

David as a Youth (1 Samuel 16, 17)

by A.W. Pink

A.W. Pink's sermon on David as a youth highlights his significance in God's redemptive plan and the qualities that made him a man after God's own heart.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:1-17, Psalm 132:1-6, Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5, Matthew 25:21, 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, Titus 1:1, Revelation 22:16

Topics: "Divine Election", "Faithfulness in Service"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the significance of David's youth in God's redemptive plan, illustrating how David was chosen by God as a king despite being the least likely candidate. This selection highlights God's preference for the humble and the overlooked, as seen in David's shepherding role and his faith in God when facing challenges like Goliath. Pink draws parallels between David's life and the coming of Christ, noting that David serves as a type of the Messiah, embodying qualities that reflect God's heart. The sermon encourages believers to recognize God's sovereign grace and the importance of faithfulness in their own lives, regardless of their circumstances. Ultimately, David's story is a testament to God's ability to use the seemingly insignificant for His glorious purposes.

Transcript

CHAPTER ONE

David As a Youth

1 Samuel 16 and 17

The life of David marked an important epoch in the unfolding of God's purpose and plan of redemption. Here a little and there a little God made known the grand goal toward which all His dealings tended. At sundry times and in divers manners God spake in times past. In various ways and by different means was the way prepared for the coming of Christ. The work of redemption, with respect to its chief design, is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world by successive acts and dispensations in different ages, but all forming part of one great whole, and all leading to the one appointed and glorious climax.

"God wrought many lesser salvations and deliverances for His church and people before Christ came. Those salvations were all but so many images and forerunners of the great salvation Christ was to work out when He should come. The church during that space of time enjoyed the light of Divine revelation, or

God's Word. They had in a degree the light of the Gospel. But all those revelations were only so many forerunners and earnest of the great light which He should bring who came to be 'the Light of the world.'

That whole space of time was, as it were, the time of night, wherein the church of God was not indeed wholly without light: but it was like the light of the moon and stars, that we have in the night; a dim light in comparison with the light of the sun. The church all that time was a minor: see Gal. 4:1-3" (Jonathan Edwards). We shall not here attempt to summarize the divine promises and pledges which were given during the earlier ages of human history, nor the shadows and symbols which God then employed as the prefigurations of that which was to come: to do so, would require us to review the whole of the Pentateuch.

Most of our readers are more or less familiar with the early history of the Israelite nation, and of what that history typically anticipated. Yet comparatively few are aware of the marked advance that was made in the unfolding of God's counsels of grace in the days of David. A wonderful flood of light was then shed from heaven on things which were yet to come, and many new privileges were then vouchsafed unto the Old Testament Church. In the preceding ages it had been made known that the Son of God was to become incarnate, for none but a divine person could bruise the Serpent's head (cf.

Jude), and He was to do so by becoming the woman's "Seed" (Gen. 3:15). To Abraham God had made known that the Redeemer should (according to the flesh) descend from him. In the days of Moses and Aaron much had been typically intimated concerning the Redeemer's priestly office and ministry. But now it pleased God to announce that particular person in all the tribes of Israel from which Christ was to proceed, namely, David. Out of all the thousands of Abraham's descendants, a most honorable mark of distinction was placed upon the son of Jesse by anointing him to be king over his people.

This was a notable step toward advancing the work of redemption. David was not only the ancestor of Christ, but in some respects the most eminent personal type of Him in all the Old Testament. "God's beginning of the kingdom of His church in the house of David, was, as it were, a new establishing of the kingdom of Christ: the beginning of it in a state of such visibility as it thenceforward continued in. It was as it were God's planting the root, whence that branch of righteousness was afterwards to spring up, that was to be the everlasting King of His church; and therefore this everlasting King is called the branch from the stem of Jesse: 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots' (Isa. 11: 1).

'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper' (Jer. 23:5). So Christ, in the New Testament, is called 'the root and offspring of David' (Rev. 22: 16)" (Work of Redemption by Jonathan Edwards, 1757). It is deserving of our closest attention and calls for our deepest admiration that each advance which was made in the unfolding of the counsels of divine grace occurred at those times when human reason would have least expected them.

The first announcement of the divine incarnation was given not while Adam and Eve remained in a state of innocency, but after they had rebelled against their Maker. The first open manifestation and adumbration of the everlasting covenant was made after all flesh had corrupted its way on earth, and the flood had almost decimated the human race. The first announcement of the particular people from which the Messiah would spring, was published after the general revolt of men at the tower of Babel.

The wondrous revelation found in the last four books of the Pentateuch was made not in the days of Joseph, but after the whole nation of Israel had apostatized (see Ezek. 20:5-9). The principle to which attention has been directed in the above paragraph received further exemplification in God's call of David.

One has but to read through the book of Judges to discover the terrible deterioration which succeeded the death of Joshua. For upwards of five centuries a general state of lawlessness prevailed: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

Following this was Israel's demand for a king, and that, that they might "be like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:20); therefore did Jehovah declare, "I gave thee a king in Mine* anger, and took him away in My wrath" (Hosea 13:11). He, too, was an apostate, and his history ends by his consulting a witch (1 Sam. 28), and perishing on the battlefield (1 Sam. 31). Such is the dark background upon which the ineffable glory of God's sovereign grace now shone forth; such is the historical setting of the life of him we are about to consider.

The more carefully this be pondered, the more shall we appreciate the marvelous interposition of divine mercy at a time when the prospects of Israel seemed well-nigh hopeless. But man's extremity is always God's opportunity. Even at that dark hour, God had ready the instrument of deliverance, "a man after His own heart." But who he was, and where he was located, none but Jehovah knew. Even Samuel the prophet had to be given a special divine revelation in order to identify him.

And this brings us to that portion of Scripture which introduces to us, David as a youth. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons" (1 Sam. 16:1). This is the sequel to what is recorded in 1 Samuel 16:10-12. Saul had despised Jehovah, and now he was rejected by Him (1 Sam. 15:23).

True, he continued to occupy the throne for some little time. Nevertheless, Saul was no longer owned of God. An important principle is here illustrated, which only the truly Spirit-taught can appreciate: a person, an institution, a corporate company, is often rejected by God secretly, a while before this solemn fact is evidenced outwardly; Judaism was abandoned by the Lord immediately before the Cross (Matthew 23:38), yet the temple stood until A.D. 70! God had provided Him a king among the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite, and, as Micah 5:2 informs us, Bethlehem Ephrathah was "little among the thousands of Judah."

Ah, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are" (1 Cor. 1:27, 28). And why? "That no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:29). God is jealous of His own honor, and therefore is He pleased to select the most unlikely and unpromising instruments to execute His pleasure (as the unlettered fishermen of Galilee to be the first heralds of the Cross), that it may the more plainly appear the power is His alone.

The principle which we have just named received further illustration in the particular son of Jesse which was the one chosen of God. When Jesse and his sons stood before Samuel, it is said of the prophet that "He looked on Eliab and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him" (1 Sam. 16:6). But the prophet was mistaken. And what was wrong with Eliab? The next verse tells us, "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (v. 7).

Ah, my reader, this is solemn and searching: it is at your heart the Holy One looks! What does He see in you?--a heart that has been purified by faith (Acts 15:9), a heart that loves Him supremely (Deut. 6:5), or a heart that is still "desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9)? One by one the seven sons of Jesse passed in review before the prophet's eye, but the "man after God's own heart" was not among their number. The Sons of Jesse had been called to the sacrifice (v. 5), and, apparently, the youngest was deemed too insignificant by his father to be noticed on this occasion.

But "the counsel of the Lord . . . shall stand" (Prov. 19:21), so inquiry and then request is made that the despised one be sent for. "And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (16:12). Most blessed is it to compare these words with what is said of our Lord in Song of Solomon 5:10, 16, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand . . . His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely."

The principle of divine election is designed for the humbling of man's proud heart. Striking and solemn is it to see that, all through, God ignored that in which the flesh glories. Isaac, and not Ishmael (Abraham's firstborn), was the one selected by God. Jacob, and not Esau, was the object of His eternal love. The Israelites, and not the Egyptians, the Babylonians, or the Greeks, was the nation chosen to shadow forth this blessed truth of God's sovereign foreordination. So here the eldest sons of Jesse were all "rejected" by Jehovah, and David, the youngest, was the one of God's appointing.

It should be observed, too, that David was the eighth son, and all through Scripture that numeral is connected with a new beginning: suitably then (and ordained by divine providence) was it that he should be the one to mark a fresh and outstanding epoch in the history of the favored nation. The elect of God are made manifest in time by the miracle of regeneration being wrought within them. This it is which has always distinguished the children of God from the children of the devil; divine calling, or the new birth, is what identifies the high favorites of Heaven.

Thus it is written, "whom He did predestinate, them He also called" (Rom. 8:30)--called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). This miracle of regeneration, which is the birth-mark of God's elect, consists of a complete change of heart, a renewing of it, so that God becomes the supreme object of its delight, the pleasing of Him its predominant desire and purpose, and love for His people its characteristic note. God's chosen are transformed into the choice ones of the earth, for the members of Christ's mystical body are predestinated to be "conformed to the image" of their glorious Head; and thus do they, in their measure, in this life, "show forth" His praises.

Beautiful it is to trace the fruits or effects of regeneration which were visible in David at an early age. At the time Samuel was sent to anoint him king, he was but a youth, but even then he evidenced, most unmistakably, the transforming power of divine grace. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep" (1 Sam. 16:11). Thus the first sight we are given of David in God's Word presents him as one who had a heart (a shepherd's care) for those who symbolized the people of God.

"Just as before, when the strength of God's people was being wasted under Pharaoh, Moses, their deliverer, was hidden as a shepherd in a wilderness; so, when Israel was again found in circumstances of deeper, though less ostensible, peril, we again find the hope of Israel concealed in the unknown shepherd of an humble flock" (David by B. W. Newton). An incident is recorded of the shepherd-life of David that

plainly denoted his character and forecast his future. Speaking to Saul, ere he went forth to meet Goliath, he said, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him" (1 Sam. 17:34,35).

Observe two things. First, the loss of one poor lamb was the occasion of David's daring. How many a shepherd would have considered that a thing far too trifling to warrant the endangering of his own life! Ah, it was love to that lamb and faithfulness to his charge which moved him to act. Second, but how could a youth triumph over a lion and a bear? Through faith in the living God: he trusted in Jehovah, and prevailed. Genuine faith in God is ever an infallible mark of His elect (Titus 1:1).

There is at least one other passage which sheds light on the spiritual condition of David at this early stage of his life, though only they who are accustomed to weigh each word separately are likely to perceive it. "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions: How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood" (Ps. 132: 1-6). A careful reading of the whole Psalm reveals to us the interests of the youthful David's heart. There, amid the pastures of Bethlehem Ephratah, he was deeply concerned for Jehovah's glory. In closing, let us note how conspicuous was the shepherd character of David in his early days. Anticipating for a moment that which belongs to a later consideration, let us thoughtfully observe how that after David had rendered a useful service to King Saul, it is recorded that, "David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem" (1 Sam. 17:15).

From the attractions (or distractions) of the court, he returned to the fold--the influences of an exalted position had not spoiled him for humble service! Is there not a word here for the pastor's heart: the evangelistic field, or the Bible-conference platform, may furnish tempting allurements, but your duty is to the "sheep" over the which the good Shepherd has placed you. Take heed to the ministry you have received of the Lord, that you fulfill it. Fellow-servant of God, your sphere may be an humble and inconspicuous one; the flock to which God has called you to minister may be a small one; but faithfulness to your trust is what is required of you.

There may be an Eliab ready to taunt you, and speak contemptuously of "those few sheep in the wilderness" (1 Sam. 17:28), as there was for David to encounter; but regard not their sneers. It is written, "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21). As David was faithful to his trust in the humble sphere in which God first placed him, so he was rewarded by being called to fill a more important position, in which there too he honorably acquitted himself: "He chose David also for His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young He brought him to feed Jacob, His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands" (Ps. 78:70-72).

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net