

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 16:14-23

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1 Samuel 16:14-23

Verse 14

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

- God had removed the kingdom from Saul and had ordered Samuel to anoint a new king for Israel. David, the youngest son of Jesse, from the tribe of Judah, had been chosen to replace Saul. Saul had lost fellowship with God and with Samuel as a result of his disobedience (see 1 Samuel 15:1-16:22).
- Because Saul had forsaken God through disobedience to God, he was empty spiritually. The Holy Spirit of God had left him. The void in Saul's life opened him to spirits other than the Holy Spirit. God sent, or allowed, an evil spirit to enter Saul and dwell in him. God had removed his hand of protection from Saul because Saul was disobedient to God's word.
- This evil spirit tormented Saul.

Verses 15-17

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 lyre. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes on you, and you will feel better."

¹⁷ So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well and bring him to me."

- Those who attended King Saul noticed the change in him and suggested to him that an evil spirit was bothering him.
- They suggested that music might calm his agitation and relieve his troubled mind when he was bothered by this evil spirit. "Music calms the savage beast." So Saul ordered that they find a musician who could play for him when he was troubled.

Verses 18-21

¹⁸ One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him.”

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.

²¹ David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much and David became one of his armor-bearers.

- Someone in attendance on King Saul remembered that David, the youngest son of Jesse, the very man chosen by YHWH to succeed Saul as Israel’s king, played the harp well and that God was with him. This attendant suggested that David might be the person for whom the king was searching. So, King Saul sent to Jesse asking him to send David to court to play for him.
- Jesse sent David to King Saul’s court along with appropriate gifts to honor the King.
- David entered the King’s service as a musician. Saul liked him and promoted David to the office of armor-bearer. This meant that David was always near Saul but was not necessarily known by Saul. He was one among many. His job was to soothe the king with music when the king was agitated.

Verses 22-23

²² Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, “Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.”

²³ Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

- Whenever the evil spirit came on Saul and agitated him, David would play and Saul would be relieved because the spirit would leave him temporarily.

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