

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

How can we protect our choices from bias?

New Revised Standard Version

Complete Jewish Bible

Easy-to-Read Version

³⁴Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel.

³⁴Sh'mu'el returned to Ramah, and Sha'ul went up to his house in Giv'at-Sha'ul. ³⁵Never again did Sh'mu'el see Sha'ul, until the day he died. But Sh'mu'el grieved over Sha'ul, and *ADONAI* regretted that he had made Sha'ul king over Isra'el.

³⁴Then Samuel left and went to Ramah. And Saul went up to his home in Gibeah. ³⁵After that Samuel never saw Saul again. Samuel was very sad for Saul. And the LORD was very sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel.

^{16:1}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." ²Samuel 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.' ³Invite 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."

^{16:1}*ADONAI* said to Sh'mu'el, "How much longer are you going to go on grieving for Sha'ul, now that I have rejected him as king over Isra'el? Fill your horn with oil, and set out; I will send you to Yishai the Beit-Lachmi, because I have chosen myself a king from among his sons." ²Sh'mu'el said, "How can I go? If Sha'ul hears of it, he will have me killed." *ADONAI* said, "Take a female cow with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to *ADONAI*.' ³Summon Yishai to the sacrifice. I will tell you what to do, and you are to anoint for me the person I point out to you."

^{16:1}The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you feel sorry for Saul? I have rejected him as king of Israel. Fill your horn with oil and go to Bethlehem. I am sending you to Jesse who lives in Bethlehem, because I have chosen one of his sons to be the new king." ²But Samuel said, "If I go, Saul will hear the news and try to kill me." The LORD said, "Go to Bethlehem. Take a young calf with you and tell them, 'I have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.' ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You must anoint the person I show you."

⁴Samuel 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?" ⁵He 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.

⁴Sh'mu'el did what *ADONAI* said and arrived at Beit-Lechem. The leaders of the city came trembling to meet him and asked, "Are you coming in peace?" ⁵He answered, "In peace. I have come to sacrifice to *ADONAI*. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." He consecrated Yishai and his sons and summoned them to the sacrifice.

⁴Samuel did what the LORD told him to do and went to Bethlehem. The elders of Bethlehem shook with fear. They met Samuel and asked, "Do you come in peace?" ⁵Samuel answered, "Yes, I come in peace. I come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Prepare yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Samuel prepared Jesse and his sons. Then he invited them to come and share the sacrifice.

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⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is now before the LORD.” ⁷But 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.” ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.”

⁶When they had come, he looked at Eli’av and said, “This has to be *ADONAI*’s anointed one, here before him.” ⁷But *ADONAI* said to Sh’mu’el, “Don’t pay attention to how he looks or how tall he is, because I have rejected him. *ADONAI* doesn’t see the way humans see — humans look at the outward appearance, but *ADONAI* looks at the heart.” ⁸Then Yishai called Avinadav and presented him to Sh’mu’el; but he said, “*ADONAI* hasn’t chosen this one either.” ⁹Yishai presented Shammah; again Sh’mu’el said, “*ADONAI* hasn’t chosen this one either.” ¹⁰Yishai presented seven of his sons to Sh’mu’el; but Sh’mu’el told Yishai, “*ADONAI* has not chosen these.

⁶When Jesse and his sons arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely this is the man who the LORD has chosen.” ⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, “Eliab is tall and handsome, but don’t judge by things like that. God doesn’t look at what people see. People judge by what is on the outside, but the LORD looks at the heart. Eliab is not the right man.” ⁸Then Jesse called his second son, Abinadab. Abinadab walked by Samuel. But Samuel said, “No, this is not the man who the LORD chose.” ⁹Then Jesse told Shammah to walk by Samuel. But Samuel said, “No, the LORD did not choose this man, either.” ¹⁰Jesse showed seven of his sons to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these men.”

¹¹Samuel 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.” ¹²He 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.” ¹³Then 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.

¹¹Are all your sons here?” Sh’mu’el asked Yishai. He replied, “There is still the youngest; he’s out there tending the sheep.” Sh’mu’el said to Yishai, “Send and bring him back, because we won’t sit down to eat until he gets here.” ¹²He sent and brought him in. With ruddy cheeks, red hair and bright eyes, he was a good-looking fellow. *ADONAI* said, “Stand up and anoint him; he’s the one.” ¹³Sh’mu’el took the horn of oil and anointed him there in his brothers’ presence. From that day on, the Spirit of *ADONAI* would fall upon David with power. So Sh’mu’el set out and went to Ramah.

¹¹Then he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse answered, “No, I have another son—my youngest, but he is out taking care of the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him. Bring him here. We won’t sit down to eat until he arrives.” ¹²Jesse sent someone to get his youngest son. This son was a good-looking, healthy young man. He was very handsome. The LORD said to Samuel, “Get up and anoint him. He is the one.” ¹³Samuel took the horn with the oil in it, and poured the special oil on Jesse’s youngest son in front of his brothers. The Spirit of the LORD came on David with great power from that day on. Then Samuel went back home to Ramah.

1. Verses 15:34-35. Consider the following:

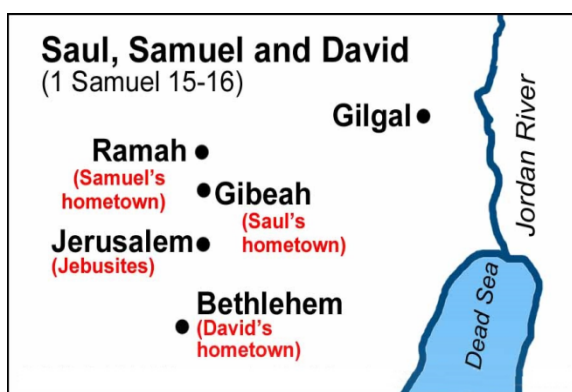
Adapted from http://www.kabbalaonline.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/702387/jewish/Fallen-Kings.htm

There are different sources enumerating Saul's errors and the reasons for his downfall.

- When Saul waged battle with the Philistines, Samuel commanded him to wait for him before offering the sacrifices they had prepared. Saul gave in to the impatience of his soldiers and broke the law by offering the sacrifices himself. He was then told that his kingdom would not last.
- He was rebuked for being not assertive enough in his mission as head of the tribes of Israel.
- Saul didn't complete the full extermination of the nation of Amalek, instead he sparing Agag their king and "the best of the sheep and the cattle, and the fatlings, and on the fattened sheep, and on all that was good; and they did not want to destroy them". When Samuel rebukes him (after killing Agag himself), Saul tried to explain away his actions. God regretted having made Saul king and declared that his reign wouldn't last long. Also, Samuel ceased to come to him, instead seeking out David, his successor.

What kind of government does Israel have? What are Saul and Samuel's roles in the government of Israel? What is their relationship to each other? What impact would that relationship have on the government?

2. What does the end of verse 35 say about God's nature?
3. Verses 16:1-3. What does verse 1 say about God's nature?
4. What does God tell Samuel to do? Consider the map and Samuel's path from Ramah to Bethlehem. How does Samuel react? Are his concerns justified? In response, what does God tell him to do? Do you think this addresses Samuel's reaction?



5. What does this interaction say about their relationship to each other? How does this differ from the relationship between Saul and Samuel?
6. Verses 16:4-5. Conjecture: do you think Samuel travelled alone or with an entourage to Bethlehem? Do you think Saul is aware that Samuel is going to Bethlehem? If so, do you think he knows why Samuel is going there?
7. Who meets Samuel when he arrives at Bethlehem? How do they react? Why might they have this reaction? What does Samuel say and do in response to their reaction? How, and with whom, does he follow through?
8. Verses 6-10. What does Samuel think when he sees Eliab in verse 6? What does God's response in verse 7 imply about Eliab?
9. Who chose Saul to be king (see 1 Samuel 9:15-17 for a reminder)? In verse 15:35 above, who regretted that choice? How or why should anyone trust the choice from among the sons of Jesse to be any different?
10. Who else does Samuel see in verses 6-10? What does he do with them, even those who are not mentioned? Does he choose any of them? Why or why not? Do you think Jesse or any of his sons know they are being examined by Samuel?
11. Verses 11-13. What does Samuel ask Jesse and how does Jesse respond? What does Samuel tell Jesse to do? Do you think Jesse was hiding David from Samuel? Why or why not?
12. How does verse 12 compare with verse 7? Is there a double-standard in comparing David with Eliab?
13. What does God tell Samuel to do? Do you think the actions involved in doing what God says were the same actions that Samuel did with Jesse and his other sons? Why or why not?
14. If the actions done by Samuel with all of the brothers were the same, what distinguishes David's anointing?
15. The title for this study is "How can we protect our choices from bias?" Discuss the overall passage in light of this topic. How can the church guard against bias? How can you guard yourself against bias?