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Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

Third Quarter.

Lesson VIII, Aug. 25. 1 Samuel 16: 1-13.

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."—1 Sam. 16: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE SACRIFICE AT BETHLEHEM. 1. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Not a great while after he had returned to his home at Ramah, after having announced to Saul that Eliah had rejected him for his disobedience; and yet the expression How long implies that some time had elapsed. Will thou mourn for Saul? God gave Samuel time for the natural expression of his grief; but too long continued, his grief would imply dissatisfaction with God and His providence. Samuel grieved (1) because of his personal affection for Saul; (2) because of his disappointment that one with such high possibilities and large opportunities should throw them away so carelessly; (3) because his own influence over Saul and his power in his counsels and plans were at an end. Seeing I have rejected him. The emphasis is on the "I." If God rejected Saul, then it must be wisest and best for all that he be rejected and other plans be adopted.

THE DIVINE CURSE FOR GRIEF. (1) A larger faith in God. (2) The second curse for Samuel's grief was in the form of activity. Work in a new line for the good old cause draws the mind away from the grief.

Fill thine horn. Horns among the ancients were hollowed out and polished, and fitted for many of the same uses as in modern times. With oil. No doubt this was the holy oil used for the lamps of the tabernacle, for anointing the priests. I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite. Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, and was probably the chief man of Bethlehem; "the sheikh of the village." He "was evidently a man of some wealth." For I have provided me a king. Jehovah was the real king of Israel and guided the nation's affairs.

2. And Samuel said, How can I go if Saul hear it, he will kill me? for the act of anointing another king would be regarded as little less than high treason. Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice. There was a practice once a year at Bethlehem, probably at the first new moon, of holding a sacrificial feast, at which Jesse, as the chief proprietor of the place, would preside, with the elders of the town. Sam. 20: 6. To the feast Samuel was bidden to go, taking with him a worthy addition to the feast. He was to say that he was going to the sacrifice, because he was going there. He told the exact truth. That he intended to do something else there, was no one's business, and there was no reason why he should tell any one. He simply said nothing about it.

3. And call Jesse to the sacrifice. The sacrifice was a religious service, representing communion with God, and was accompanied with acts of devotion, prayers, and sometimes a feast, as we see in the dresses. And I will show thee what thou shalt do. That is the common way of the Lord's dealing with His children. He has made provision for them, all the way along their course; but he does not disclose all of those provisions beforehand.

4. And Samuel did that. He obeyed the Lord, although the deed seemed dangerous and contrary to his wishes. And came to Bethlehem: accompanied by a servant, or perhaps, Levite, driving the heifer. The distance from Ramah to Bethlehem was 10 or 11 miles. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming. It was an unusual thing in these latter days for the gray-haired and aged prophet to visit a place in this solemn manner. Comest thou peaceably? Does your coming betoken peace, good will, the favor of God, or otherwise?

5. Sanctify yourselves. By the usual ceremonial purification, such as washing the body and clothes, the outward symbols of spiritual preparation (see Gen. 35: 2; Ex. 19: 10 ff.) The inward purification, as described in Isa. 58: 3-11, was to be a part of the sanctification. And he sanctified Jesse. In the case of Jesse's family, Samuel supervised the necessary purification himself. And called them to the sacrifice. It is very probable that Jesse's family and the elders and other citizens all went to the public services of the sacrifice, and then each family had the social festival that followed by itself, with its own circle of friends. Samuel invited Jesse and his family to partake with him of the sacrifice he had brought.

II. THE SELECTION OF DAVID. 6. And it came to pass, when they were come: to the place of the social meal of the sacrifice, as described above; and before they sat down to the feast (ver. 11), very probably at Jesse's house. He looked on Eliab: the eldest son of Jesse. He noticed him as the family were assembling. And said to himself, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. "Eliab, by his height and his countenance, seemed the natural counterpart of Saul, whose successor the prophet came to select.

7. Look not on his countenance. Israel's second king was to be chosen on the ground of qualities pleasing to God, and not of those that were popular with men. For the Lord sees not as man seeth. For the Lord sees all; knows all. The most hidden things are as plain to Him as the sun at noonday. For we looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. God knows the real man, his inner nature and possibilities.

GOD LOOKETH ON THE HEART. (1) Not on one's social rank. Bethlehem was an insignificant town "among the thousands of Israel." David's family was one of lesser importance. (2) The Lord does not look upon one's family history. The lineage of Jesse, Obed, and Bath was quite humble in its origin. (3) The Lord does not look upon one's fortune. It would not be fair to assert that God always chooses the poor before the rich; but He certainly does not choose the rich for their riches in any case. (4) Once more: The Lord does not look upon one's eye in making his choice of men. Polyarp was converted at nine years of age. Matthew Henry at eleven, President Ed-

wards at seven, Robert Hall at twelve, and Isaac Watts at nine. God chooses His best workers often in the beginning of their intelligent existence. 8. 9. Abinadab, Shammah. Those two, with Eliab, were the sons of Jesse sent to war against the Philistines (chap. 17: 13).

10. Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel: including the three already mentioned. 11. There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he keepeth the sheep. Some must attend to the sheep; and David, as the youngest, would naturally be the one least missed from the feast. We will not sit down till he come hither. Literally, we will not surround the table; we will let the feast wait till David comes.

12. The Anointing of David. 13. The word "anointed" denotes the fact that Eliab and his brethren were regarded as a mark of beauty in southern countries, where the hair and complexion are generally dark. And withal of a beautiful countenance. Literally, of beautiful eyes. Beautiful eyes would make homely features beautiful. And goodly to look on: fair to see. Nothing is said of his stature.

13. Then Samuel . . . anointed him in the midst of his brethren. In their presence. The anointing was the symbol of a setting apart for some special mission appointed by God. It is not at all probable that David's brethren knew the high destiny for which he was anointed. It was too dangerous a secret to be known to so many; nor did they act as if they knew it at the time of David's visit to the army. It is doubtful if the meaning of the act was then revealed even to David. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David: to influence the mind and heart of the shepherd, boy so that he could "grow up into a hero, a statesman, a scholar, and a wise and far-sighted king." From that day forward. This phrase "denotes the continuity of the operation of the Spirit to David's entire life, and indicates its unbroken development under the guidance of the divine Spirit to full fitness and capacity for the royal calling."

IV. DAVID'S PREPARATION IN CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH FOR HIS LIFE'S GREAT WORK. David's preparation for his life's great work was almost out of chaos a great kingdom worthy to be a type of God's kingdom all down the ages. He must be a general of armies. He must be a statesman. He must be a prophet, and reform, organizer, and develop the devotional services of the nation. He must be a man of prayer and worship. Let us therefore look at David's youth as a preparation for his future destiny.

(I) HIS NATURAL ENDOWMENTS. (1) He had a good inheritance. "The kindly and fatherly disposition of Boaz and the only devotion and warm attachment of Ruth were very apparent in the character of their great-grandson." (2) He had physical strength, beauty, and attractiveness. (3) He had natural abilities of a high order and great variety. (4) He had the conditions of power over men. (5) He had a wonderful and lovely character. He moved many men with that irresistible fascination which only the greatest exercise."

(II) HIS TRAINING AND SURROUNDING INFLUENCES. (1) His daily duties with the sheep, giving an opportunity for training in business, alert attention, courage, government. (2) He had large opportunity to study nature and meditate on nature's God. (3) He had a training in religion and in the Scriptures then known, which would include the history of his nation up to nearly his own time. (4) He was anointed: a necessary step in his way to the throne. (5) All his usefulness in his daily duties developed courage, skill, carefulness, business ability, power to govern, knowledge of daily life. (6) David "deeply studied such parts of the sacred Scripture as then existed. His writings continually evince his close acquaintance with it, his admiration of it, his intense appreciation of its value, his love for it." He became early a true child of God. He was thus unconsciously becoming fitted to be a moral reformer and the religious leader of the people.

(III) HIS USE OF HIS ENDOWMENTS AND INFLUENCES. (1) He became physically active and strong through faithfulness in daily duties. (2) He spent his leisure hours in practicing music. This early faithfulness was one step by which he came to the court of Saul, and enabled him to organize orchestras and choirs for the service of God, and become the author of a wonderful development of music as an aid to worship. (3) His culture, his poetic talent led to the first great hymn-book. (5) His practice with the sling, in order that he might be the best defender of his flocks against wild beasts and robbers, prepared him for his great battle with Goliath—a necessary step in his way to the throne. (6) His culture, his poetic talent led to the first great hymn-book. (5) His practice with the sling, in order that he might be the best defender of his flocks against wild beasts and robbers, prepared him for his great battle with Goliath—a necessary step in his way to the throne. 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