of God's plan.
 - a) Did Samuel tell Jesse that one of his sons would be the next king?
 - b) How much did Jesse and the other sons understand of the anointing?
 - (1) The only clue is Samuel says out loud "God has not chosen these" in Verse 10, which leads us to suspect Jesse was "in on all of this".
10. Verse 11: "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."
- a) Up to this point, the word "David" was still not even used in the bible.
 - b) Assuming Jesse understood Samuel's purpose, Jesse thought so little of David being chosen that he wasn't even invited the feast.
 - i) From a human perspective, this is understandable. David was the youngest, probably between 10-15 years old at this time. If God wanted a king, then God would want someone old enough to be king.
 - ii) The point is "not to put God in a box". We assume God wants someone of a certain age, or certain look and again, God is interested in the inside, not the outside. God can and does work with anyone whose heart is right for Him.

- c) Give Samuel a little credit here. Samuel is saying in Verse 11 that the sacrificial ritual won't begin until Jesse goes back and fetches his youngest son. That could be a long time frame as dad doesn't even know where he is.
 - d) Stop and think about this from David's perspective:
 - i) His father tells David, "Look son, the whole family is going to see Samuel and do a sacrifice for God. Rumor has it that one of your older brothers might be the next king. You sit here and watch the sheep while were gone."
 - ii) Was David thinking, "Why wasn't I invited?" Was David thinking, "My gosh, my dad thinks so little of me that he didn't even invite me to this feast"?
 - iii) It is almost a "Cinderella-like" story at this point where David gets called to the feast and then he is picked over his wicked stepbrothers. ☺
 - iv) Imagine David's shock when say, a brother comes out to the family farm and yells, "David, get your behind over here quickly. Samuel himself said you have to come to the feast."
 - v) Remember the father and the brothers had to "consecrate" themselves for the feast. That means washing of themselves and the clothes. David probably watched them do all of that while he tended the sheep. Now here was David "with no time for all of that stuff" being called to the feast.
 - e) Last, think about this from the Samuel's perspective:
 - i) Samuel is all about obedience. Samuel knew that God called one of Jesse's sons to be the next king. Samuel asked if Jesse had any more sons and Samuel "wouldn't sit down" until the job was complete.
 - ii) Remember in the last chapter. King Saul "stopped" prior to complete obedience by failing to kill all of the Amalekites. Samuel on the other hand, would not even sit down and do the "feast thing" ☺ until all of Jesse's sons had been checked out. It is a reminder of God's desire of total obedience.
11. Verse 12: So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."
- a) So here is the moment where David was brought before him. Somehow, somehow, God communicated to Samuel that "this guy is the one".
 - b) I probably should talk about the word "ruddy". David is described here as "ruddy".
 - i) The word can mean red and some theorize that David was a redhead.
 - ii) More likely the word refers to "masculine" in the sense that David was a "man's man". The word can refer to strong and self-confident.
12. Verse 13: 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 upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.
- a) Here we have the first time the word "David" is actually mentioned in this story. Believe me, it's not the last. ☺ There is more text in the bible dedicated to the life David than any other person in the Old Testament. That alone should make a statement.
 - b) Notice David's name is not mentioned until David was officially anointed by Samuel.
 - c) Before we finish 1st Samuel and 2nd Samuel, David will have two more anointings: One will be as the official leader of the tribe of Judah, and the second as the king of all Israel. The difference is this is a private anointing where David becomes aware of his future role. The other two is when the public becomes aware of his role as king.
 - d) There is a subtle word-picture in the fact that David is not mentioned by name until his actual anointing. It is a picture of a "new beginning".
 - i) Once we commit our lives to serving God, our lives dramatically change. We literally become a new person. God works to change us from the inside out.

- ii) Looking back on my life prior to that moment, I can see how the “Hand of God” was working in my life to prepare me for that moment. My point is that God is “shaping and molding” us prior to the time we commit our lives.
- iii) The same applies to David. Yet there was “something special” when he became anointed in the same way our lives change when we first commit our lives to God.
- e) What is interesting about this verse is what did and did not happen afterward.
 - i) The text says that Samuel then went back to Ramah. That town was the base of Samuel’s operation. We learn in the next chapter that David went back home.
 - ii) The point is look at what did not happen:
 - a) Samuel did not grab David, call the leaders of Israel and say, “Hey folks, I just anointed the next king. Forget about Saul and follow this guy!” ☺
 - b) Notice David did not say to his family, “Excuse me everyone, I just believe Samuel anointed me the next king. Dad, brothers, the sheep are now your problem. I’m packing. See you at the palace!” ☺
 - c) The point is both Saul and David went back to their normal lives.
 - d) What’s the point? The point they both waited on God’s timing. (There’s that word again! ☺) This anointing by Samuel was a prediction and not a marching order to change the king there at the moment. Samuel went home and waited on God’s timing for this to happen. David went home and waited on God’s timing for this to happen.
 - e) That’s the lesson for us. God has wonderful plans for our lives. Until those plans happen, we need to get back to our sheep. ☺

13. Verse 14: Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

- a) The next four verses lead to some difficult questions. They have to do with the Spirit of God leaving Saul and an evil spirit tormenting Saul. I don’t have all the answers, but that won’t stop me from trying to explain it. ☺
- b) Before I get into all of that, let’s talk about the important points.
 - i) What we have here is the transition of power. Although it will be many years until it is official, as far as God is concerned it is a “done deal”. This verse mentions the Spirit of God going from “soon-to-be-former-king” Saul to the “one-day-to-be-the-new-king” David.
- c) OK, here we go with the tough part. Let’s start with the Spirit of God leaving Saul.
 - i) First of all, God’s Spirit (a.k.a., “Holy Spirit”) is not limited in size and scope. It is not as if “there is only so much spirit to go around” and therefore God had to remove the Spirit from Saul in order to give it to David. If you think that is possible, then you’re concept of God is too small.
 - ii) I hold the view that Saul is still “saved”. Many chapters from now, we will get to Saul’s death. Samuel dies years before Saul. Yet, we’ll read of this message from Samuel to Saul that “he (Saul) will join him (Samuel)” (1st Samuel 28:19) in wherever Samuel is in the afterlife. Since I don’t believe Samuel is in hell, Saul is there with him. My point here is Saul is not sent to hell just because the Spirit of God has left him and some evil spirit is tormenting Saul as stated in this verse.
 - iii) Next, we need to talk about Christians and “sealed” with the Holy Spirit.
 - a) In John 15:26, Jesus promises us that after he is resurrected he will send us the Spirit of God to guide us in all truth. That is what the events of Acts Chapter 2 is all about. My point is a follower of Christ has the Spirit of God in him, and it can’t be taken away. Nowhere in the New Testament does it ever teach that the Spirit of God is “temporary”.

- b) Compare that to what David said in the Psalms:
 - (1) “Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.” (Psalm 51:11 NIV)
 - (2) David is praying that “Don’t take the Spirit away from me like you did from Saul”. A Christian cannot pray that prayer. (Well they can, but it won’t do them any good. ☺) As long as you are trusting in Jesus for your salvation, the Spirit is permanently a part of you.
- d) On to the next tough question: The verse said, an evil spirit from God tormented Saul.
 - i) Does this mean God can send evil spirits upon people?
 - ii) First of all, remember that God created everything and everything is subject to him. All of the Satan’s attempts to “thwart” God’s plans ultimately work out for God’s glory.
 - iii) There is also a big difference between an evil spirit tormenting you and being demon possessed. Jesus spent a lot of time casting out demons. No one in the New Testament, having the Holy Spirit in them, is ever demon possessed. However, there is a case of being tormented by demons, which we’ll get to.
 - iv) There is a classic illustration that I’m about to butcher: ☺ There was an evil man who was angry with a king. The evil man wanted to harm the king. The evil man knew there was a forest the king loved. So the evil man chopped down some of the king’s favorite trees in that forest. When the king saw it, he said to the man, “You know, I was going to build a new palace in this very spot. Without knowing it, You cleared the spot for me.” The point of that story is what Satan intends for evil ultimately is used for God’s glory.
 - v) Joseph said in Genesis, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Gen. 50:20 NIV).
 - vi) To do evil does not excuse the act. It is just a reminder that God knows all things, and all things that are going to happen. They ultimately end up for His glory.
 - vii) So what does this have to do with Saul? Glad you asked! God “allowed” this evil spirit to torment Saul. The purpose is, as we will read is that David (as a boy) is sent to Saul to play the harp and relieve Saul of his torment. The purpose of this torment is to get David over to the castle. This formed David’s relationship with Saul, his son Jonathan. It also gave David some experience of the king’s life.
- e) Next question: Can an evil spirit torment us today? Consider this verse:
 - i) Paul wrote, “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.” Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”” (2nd Corinthians 12:7-9 NIV)
 - ii) Paul had a “messenger from Satan torment him.” We don’t know exactly what that meant the same way we don’t know exactly how this demon tormented Saul.
 - iii) Stop and consider the possibility that anything from anger to a backache could be an evil spirit tormenting you. Don’t get me wrong. You should still take whatever steps or medicine to help you. I’m just throwing this out as a possibility.
 - iv) Paul prayed for this torment to go away and it didn’t work. I’m guessing that King Saul also prayed to God for the demon to go away. Either way, God allowed this torment to ultimately fulfill some greater purpose.
- f) OK, enough theology on one verse. Let’s move on to another verse that is equally as difficult. ☺

14. Verse 15: Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you." ¹⁶ Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better."
- a) Somehow, the people who attended to Saul understood that an evil spirit was tormenting Saul. They knew it wasn't depression or a chemical imbalance. ☺ It was a demonic spirit bothering Saul. "How" they knew is not stated in the text.
 - b) Again, while I do believe if a demon can torment Paul in the New Testament, that issue does exist from us. How can we tell if the problem is "medical" or "spiritual"? The answer is to consider both. In other words, "Pray, and take aspirin". ☺ If one isn't helping, try the other. Consider God is trying to teach you something.
 - i) One of my favorite prayers in difficult and painful situations, is "Lord, let not these lessons be wasted. Help me to accept the situation, understand that it is ultimately to be used for Your glory, help me to be a good witness for You in this situation, and let not the lessons of it be wasted."
 - c) Next comes the other strange part of this verse. The servants say the remedy for this evil spirit is to get someone to play music (the harp) for King Saul.
 - i) Does that mean listening to a Christian music radio station will take away an evil spirit from us? ☺ I don't think so. I don't believe this is a "cure all" method. If that were the case, Paul would have commented on that issue when the demonic spirit was tormenting him.
 - ii) Remember the important part is that all of this is designed to get David over to the palace. David is the guy skilled as a harp player.
 - a) By the way, "harp" refers to a small hand-held instrument. It is similar to what we think of as a "lyre".
15. Verse 17: So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well and bring him to me." ¹⁸ One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him."
- a) One of Saul's servants had seen David play the harp and knew he was talented. How this guy knew of David is not stated.
 - b) This is another example of "God working in the background". The main purpose was to get David over to King Saul. Therefore, David had developed a God-given talent to play the harp. This servant of Saul "just happened" to see him, and well, here we are.
 - c) Here we learn a little about David.
 - i) We learn of David the musician. Great musicians are born with a God-given talent. It requires years of practice and education to develop that talent. David probably played the harp as a hobby while he watched the sheep. He didn't realize anyone watched or cared. David never toured Israel in concert. ☺
 - ii) The next thing we learn is David is a "brave man and a warrior". We'll read in the next chapter how David fought off lions and bears who attacked his sheep. I doubt David bragged about this. Yet this servant of Saul saw this and thought enough of David to mention his name to Saul.
 - iii) Finally the text says David is a good speaker and good looking.
 - iv) My point here is we don't know how God is working in our life. I'm sure David was just going about his life and not thinking about bigger picture. We don't know who is watching us and how we will eventually be used by God.

16. Verse 19: Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." ²⁰ So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.
- a) Here is King Saul actually sending for David to come to him.
 - b) You have to wonder what Jesse and David was thinking. They were aware of the anointing and what it meant. "All of a sudden" a messenger from the king shows up and tells Jesse, "Send David over to the castle and tell him to bring his harp".
 - c) I'm sure Jesse and David smiled at each other, shrugged their shoulders at what it meant and then Jesse loaded up David with a few gifts.
 - i) The gifts were a way of paying homage to the king. Despite the fact David knew that Saul anointed him, they still brought gifts of homage to King Saul. It is another example of waiting on God's timing.
17. Verse 21: David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. ²² Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, "Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him."
- a) So here goes David off to the palace to play his harp. Apparently, Saul is so taken by the guy he becomes one of his armor-bearers in battle.
 - b) The big picture idea is to see how God is working out the details on His timing. This is all about the rise of David and the slow-fall of Saul. All of the events we have read about in the last half of the chapters are details and examples of how God is working out His plan.
 - c) Some people speculate that the events of Verses 21-23 cover a long span of time.
 - i) In the next chapter, we get to the famous "David versus Goliath" story. When the battle was over, Saul approached David and asked in effect, "Who are you?" (1st Samuel 17:58). Since Saul didn't know who David was at that battle, commentators logically speculate that what is happening here in Verses 21-23 cover a good time span after David went into service for King Saul.
18. Verse 23: Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.
- a) So here we read of David playing the harp for Saul and somehow, this caused the evil spirit to leave. Again, it raises all sorts of questions that we don't have answers to:
 - i) How did Saul know it was an evil spirit and not some other issue?
 - ii) How did David's playing actually get the evil spirit to stop? Did anyone actually see it leave? Was it just a matter of Saul having peace when the music played?
 - iii) My point is we could spend hours debating questions that we don't have answers to. The point to learn is that God allowed all of this to happen in order to get David into the castle. Everything else is debate and speculation.
 - b) We do know that this was a "part time gig" for David the musician. ☺ In the next chapter we read of David being home prior to fighting Goliath. I envision David going about his normal life, a messenger of Saul showing up every now and then to get David. David then brought his harp, played and then went back home. My point here is notice the patience of David. He never threatened Saul. David waited on God's timing for events to happen as opposed to trying to force them to happen.
19. OK, wrap up time. I want to go back to the first recorded compliment that God gave David. Back in Chapter 13, when Samuel told Saul that God had another king in mind, Samuel said:
- a) "The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart." (1st Samuel 13:14 NIV)
 - b) OK, what does that mean? How was David a man after God's own heart?
 - i) After all, David made lots of mistakes. We will read of his own shortcomings. He has his own moments of fear. There is also the whole-Bathsheba thing. ☺

- c) So just “how” is David a man after God’s own heart?
 - i) I suspect the answer is that David is a man who waited on God’s timing.
 - a) When David was anointed, he never rushed to be the king.
 - b) He never “pushed the events” so that the kingship would happen.
 - c) In the upcoming chapters, David has several opportunities to kill Saul. He never does, as David knows Saul was anointed and that David has to wait on God’s timing.
 - d) My closing argument is that “a man or woman after God’s own heart” is not only one who lives to do God’s will, but also seeks God’s timing. To work on our timing is to do our will and not God’s. Knowing God’s timing is difficult, if not impossible at times. In this sense, “God’s timing” is a part of “God’s will”. A person after God’s own heart is not a perfect person, but a person who moment by moment wants to live their life to make a difference for God and not themselves. They live to glorify God in all they do. A big part of that is learning to discern God’s timing. God’s timing for me is different for God’s timing for you, just as God’s plan for our lives are different.
- 20. With all that said, let’s close in prayer and ask for discernment on timing.
- 21. Let’s pray: Heavenly Father it is our desire to be a man or a woman after Your own heart. To do that, we constantly need to surrender our will to Yours. Part of that discernment is to understand timing. As difficult as that is, help us to remember that nothing is impossible with You. Help us to make ourselves available to You and be willing to accept Your will on your timing. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.