



# Jehovah-Jireh

*“JEHOVAH, OUR PROVIDER”*

**HE IS THE ONE WHO SEES OUR NEEDS AND PROVIDES.**

Why does Saul appear to not know who David  
is in 1 Samuel 17:55-58?

Word play on ראה

SAMUEL  
and the  
DEUTERONOMIST

*A Literary Study of the  
Deuteronomic History*

== PART TWO ==

I SAMUEL

ROBERT POLZIN

1 Samuel 15:35

And Samuel did not **see** Saul again

until the day of his death,

but Samuel grieved over Saul.

And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king

over Israel.

וְלֹא־יָסַף שְׂמוּאֵל לְרֹאֲוֹת אֶת־שָׂאוּל׃  
עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ׃  
כִּי־הִתְאַבֵּל שְׂמוּאֵל אֶל־שָׂאוּל׃  
וַיְהוּה נָחֵם כִּי־הִמְלִיךְ אֶת־שָׂאוּל  
עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃ פ

1 Samuel 16:1

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."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־שְׂמוּאֵל׃  
עַד־מַתִּי אַתָּה מִתְאַבֵּל אֶל־שָׂאוּל׃  
וְאַנִּי מֵאַסְתִּיו מִמֶּלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃  
מִלֵּא קֶרְנֶךָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֵךְ׃  
אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֶל־יִשִׁי בֵּית־הַלְחֻמִּי׃  
כִּי־רִאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ׃

Genesis 22:8

Abraham said,

"God will **provide** for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

So they went both of them together.

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם  
אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לוֹ הַשְּׂעָה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי  
וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:

Genesis 22:14

So Abraham called the name of that place,

"The LORD will **provide**";

as it is said to this day,

"On the mount of the LORD it shall be **provided**."

וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא  
יְהוָה | יִרְאֶה  
אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם  
בְּהַר יְהוָה יִרְאֶה:

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And Samuel did not **see** Saul again

until the day of his death,

but Samuel grieved over Saul.

And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king

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וְלֹא־יָסַף שְׂמוּאֵל לְרַאֲוֹת אֶת־שָׂאוֹל  
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וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־שְׂמוּאֵל  
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 אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֶל־יִשִּׁי בֵּית־הַלְחֵמִי  
 כִּי־רִאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ:

- Samuel is grieving over Saul.
- God will provide (“see for himself”) a new king.  
 How will God choose this new king?

16:6

When they came, he **looked** on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him."

וַיְהִי בְּבוֹאָם וַיֵּרֶא אֶת־אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּאמֶר אֵד נִגַּד יְהוָה מִשִּׁיחוֹ:

- **Samuel does some looking but does he see correctly?**

16:7

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."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל  
 אַל־תִּבְטֵ אֶל־מְרֹאָהוֹ וְאֶל־גְּבוּהַ קוֹמָתוֹ  
 כִּי מֵאִסְתִּיהוּ  
 כִּי לֹא אֲשֶׁר יֵרְאֶה הָאָדָם  
 כִּי הָאָדָם יֵרְאֶה לְעֵינָיִם  
 וַיְהוֶה יֵרְאֶה לְלִבָּב:

- **Samuel sees the outward appearance.**
- **God sees the heart.**

16:13

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.

16:14

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul,  
and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.

16:15-16

And Saul's servants said to him,  
"Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now command your  
servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when  
the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well."

- **Who is seeing to the heart of the matter here?**

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- **Saul's servants don't just see appearances.**
- **Surprisingly, they know what the narrator has told us.**  
**They see the heart of the matter, so to speak.**

16:17

So Saul said to his servants,

"Provide for me a man who can play well

and bring him to me."

וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל-עֲבָדָיו  
רְאוּ-נָא לִי אִישׁ מִיִּטִּיב לְנַגֵּן  
וְהֵבִיאוֹתֶם אֵלַי:

- Who else was going to “provide” a man for himself?

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כִּי-רָאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ:

- **Both YHWH and Saul choose David but with very different insight.**
- **YHWH has chosen David as the next king.**
- **Saul will end up choosing a man for his inner court, not knowing that that man is God’s chosen to replace him.**

16:17

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- **How will Saul's servants answer?**
- **How will they see? By mere appearances?**

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So Saul said to his servants,

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וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־עֲבָדָיו  
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16:18

One of the young men answered,

"Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite,  
who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war,  
prudent in speech, and a man of good presence,  
and the LORD is with him."

וַיַּעַן אֶחָד מֵהַנְּעָרִים וַיֹּאמֶר  
הִנֵּה רָאִיתִי בֶן לְיִשַׁי בֵּית הַלְּחֶמֶת  
יָדַע נָגֵן וְגִבּוֹר חַיִל וְאִישׁ מְלַחֲמָה  
וְנָבוֹן דָּבָר וְאִישׁ תָּאֵר  
וַיְהוֶה עִמּוֹ:

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So Saul said to his servants,

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וַיַּעַן אֶחָד מֵהַנְּעָרִים וַיֹּאמֶר  
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וְנָבוֹן דְּבַר וְאִישׁ תָּאֵר  
וַיְהוֶה עִמּוֹ:

- **This servant sees well. Better than Samuel (v 7).**
- **Samuel and Saul aren't seeing the heart.**

17:24

All the men of Israel, when they **saw** the man,  
fled from him and were much afraid.

וְכָל־אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרָאוּתָם אֶת־הָאִישׁ  
וַיִּנָּסוּ מִפְּנָיו וַיִּירָאוּ מְאֹד:

17:25

And the men of Israel said,

"Have you **seen** this man who has come up? Surely he  
has come up to defy Israel. And the king will enrich the  
man who kills him with great riches and will give him his  
daughter and make his father's house free in Israel."

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הֲרֵאִיתֶם הָאִישׁ הַעֲלֶה הַזֶּה כִּי לְחַרֵּף  
אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָה וְהִיא הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִכְנֹס  
יַעֲשֶׂרְנוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ עֶשֶׂר גְּדוֹל וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ יִתֶּן־לוֹ  
וְאֶת־בֵּית אָבִיו יַעֲשֶׂה חֶפְשִׁי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

- How do the men of Israel see?
- Do they see as God sees? To the “heart” of the matter?
- Or do they look merely at appearances?

17:28

Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your **heart**, for you have come down to **see** the battle."

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלִיאָב אֶחָיו הַגָּדוֹל בְּדַבְרֵוֹ  
 אֶל־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּחֲרֵאֵף אֱלִיאָב בְּדוֹד וַיֹּאמְרוּ  
 לְמַה־זֶּה יֵרְדָּתָ וְעַל־מִי נִטְשָׁתָ מֵעַט הַצֹּאן  
 הַהֶנְהָל בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־זִדְּנֹךָ וְאֵת רַע  
 לְבַבְךָ כִּי לִמְעַן רְאוֹת הַמִּלְחָמָה יֵרְדָּתָ:

- **Despite what he claims, does Eliab see the heart of David or does he see mere appearances?**

17:42

And when the Philistine looked and **saw** David,  
he disdained him, for he was but a youth,  
ruddy and handsome in appearance.

וַיִּבֹט הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּרְאֶה אֶת־דָּוִד  
וַיִּבְזֶהוּ כִּי־הָיָה נָעַר  
וְאֲדָמְנִי עֵס־יָפָה מִרְאָה:

- Does Goliath “see” David correctly or does he misjudge him?

17:51

Then David ran and stood over the Philistine

and took his sword

and drew it out of its sheath

and killed him

and cut off his head with it.

When the Philistines **saw** that their champion was dead,

they fled.

וַיִּרַץ דָּוִד וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶל־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי

וַיִּקַּח אֶת־חַרְבּוֹ

וַיִּשְׁלֹפֶה מִתְּעָרָה

וַיַּמְתֵּהוּ

וַיַּכֶּתֶבֶה אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ

וַיִּרְאוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי־מֵת גִּבּוֹרָם

וַיִּנְסוּ:

- At this point David's "hidden" potential becomes evident to all and the Philistines see how they have been "miss-seeing" him.

17:55

As soon as Saul **saw** David go out against the Philistine,

he said to Abner, the commander of the army,

"Abner, whose son is this youth?"

And Abner said,

"As your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

וְכִרְאוֹת שָׁאוּל אֶת־דָּוִד יֵצֵא לְקִרְאֵת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי

אָמַר אֶל־אַבְנֵר שֵׁר הָעֶבֶא

בֶּן־מִי־זֶה הַנָּעַר אַבְנֵר

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְנֵר

חַי־נַפְשְׁךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ אִם־יֵדְעֵתִי:

- **What/How is Saul seeing now?**

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חַי־נַפְשִׁי הַמֶּלֶךְ אִם־יֵדְעֵתִי:

- **What/How is Saul seeing now?**
  - **David had not defeated Goliath yet but maybe Saul is starting to wonder?**
  - **Everything may not be as it appears.**
  - **Who is this youth who's been in his court? Where did he get such courage?**
  - **And who is that daddy of his Jesse? Hmm...**
  - **Abner is like... I donno. The servants picked him!**

18:15

And when Saul **saw** that he had great success,  
he stood in fearful awe of him.

וַיֵּרָא שָׁאוּל אֲשֶׁר-הוּא מִשְׁכִּיל מְאֹד  
וַיִּגַר מִפְּנָיו:

18:28-29

But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David,  
and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him,  
Saul was even more afraid of David.  
So Saul was David's enemy continually.

וַיֵּרָא שָׁאוּל וַיֵּדַע כִּי יְהוָה עִם-דָּוִד  
וּמִיכַל בַּת-שָׁאוּל אֲהַבְתָּהוּ:  
וַיֵּאסֶף שָׁאוּל לִרְאֵ מִפְּנֵי דָוִד עוֹד  
וַיְהִי שָׁאוּל אֹיֵב אֶת-דָּוִד כָּל-הַיָּמִים: ס

- **What/How is Saul seeing now?**

**Why can't Saul see well?**

**Because God is against him at this point.**

**God has**

- **rejected him as king**
- **torn the kingdom from him**
- **taken from him His Spirit**
- **sent him a harmful Spirit**

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have **rejected** the word of the LORD, he has also **rejected** you from being king."

1 Samuel 15:28 And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has **torn the kingdom** of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.

1 Samuel 16:14

Now the **Spirit of the LORD** departed from Saul, and a **harmful spirit** from the LORD tormented him.

- **Saul can't see because God is against him.**
- **Saul only sees David's true colours when he's already embedded in Saul's court, and army, and family.**

Also a word play on בא  
Thematically parallels the ראה word play

1 Samuel 16:1

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."

16:2

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.'

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-שְׁמוּאֵל  
עַד-מַתִּי אַתָּה מְתַאֲבֵל אֶל-שְׂאוּל  
וְאֲנִי מְאַסְתִּיו מִמְּלֶכֶךְ עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִלֵּא קֶרְנֶךָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֵךְ  
אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֶל-יֵשִׁי בֵּית-הַלְּחָמִי  
כִּי-רָאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ:

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל  
אֵיךְ אֵלֶיךָ וְשָׁמַע שְׂאוּל וְהָרְגָנִי ס  
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה  
עֲגֹלָת בָּקָר תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ  
לְזִבְח לַיהוָה בְּאַתִּי:

1 Samuel 16:1

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."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל  
עַד־מַתִּי אֶתָּה מִתְאַבֵּל אֶל־שָׂאוּל  
וְאֲנִי מֵאִסְתִּיו מִמֶּלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִלֵּא קֶרְנֶךָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֵךְ  
אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֶל־יֵשִׁי בֵּית־הַלְּחֶמִי  
כִּי־רָאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ:

16:2

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.'

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל  
אֵיךְ אֵלֶיךָ וְשָׁמַע שָׂאוּל וְהָרַגְנִי ס  
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה  
עֲגֹלַת בָּקָר תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ  
לְזִבְח לַיהוָה בָּאתִי:

**Polzin (p 159)**

**"We thus possess information about the trip's true purpose, the anointing of Saul's successor;  
we look upon the heart of the trip."**

1 Samuel 16:1

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."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל  
עַד־מַתַּי אֶתָּה מִתְאַבֵּל אֶל־שָׂאוּל  
וְאֲנִי מְאַסְתִּיו מִמֶּלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִלֵּא קֶרְנֶךָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֵךְ  
אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֶל־יֵשִׁי בֵּית־הַלְּחֵמִי  
כִּי־רָאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ:

16:2

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.'

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל  
אֵיךְ יֵלֵךְ וְשָׁמַע שָׂאוּל וְהָרַגְנִי ס  
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה  
עֲגֹלַת בָּקָר תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ  
לְזִבְחַ לַיהוָה בָּאתִי:

Polzin (p 159)

"But then God responds to Samuel's fears by inventing a subterfuge, thus creating the apparent reason for the trip: 'And the LORD said, 'Say "I have come to sacrifice"' (v.2). The narrative distance here between 'coming' and 'going' represents the ideological distance between appearance and reality."

16:4

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?"

וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה  
וַיָּבֵא בֵּית לַחֶם  
וַיַּחְרְדוּ זְקֵנֵי הָעִיר לִקְרַאתוֹ  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ שְׁלָם בּוֹאָדָּ:

16:5

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.

וַיֹּאמֶר  
שְׁלוֹם לְזִבְחַ לַיהוָה בָּאתִי  
הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ וּבֵאתֶם אִתִּי בַזֶּבַח  
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יִשְׁי וְאֶת־בָּנָיו  
וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶם לְזִבְחַ:

**Polzin (p 159)**

"No matter that God speaks to Samuel or vice versa, that Samuel speaks to the elders or Bethlehem or vice versa, or finally that the narrator speaks to the reader. In all these cases the spatial shifter indicating movement from Ramah to Bethlehem is **a going (halak)** when its true purpose is being referred to, and **a coming (ba)** when its sacrificial subterfuge is in focus. From God's spatial perspective (Ramah), Samuel **goes to anoint**; from the point of view of those at his destination (Bethlehem), Samuel **comes to sacrifice**."

16:4

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?"

וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה

וַיָּבֵא בֵּית לַחֶם

וַיַּחְרְדוּ זְקֵנֵי הָעִיר לִקְרַאתוֹ

וַיֹּאמְרוּ שְׁלָם בּוֹאָדְךָ:

16:5

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.

וַיֹּאמֶר |

שְׁלָוִם לְזִבַּח לַיהוָה בָּאתִי

הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ וּבֹאתֶם אִתִּי בַזֶּבַח

וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יִשְׁי וְאֶת־בָּנָיו

וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶם לְזִבַּח:

**Polzin (p 159)**

**"Of course the sacrifice is never reported as taking place in the story because the anointing of David is the heart of the matter, whereas the sacrifice is only outward appearance..."**

Polzin continues to track בא in the rest of 1 Samuel 16, as Samuel goes about the process of choosing David and as Saul chooses David.

On page 161 Polzin summarizes:

As with the ideological implications of *ba* earlier in the chapter, so also here [v. 17 and 21] : “to **come**” means to be seen according to appearances, as people see, rather than according to the inner truth, as God sees. The shifting spatial perspectives indicated by the narrator’s precise choice of words help to indicate the ideological perspective of the author. It may appear to Saul and his retinue that David is the answer to their problem; up to a point he is. Nevertheless, the heart of the matter, as the reader already knows, is that Saul is really helping to bring about his own downfall. God’s “having David **brought**” [v. 12 hipil of בא] to Samuel marks its true purpose: to make a king; David’s “**coming** to comfort Saul” [v. 21] merely masks its true purpose: to unmake one.