

Unseen > Seen

1 Samuel 16:1–13

I. Intro

- A. They say you can't judge a book by its cover, but we do it all the time
 - 1. TikTok, Instagram, the way people dress, even Christianity
- B. The heart of the Church is supposed to be Jesus, the visible image of the invisible God, but the problem is he is invisible to us too
 - 1. We can't see him. We only see the people who supposedly follow him
- C. So if they - those we can SEE - are bad examples of Christ (hint: we will be), then it's tempting to throw out God as well → judge what is UNSEEN based on what is SEEN
- D. But beneath the surface, there is always something UNSEEN that is more "the really real" to quote from "The Matrix"
- E. In God's economy, the UNSEEN is more valuable than the SEEN, and over time he is making that which is UNSEEN come to the surface
- F. One day what is UNSEEN and what is SEEN will match completely, but not today

II. 1 Samuel 16:1–14

- A. *[1] The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."*
 - 1. Samuel is a real person like me or you → he genuinely cares for Saul;
 - 2. He is hurt by sin, and he hasn't let his heart get calloused (easy to do)
 - 3. But his hurt (and the loving rebuke from God) also underscores the reality that despite a lifetime of working alongside God he is still judging things by what he can SEE, and Samuel, the Seer, sees no solution
 - 4. But God works in and through what is UNSEEN
 - a) What is unseen? "I have provided for myself a king..."
 - 5. And God has provided him... and he's been doing it for a long time
 - a) Judah → Lion of the Tribe prophesy in Genesis
 - b) Rahab → Jericho Gentile pardoned w/ scarlet thread
 - c) Ruth → Moabite widow who is redeemed by Boaz
 - d) God has been PREPARING David's lineage in the unseen realm for quite some time. He knows what he is doing
 - 6. God is the UNSEEN mover → He works in and through what is UNSEEN
- B. *[2] And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' [3] And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you." [4] 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?" [5] And he said,*

“Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

1. Once again, Samuel is fearful about what is seen → the threat of Saul
2. God gives him good, wise counsel, which Samuel follows

*C. [6] When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before him.” [7] 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 sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**”*

1. When Samuel arrives in Bethlehem, he sees Jesse and his sons.
2. Initially, Samuel assumes that the eldest son, Eliab, would be the chosen one due to his appearance → He is thinking about what is SEEN
3. But God corrects Samuel’s mistake of judging by outward impressions
4. Instead, God values what is UNSEEN, the heart
 - a) Something in David’s heart is admirable to the LORD

D. [8] Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” [9] Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” [10] And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” [11] Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.”

1. More of the same, but we are running out of sons
2. No one even considered thinking of the youngest son. He wasn’t of sufficient significance to attend the feast, and he has been “keeping the sheep” (Literally shepherding the sheep)
 - a) Wordplay since “shepherd” is used in the ANE as a royal title
 - b) The one to shepherd Israel is already growing as a shepherd
3. God’s been preparing him all along
 - a) The one who works in the UNSEEN was crafting his story

E. And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” [12] And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” [13] Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

1. This is the one God has chosen. God sees his heart. This is the king that the UNSEEN Sovereign Mover has chosen
2. David is anointed (oil poured out as a SEEN sign)
3. “Horn of oil” brings us full circle with v1 (Called an *inclusio*)
4. Right now nobody besides Samuel knows that the anointing has to do with kingship → it could be prophetic ministry, any job the Lord has

5. The purpose of anointing is to provide something SEEN as evidence for something UNSEEN

6. The SEEN here is the anointing; the UNSEEN is the Spirit poured

7. In chapter 17, God's going to provide a big SEEN exclamation point proving David's anointing: When he kills Goliath

III. Let's fast forward to another anointing...

A. *Matthew 3:16–17 [16] And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

B. David's grandson, 14 generations removed, Jesus is on the seen

C. SEEN: Nothing impressive. Carpenter's illegitimate adopted son, not very handsome, nothing special

D. UNSEEN: Oh boy; you ain't see nothing yet.

E. John the Baptist senses something about him and knows he is the promised one, but nobody else does yet. Jesus goes to be baptized, and b/c Jesus says so it happens

F. SEEN: Baptism || UNSEEN: Spirit of God falling on him, anointing him

G. Why? For the same reason, it came on David: to anoint him for a purpose

1. *Jesus explains in Luke 4:18–19 → [18] "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, [19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (ESV)*

H. Much of Jesus' ministry was doing something unseen (fighting the powers of darkness and sin), but being rejected by what was seen

1. Matthew 13:13 → "Seeing they do not see"

I. What the world saw was crucifixion and suffering → weakness

1. What God saw was victory and disarming the devil → strength

J. But God doesn't chiefly operate in the SEEN but the UNSEEN

1. We are encouraged to do the same *2 Corinthians 4:18 - as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

IV. One more anointing... happened today almost 2000 years ago, Pentecost

A. *Acts 2:1 On the day of Pentecost [festival of the harvest] all the [followers of Jesus] were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them [this is an anointing]. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. 5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the*

believers. 7 They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee... And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!"

- B. As with the previous stories, there is an anointing here - a collision between the SEEN and the UNSEEN
 - C. SEEN: Men and women gathered for prayer; the noise of a wind; anointing of oil (Holy Spirit oil!) and the proclamation of the good news of God in languages
 - D. UNSEEN: The Holy Spirit has just fell from on high, anointed his people, and taken up residence → Baptism of the Holy Spirit!
 - E. These will be a changed people, but we only see the UNSEEN spill into the SEEN over time. Some are immediate; some take awhile
 - F. Well there is a mighty harvest indeed, b/c 3000 men get saved, baptized
- V. Comparing these Stories
- A. The parallels between these stories of anointing are amazing. In them we see that God gives us confirmation in what is SEEN to show what he is really doing in that which is UNSEEN
 - B. The common thread between all of these narratives is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus. He is the UNSEEN wind who gives glory to the Son
 - C. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment
 - D. He empowers men and women to do the work of God
 - E. He teaches us truth from the Word of God
 - F. He gives the very power that raised Jesus from the dead. He can heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and cast out darkness
 - G. Jesus said that just as you cannot see the wind, but you can see the effects of the wind, you cannot see the Spirit, but you can see those who have been transformed BY the Spirit
 - H. And if you are a follower of Jesus, that includes you
 - I. The Spirit has anointed YOU in the UNSEEN realm to do God's good work here
- VI. How do we foster the UNSEEN? How do we develop a heart like David?
- A. **You must be born again of the Spirit.** This isn't a work of flesh and blood. It is a work of the Spirit. Jesus said, flesh begets flesh, and Spirit begets Spirit. Jesus said, repent and believe the good news and you will be saved
 - B. **Obey Jesus by being baptized as a believer (not as a baby)**
 - 1. Baptism is not the graduation certificate, but the birth certificate
 - 2. In the SEEN world, you don't feel worthy as a new believer. Others will say, "You're a Christian?!" But the SEEN world isn't what truly matters
 - 3. In the UNSEEN world, God says, "This is my child, my new creation, my beloved one. I have called her by name and she is mine. I take great delight in her. She is precious and redeemed. I have great works for her. I have great plans for her. I have anointed her to fulfill my purposes. Just you wait."
 - 4. When a person gets baptized, the UNSEEN is revealed in the SEEN for a brief moment. It is a visual representation of what is going on in the UNSEEN world

- a) Crucified with Christ → Buried with Christ → Dead to Sin → Raised with Christ to new life, to forgiveness, to power
 - 5. Death comes before resurrection; weakness comes before power; what is seen will be replaced by what is unseen
 - 6. Baptism is a SEEN picture to remind us of UNSEEN realities
- C. **You have to GROW in the UNSEEN and the SEEN.**
 - 1. David's heart was like God's b/c God cut out his old one and gave him a new one. He got a spiritual heart transplant; and so did you in CHRIST
 - 2. So how do you grow to develop that heart even more for God?
 - 3. Those who are the strongest and healthiest in the UNSEEN (their heart for God) are those who spend significant effort pursuing that which is UNSEEN instead of that which is SEEN
 - a) Consider David... I will awake the dawn
 - b) Consider Jesus... Early in the morning
 - 4. Crying out to the unseen one in prayer
 - 5. Seeking the invisible God in His Word b/c we want to know him
 - 6. Trusting in his unseen promises even if we don't see fulfillment
 - 7. Obeying him when the results aren't seen right away
 - 8. The UNSEEN is the Spirit's realm, and where he does his best work, forming you into the image of Christ, the Greater Son of David
- D. This is an unseen work, but it spills over into the seen world
 - 1. As Christ changes me, I begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and so on
 - 2. The unseen work boils over into the seen
- E. When I look in the mirror, I see weakness, but God sees strength. I see struggles, sin, and failure, but God sees righteousness credited
- F. Believer, if you are in Christ, you are a new creation. The old man HAS passed away → even if you can't see it in this world. The UNSEEN is becoming your reality.

VII. Imagine:

- A. Imagine a people who walked out these realities in the world around them...
- B. Invitation:
 - 1. Born Again
 - 2. Baptism
 - 3. Grow