

Wednesday, September 9, 2020 ▫ Read 1Samuel 16:14–23

Questions from the Scripture text: Who departed from Saul in v14? What troubled him? Who sent the distressing spirit? Who spoke to Saul in v15? What do they say? What do they want Saul to do to them (v16)? What kind of man do they want to find? What result do they think this will have? What does Saul do in v17? Whom does one of the servants mention in v18? What six qualities does he mention? Which of these does he state last? Whom does Saul send to whom in v19? What does he tell them to say? What does Jesse send, by whose hand, in v20? What does David do in v21? How does Saul initially respond to David? What does David become? What request does Saul send to Jesse in v22? What reasoning does he give? What does v23 tell us that David would do, on what occasions? What would happen to Saul? What would depart from him?

“Yahweh is with him.” Isn’t that the most important of David’s qualifications in v18?

The passage sets us up to see this by emphasizing in v14 how the Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul. But, in the Lord’s providence, an evil spirit comes upon Saul (v14, 15, 23).

v7 is still driving what we are to “see” in this passage. The Hebrew word for the “evil” of the spirit sounds exactly (though spelled differently) like the word “see” (translated “provide”) in v17. There is an intense focus upon “seeing” a man whose heart has Yahweh with him instead of evil.

And this is what all of us children of Adam need. To have Yahweh with our hearts by His Spirit. But how can we? The spirit that we have received, in our first father and because of him, is an evil spirit. But David, the man/king after God’s own heart, is able here successfully to drive away and reverse the effects of the evil spirit afflicting Saul, the man/king whose heart was not after the Lord’s (v16, 23).

The irony is that Saul does not know what has happened in the first half of the chapter, that the man that he exactly needs in order to have the Spirit of Yahweh drive away his evil spirit is the man that is replacing him as king. Though Saul “loves him greatly” (v21) and looks upon him with favor (v22) now, that will all change, when he learns that David must be king.

There is an important parallel here for us with the ultimate David, King Jesus. There are many who want various things that Jesus can indeed give. Christ is the perfection of all of the good qualities named in v18: knowledge, strength, victory, counsel, and beauty. And He is the ultimate “God with us” (“Immanuel”). And there are many who love the idea, and the superficial enjoyment, of many of these benefits of Jesus.

Such people sometimes think that they love Him, but when challenged with the idea that Jesus must be King, they recoil, and all is lost for them. There is nothing that we need more from Jesus than for Him to be our “last Adam,” Who gives us a new spirit, Who indwells us with His Holy Spirit, Who delivers us from all our enemies, and in Whom God is perfectly and blessedly with us.

As we read this passage, we can feel the tension of how Saul will ultimately end up rejecting and hating and opposing David. But the passage is also a mirror for us, if we can see the perfect Christ in the foreshadowing of David: are we willing to have Him as King? Or are we just interested in a collection of benefits that we hope to gain from Him?

What benefits do you need from Christ? In what do you most need to submit to Him as King?

Suggested songs: ARP45A “My Heart Is Greatly Stirred” or TPH45A “My Heart Is Greatly Stirred”