

who, because he later supported David's son Adoniyah instead of Solomon as David's heir to the throne, was finally banished, leaving the Aaronic kehunah to Zadok and his sons. Since Ahimelech and Abiathar are descendents of Eli, we read the story of I-II Shmuel knowing there is a curse on them and that their branch of the Aaronic family tree will eventually lose the kehunah. Eli should have feared G-d enough not to eat and drink judgment on himself, especially in view of his unholy sons who were kohanim (see Lv. 10:1,2,16-20). The backdrop of Eli's decadent kehunah is the ominous military threat of the Philistines, who are on the brink of subjugating the whole land and are already in some sense holding sway (13:19-22), in spite of Shmuel's best efforts (7:2-17). The sinful people discover that the ark will not work as a good-luck charm or a magical weapon. Without teshuvah (repentance) and obedient holiness, Israel will be defeated, as Samson discovered in his own experience with the Philistines. But the Philistine g-d Dagon cannot stand in the presence of the ark; rather, it falls in broken obeisance. This means that if the people of G-d through their sin lose the power of G-d, that does not mean that G-d's Word has lost its power. G-d is the true king of Israel, and the people need to beware of the tyrannical exploitation they may be asking for when they act like other nations. It turns out that King Saul, lacking covenant loyalty to the Word of G-d, falls short of the theocratic ideal, and his life becomes a foil against which to view the description of the Moshiach in

2Sm. 7:12-17, "But I will not take my steadfast love from him (David's Son, the Moshiach), as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you (David)." In I Sm. 17 we see the killing by the youth Dovid of the Philistine champion Goliath (10 feet tall, weighing in with a 150 lb. coat and a 19 lb. spear head). David's victory over Goliath begins to trigger Saul's jealousy and eventual unraveling (18:7-8). Later Saul tries to kill David, but G-d puts a wonderful brotherly love for Dovid in the heart of Saul's son Jonathan, who rescues Dovid from Saul's murderous wrath and seems to hold a serene and unselfish knowledge that Dovid and not he will inherit the throne (20:13-15). Like Jonathan, David's wife Michal, Saul's young daughter, also helps David escape (19:11-17). In the Philistine city of Gath Dovid has to use his wits to save himself, pretending to be mad. The Philistine king Achish later makes Dovid his mercenary and gives him the village of Ziklag (though, as his mercenary, Dovid outwits him, and, in a holy war, destroys non-Israelite villages rather than his own Jewish people). In any event, Achish is convinced enough by Dovid's acting skill to let him do whatever he wants (see 21:10-15) except fight side by side with the Philistine (29:3-11), something Dovid doesn't want to do anyway, especially against his own people. Up to this point Dovid with his own private army seems to act like a sort of Jewish Robin Hood, even hiring himself out as a private police force. When a wealthy sheep owner Nabal (naval = "fool") rejects Dovid and messianic association with him and thereby proves

himself a true "fool," his death opens the door for his widow to become David's wife. This woman, Abigail, is carried off from Ziklag by Amalekites (30:2) along with "the women and all who were in" Ziklag. In a foreshadow of the coming rejected Moshiach, Dovid is almost stoned by his own people, very much like Moses (Ex. 17:4; I Sm. 30:6), both Dovid and Moshe being messianic types of the Servant of the L-rd' (Dt. 34:5; I Sm. 25:39; Isa. 53:11). Chapter 8:8 shows that G-d is a rejected G-d; therefore, we should not be surprised that the Moshiach is a rejected Moshiach (Isaiah 53). But notice that when Dovid the King is rejected by the Jewish people, he is accepted by the Gentiles, the Philistines (see Acts 28:28)! Then, after that, the Jewish people accept him and crown him king, as we shall see in II Shmuel. At the end of I Shmuel, signalling that the people of Israel once again have no king and need Dovid their King to be their deliverer, a horrible picture comes into view: Saul and Jonathan and all Saul's sons are killed by the Philistines at Mt Gilboa. 1Sm 3:7; 1Sm 2:12-17 contain ominous warnings against those who are dabbling in religion and have not had the new creation experience of the new birth.

16 And Hashem said unto Shmuel, Ad mosai wilt thou mourn for Sha'ul, seeing I have rejected him as Melech al Yisroel? Fill thine keren with shemen, and go, I will send thee to Yishai of Beit-Lechem: for I have provided Me a melech among his banim. [2] And Shmuel said, How can I go? If Sha'ul hear