



Part 1

The Hidden King

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CHRISTIAN
FORMATION

The point of this study

The goal of every Inspire study is to draw closer to Jesus Christ. In this series, we will explore the life of David, the shepherd king, and consider how his story helped shape Israel's hope for the Messiah and the early Church's understanding of Jesus as that Messiah.

This study draws on four ancient lenses of interpretation: the literary, the metaphorical (which we will call the theological), the epic (which we will call the kingdom of God), and the ethical. Each lens helps us engage more deeply with the passages we read, leading us ever closer to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God to whom the Scriptures bear witness. If you would like to explore these lenses further, you can find more in the Inspire video series [How to Read the Bible \(Part 2\)](#).

The check-in & opening prayer

As we begin this study, let's take a moment to check in with ourselves and to ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate our heart. You can do this through personal journaling or by sharing with the group.



I wonder what was a highlight of your week.

**I wonder where you may have needed
prayer or support this week.**

I wonder where you noticed God at work this week.

I wonder what you are bringing to this study.
(questions, concerns, distractions, hopes, fears, learnings...).

I wonder what you hope to receive from God through this study.

Holy God,
**open our eyes that we may behold you;
open our lips that we may proclaim your praise;
open our ears that we may listen for your Word;
and open our hearts that we may be transformed,
to become like Jesus, the Son of David,
the Son of God, our friend and helper.**

Amen.

Context (*read and reflect*)

*Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**.*

Before we turn to 1 Samuel 16:1-13, let's place it in context.

1 Samuel 16 sits at a turning point in ancient Israel's story. Up to this moment, it has moved from a loose tribal confederation (the period of the judges) into monarchy. The people had asked for a king "*like the nations*," and Samuel the Prophet anointed Saul as Israel's first king (1 Samuel 8-10). At first Saul shows promise, but over time his leadership becomes marked by fear, insecurity, and disobedience — especially in key moments where he fails to trust God's word (1 Samuel 13 and 15). By chapter 16, God has rejected Saul as king, even though Saul still sits on the throne. That tension — a rejected king still ruling, and a new king not yet revealed — forms the backdrop of this passage.

I wonder how we, too, live in the time between a rejected king still ruling and a new king yet to be revealed.



Samuel himself is caught in that tension. He grieves Saul, which tells us something important: this is not a clean or triumphant transition, but a painful one. God's instruction to Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint a new king must be carried out quietly, even cautiously, because Saul's power is still real and potentially dangerous. So the anointing of David takes place in secret, almost hidden within an ordinary act of worship — a sacrifice. From the beginning, David's kingship is not public or political; it is something God is doing beneath the surface.

I wonder how this quiet, hidden beginning might help us understand the coming of Jesus.



The Context continues on page 5, after the story...

The Story (mark and note)

Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**. As you read, circle, underline, and make notes on the passage, notice the characters, the setting, the verbs, the allusions to other parts of Scripture, the metaphors, and anything else that draws your attention. Throughout this study, you will notice that certain words or themes are highlighted. These are simply some of the things that stand out to me as I read. You may notice different details, patterns, or questions – and that is part of the beauty of reading Scripture together. Mark the text with what you notice, what surprises you, and what you sense the Spirit drawing your attention toward.

means "God has heard"

means "Asked"

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

Who is Samuel? What do you know about him? Why does his name mean "God has heard"?

Who is Saul? What do you know about him?

Make a list of interesting verbs:
grieve
I have rejected...

מָשִׁיחַ ←
→ mah-shee'-akh
means "anointed" or "Messiah"

What does it mean that the Lord does not see as mortals see?

What does it mean to be rejected or chosen by the Lord?

Notice the shepherd image!

What does it mean that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David?

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The setting in Bethlehem is also significant. It is a small, unremarkable town, not a centre of power. Jesse's family is introduced, and the narrative deliberately moves through the older, more impressive sons before arriving at David, the youngest, who is out tending sheep. This scene highlights a key theological shift: God's choice is not based on appearance, status, or expectation. As the well-known line puts it, *"the Lord does not see as mortals see...the Lord looks on the heart."* In context, this is not just a general spiritual principle — it stands in direct contrast to Saul, who was chosen in part for his outward stature and kingly presence.

**I wonder if you have ever noticed God at work
in people or places you did not expect.**



Finally, the act of anointing is crucial in itself. Oil poured on the head marks someone as set apart for God's purposes. The Hebrew word for *"anointed one"* (*mashiach*, Messiah) begins to take on deeper meaning here. David is not simply being chosen as a political leader; he is being drawn into a role that carries spiritual and theological weight. From this moment on, Israel's hope becomes increasingly tied to the line of David — looking toward a future king who will fully embody what David only begins.

I wonder how Jesus fulfills and transforms David's role as king.



The Hidden King

*Reading the Scripture through the **Theological Lens**.*

Let's take a moment to reflect on the theological theme of **the Messiah**.

Jesus is called the Messiah (Matthew 16:16; Mark 8:29; John 1:41; Acts 2:36), a Hebrew word meaning **"the Anointed One."** In Greek, this is translated as Christ. "Jesus Christ," therefore, is not a first and last name, but a name and a title: **Jesus, the Anointed One**.

Where does this idea come from? Like so much in the New Testament, its roots are found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Kings and prophets were anointed to carry out particular roles within the community — to lead, to speak, and to serve God's purposes. **Anointing was an outward act that signified God's choosing and calling.** In this sense, any king or prophet who was anointed could be described as a "messiah" — that is, an anointed one. David was one such person. In the story, David is set apart from his family and anointed by the prophet Samuel to become king of his people.

Later, anointing began to take on the shape of future hope. The prophets were gone, and the kingdom had fallen. In their absence, people began to long for their restoration — for a faithful king and a true voice of God among them. Over time, **the idea of "the anointed one" shifted from a present role to a future promise: not just any anointed leader, but one who would come to restore God's people and fulfill God's purposes.**

Someone like David — but now fulfilled in Jesus: one who was hidden and overlooked, born in Bethlehem, raised in the backwaters of Nazareth, on the fringes of an empire, crucified as a criminal, and yet the Chosen One of God.

I wonder where we may overlook people because they seem small, hidden, or unimportant.



I wonder how God might be at work in those very places—and whether we are able to recognize it.



Sharing

*Reading the Scripture through the **Kingdom of God Lens**.*

I wonder how the hiddenness of David helps us recognize the hidden ways God's Kingdom comes to us in Jesus.

I wonder how Jesus might be like David – and what that reveals about the kind of king he is and the kingdom God is bringing.

*Reading the Scripture through the **Ethical Lens**.*

I wonder where we may still be drawn to judge by outward appearance – either in others or in ourselves – and how we might begin to see more as God sees.

I wonder where we may have felt overlooked, dismissed, or unexpectedly chosen – and how God may be inviting us to respond to others who feel the same.

I wonder what it might mean that, in our baptism, we share in Christ's anointing – and are called to live as part of his work in the world.

You may close in prayer.



The Parish of St. Mark – *Ocean Park*