



CHAPTER 5

SYNTHESIS

5.1 Introduction

1 Samuel 11:1-11 was involved in various textual and historical processes to form the present text and context. Since the biblical narrative talks about the critical moment of the emerging kingship in Israel, it serves as a historical source for the probable event of that time. On the one hand, the historical description of the narrative is valuable, particularly the event in which Saul achieved a sheer victory over the Ammonites. On the other hand, the way in which his leadership and his presence are presented is highly idealized with implied intentions of the narrator. The narrator illustrated how the leadership of Saul was divinely sanctioned for the kingship of Israel. Saul's prophetic group designed the royal ideology. The text also underwent redactional activities of the Dtr in the time of Josiah and the exilic period.

Through delicate redactional intentions the narrative was incorporated in the macro-context of the royal ideology of David. It was an apology in that the Dtr attributed the evil origin of the kingship to Saul in order to provoke the Davidic character. Although many successive Davidic kings failed in their loyalty to Yahweh, their transgressions had eventually been ransomed by the Davidic monarchy. In the time of Josiah the Dtr tried to idealize the Davidic kingship and the religious tradition based on the Temple of Jerusalem. During the exile the Dtr propagated the legitimacy of the Davidic kingship that could revive the political and religious life of Israel based in Jerusalem. In the macro-context the narrative was skillfully ordered and theologically redacted.

This chapter summarizes the previous discussions and organizes the characterization of Saul in the historicized and theologized Saul, in order to point to the distinctions between historical Saul and redactional perspectives on Saul. This summary synthesizes the proposed research problem, the aims and objectives, and the methodology of this research.



5.2 Saul, the divinely sanctioned king (the prophetic tradition)

After the defeat of the Ammonites (cf 1 Sm 11:15) the tradition of Saul idealized the leadership of Saul as a divinely sanctioned kingship. The heroic achievement of Saul caught the attention of all the tribes of Israel (1 Sm 12:12). The people of Israel awoke to unite politically for their protection (cf 1 Sm 8:5). They experienced that unstable leadership resulted in destroying the religious confidence in Yahweh (1 Sm 4:1-11). There were some people who looked forward to more than the political and religious benefits from the kingship, namely permanent social benefits (cf 1 Sm 10:26). Finally, the people realized that the heroic achievements of Saul demonstrated how the leadership of the king could bring national well-being. In this well-being all their hopes could materialize (1 Sm 11:15). The people realized that Saul's leadership had been divinely sanctioned by the spirit of God, and fulfilled as prophesied (1 Sm 10:7; 11:6-7). The awareness of the divine sanction of the leadership of Saul caused them to believe that the monarchy came from Yahweh (cf 1 Sm 9:16). They knew that their expectations could only be actualized by a monarchy like the one among the nations.

By providing divine support to Saul, the prophetic group could justify their prophetic activity. In the time of Saul two prophetic groups were conspicuous: The prophetic group of Samuel in Ramah (1 Sm 19:18-20) and a group of ecstatic prophets from the high places (1 Sm 10:10-13; cf 1 Sm 10:5-7). The presence of two prophetic groups shows a possible religious conflict between them. The power game happened among the prophetic groups to grasp the religious and political hegemony in the kingship of Saul. Their religious activities were indispensable to form the kingship into a political reality among the people.

Gradually Saul became aware that he was the focal point to combine the religious, political, and social factors in his kingdom (cf 1 Sm 13:9; 14:49-51; 22:6-19). Saul's decisive and direct leadership evoked memories of victories against the enemies (1 Sm 14:47-48, 52). He was devoted to defend his



people from the enemies, the Philistines (1 Sm 31). Religiously he was devoted to make Yahweh known as the God of Israel. Practically, he presented offerings to Yahweh (1 Sm 11:7; 13:9). On the other hand, he consistently relied on answers of Yahweh to fulfill the people's expectation of him in his critical moments as king of Israel (1 Sm 14:18, 37-41; 28:6 cf 1 Sm 8:5). His religious reverence for Yahweh was expressed in building an altar for Him (1 Sm 14:35). A highly striking historical reference about Saul was depicted in his repentance before Samuel and Yahweh (1 Sm 15:24-31). Although Samuel announced Yahweh's rejection of his kingship, Saul went to worship Him (1 Sm 15:31). Several times the historical consciousness about Saul evinced that he attempted to serve Yahweh by his own way not in keeping the commands of Samuel. Samuel thought that Saul challenged his religious authority to represent Israel to Yahweh. Saul understood his kingship with regard to political and religious matters in terms of protecting the people. His temptation to be the prime figure in Israel eventually brought a serious conflict with Samuel and his disciples in Ramah (1 Sm 13:10-14; 15; 19:18-24).

In sum, Saul appeared as the king who was divinely sanctioned by Yahweh (1 Sm 11:7; cf 1 Sm 10:6). He was devoted to protect his people from their enemies throughout his life (1 Sm 31; 2 Sm 1:17-27). His real failure was that he could not build his kingship to be permanent.

5.3 Saul divinely rejected king (a redactional perspective)

5.3.1 Introduction

Throughout the DH, Saul was judged as the rejected and unfaithful king of Israel. According to the implication of the Dtr, the evil origin of the kingship was brought by Saul to Israel. Further his kingship was stained by his initial connection at the high places. The Dtr attributed the ultimate failure of the kingship of Israel to the wrong cultic practices in the high places. The Dtr considered that the cultic practices at the high places were oriented at other pagan worships. Unfaithfulness to the cultic practices in the Temple of



Jerusalem signified disloyalty to Yahweh. The Dtr longed to see the revival of the cultic life in the Temple of Jerusalem and the renewal of the Davidic monarchy. Indeed, Saul was destined to fail in the perspective of the Dtr in favor of the idealization of the Davidic kingship.

5.3.2 Saul, a leader lacking knowledge

The Dtr highlighted Saul's lack of knowledge as king of Israel. The ANE king had to prove his divine knowledge to his people as a sign of the divine sanction of his kingship. The intention of the Dtr was to indicate Saul's lack of knowledge of what was to happen. Without this knowledge a king such as Nahash (1 Sm 11:1-11) would have failed.

One of the contentions of this dissertation is that 1 Samuel 11:1-11 was originally designed as part of the royal ideology of Saul's kingship. In this narrative the royal knowledge of Saul was juxtaposed with that of Nahash. The intention of the narrator was to propose Saul's divine leadership as well as his knowledge as attested in his victory over Nahash's foolish attitude in judging future events. Indeed Saul was a legitimate king whereas Nahash was an improper king according to the idea of the ANE.

However, in the macro-context the idea of royal knowledge was applied to Saul negatively. Furthermore, it is seen in the redactional phrase, "after Samuel," and in the biblical narrative. In 1 Samuel 11:9 the Dtr intentionally changed the agent conducting the military operation from Saul to the people of Israel, "they said" (וַיֹּאמְרוּ). The voice in the sentence is hardly to be believed as the original one, since the text itself focused on idealizing Saul's definite and powerful leadership as king of Israel.

The concept of royal knowledge was highly significant to the Dtr in the relation between Samuel and Saul. Saul was initially introduced by Samuel to the prophetic group of the high place. Since then, Samuel always attempted to play a superior role over Saul, particularly in religious matters. Samuel



prophesized that Saul was to meet a prophetic group, to turn into another person, and to do what he wished to do (1 Sm 10:5-7). In 1 Samuel 13 Samuel claimed responsibility over the cultic activity that Saul performed to demonstrate his right to his people before the critical battle with the Philistines. In 1 Samuel 15 Samuel officially withdrew his support from Saul, departing from him forever. Samuel was the only prophet who could give Saul the divine answer (1 Sm 28).

The relationship obviously implied Saul's dependence (Czovek 2002:170-171; cf Rendtorff 2005:107) in the dtr context. Saul was dependent on Samuel, on his son Jonathan (1 Sm 14:1-23) and on David (1 Sm 17). The Dtr explicates that Saul absolutely relied on Samuel's leadership to build his kingship among the people (1 Sm 10:17-27). Saul was even underscored as one who relied on a medium in his final moment as king of Israel (1 Sm 28). On the contrary, in the prophetic tradition of Saul (1 Sm 11) Saul was independent and confident to resolve the crisis of Jabesh-Gilead.¹⁷³ That was the right charismatic leadership. The independence and resolution of the charismatic leadership would bring success. But the dependent leadership was not part of the charismatic leader. The dependent characterization of Saul was designed to show the illegitimacy of Saul's kingship.

Lack of divine knowledge characterized Saul with the evil religious practices denounced by the law of Deuteronomy (Dt 18:15-22). The deliberate choice and ordering of the narratives by the Dtr was designed to emphasize the evil

¹⁷³ Czovek (2002:173) paid close attention to the dependent characterization of Saul as the crucial point to observe Saul's real failure when rebuked by Samuel: "My contention is that Saul, by taking action on his own, unintentionally issued a challenge to the authority structure established by Samuel. Saul did not prove to be subservient. That the king may become independent of the prophet by establishing a second centre of power not under his control posed a real threat to Samuel." His point is that Saul's failure was not because of sin against Yahweh in the cultic activity (1 Sm 13). His failure was rather intended by Samuel who wanted to bring "the king under his prophetic control-by vague 'prophetic' formulations, delay and prophetic denouncement" (Czovek 2002:173). Although he pointed to the significant relation between Saul and Samuel, he did not give further explication on the absence of Samuel's role in 1 Sm 11. Why did Samuel intend to fail Saul's charismatic leadership in 1 Sm 13? No specific answer was given; his point was ambiguous in explaining the probable reason for Samuel's rejection.



origin of the kingship of Israel in Saul. The beginning of Saul's appearance referred to the high places (1 Sm 9:15-27; 10:13). The final moment in his life captured his visit to the medium in 1 Samuel 28. Even in his kingship Saul is characterized as the one who breaks the prophetic word to keep the cultic practice (1 Sm 13). Isaiah 44:25 pointed out that diviners and soothsayers were the origin of foolishness:

who frustrates the omens of liars, and makes fools of diviners; who turns back the wise, and makes their knowledge foolish.

The explication of the Chronicler (1 Chr 10:13-14) about the religious practices of Saul shows how the Chronicler understood the judgment of the Dtr on Saul:

So Saul died for his unfaithfulness; he was unfaithful to the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD; moreover, he had consulted a medium, seeking guidance, and did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

The focus of the Chronicler¹⁷⁴ was on the story of the medium at Endor (1 Sm 28). The inquiry of Saul from the medium (1 Sm 28) was apparently seen as unfaithfulness of Saul to Yahweh.

The perspective of the divine knowledge in the DH was surely intended by the Dtr. Saul consistently tried to have an answer from Yahweh. As he confessed to Samuel (1 Sm 28:6), he was devoted to finding the answer of Yahweh from dreams, from the Urim, or from the prophets. Saul's lack of the divine knowledge was the view of the Dtr from their particular historical situation, namely the reform of Josiah and the exilic period.

¹⁷⁴ Dyck (1998:145) viewed the idea of "unfaithfulness" as central in Chronicles, referring to unfaithfulness to the cult; further the idea of "seeking Yahweh" concerned the legitimate cult. The Chronicler convincingly characterized Saul as the one who was unfaithful to the cult of Yahweh.



5.3.3 People-oriented characterization of Saul

The appearance of Saul in 1 Samuel 11:1-11 was closely related to his hearing of the cry of the people (vv 4-6). His careful and attentive listening gave him the chance to show his divinely sanctioned leadership as king. Nahash intended to bring national shame on Israel (1 Sm 11:2). Saul appeared on the scene to protect the dignity of Israel against the intended shame. The kingship of Israel was triggered to protect the national honor. The event clarifies why the people of Israel rushed to proclaim Saul as their king (1 Sm 11:15). They certainly witnessed how Saul protected them against the insult of the enemies. The event showed that a responsibility of the monarchy of Israel was to protect the honor of the people of Israel.

This specific positive characteristic of Saul was considered negatively by the Dtr. The Dtr characterized him as driven to fail because of his attitude as the rejected king. Samuel considered Saul unfaithful in that he did not keep his command to destroy Agag and all the valuable animals and things (1 Sm 15). His positive people-oriented character was challenged as unfaithful to Yahweh.

The society of Saul was rather an 'honor-oriented society' that tried to avoid shameful and dishonorable considerations from a specific figure or group of people (cf Jemielity 1992:32). Saul's inclination to behave like he did in his people-oriented society is observed in this context.

In 1 Samuel 15:30-31 Saul implored Samuel to accompany him before the elders of Israel. He was really afraid of losing his respect and honor before the elders. Indeed the respect and honor of the elders guaranteed his kingship socially, since their honorable attitude to Saul would result in the same respect from the people. As the political head of the people, Saul hated to be treated shamefully.



The Dtr theologized that the people-oriented character of Saul drove him to grasp a kingship by accumulating political and religious authority like that of all the other ANE nations. The attempt of Saul was unjustifiable to Samuel and to the Dtr and therefore was challenged by them. The Dtr saw it as unfaithfulness to Yahweh.

In the end, the Dtr characterized Saul's kingship as illegitimate and failed in terms of the divine favor. First, Saul was not a proper judge, since he did not stand in the traditional line of the judges, as represented by Gideon who rejected the offer of kingship by the people because he acknowledged the divine kingship. Second, Saul was not a proper king who could represent all his people as well as their national God, Yahweh. He did not acknowledge the leadership of Samuel as the father of prophetic group. He rather tried to take over Samuel's fatherly role as a prophet as well as a priest.

5.4 Synthesis

Keys (1996:149-150) confirmed that there is little personal information about Saul except 1 Samuel 9-10. Further, the macro-text of the narrative of Saul focuses on showing him as king and as the king in conflict with Samuel (1 Sm 11; 13-14; 15; 17). Keys (1996:150) inferred that the only concern of the biblical text is "with his [Saul's] fall from divine favor and ultimately from his office." Indeed, the perspective of the macro-context complies with the comment of Keys.

The agenda of the Dtr was to illustrate that the kingship of Israel was originally designed as a way to make the God of Israel, Yahweh, known. This clearly departed from the intention of the people who asked to have a king. The Dtr saw the kingship that the people requested was the improper institution to make Yahweh known, unless they listened to the voice of Yahweh (1 Sm 12). To the Dtr, Saul was a typical example of one who does not make Yahweh known. Consequently, he was disqualified as king of Israel because he should have led the people to know their God, Yahweh.



As in Saul's case, the kingship of Israel failed to keep the divine knowledge. That was the reason for their exile. Ezekiel repeatedly emphasized why the kingship of Israel disappeared: "and they shall know that I am Yahweh."¹⁷⁵ In 1 Samuel 11:7 the Dtr emphasized the idea of knowing Yahweh with an additional phrase, "after Samuel."

1 Samuel 11:1-11 shows that the appearance of the kingship of Saul was inevitable in the critical period of the Israelite history. The leadership of Saul was divinely sanctioned in the prophetic manner. Actually his religious and political base came from the strong support of a prophetic group at the high place. Such a prophetic characteristic of Saul was highly welcomed by the people, since that was just the kingship that the elders requested to Samuel: "a king that all the nations have" (1 Sm 8:5).

However, in the redactional context, the value of Saul's kingship was judged highly negative because his kingship did not lead the people to know their God, Yahweh, in keeping the Mosaic covenant. The Dtr attempted to demonstrate the way which Saul's kingship held to wrongly oriented cultic practices. This kingship did not keep the people faithful in observing the covenant. According to the Dtr, as evinced in the fall of Jerusalem, the high places prevented the keeping of the covenant in knowing Yahweh. They caused the people to worship false gods. Thus, the Dtr endeavored to attribute a direct cause of the fall of Israel to the origin of the kingship of Saul who was closely connected with the high places to build his kingship. The Dtr was motivated to clarify that the political and religious base of Saul was the original reason that prevented the people of Israel to know who Yahweh is. Yahweh is the only king of Israel that the people should know.

In conclusion, the phrase, "Come out after Saul and after Samuel," shows the success of the Dtr to indicate that the leadership of Saul worked only when

¹⁷⁵ Matthews (2001:133) observed that the phrase appears more than eighty times in Ezekiel, for instance, Ezk 5:13; 6:14; 7:27; 20:26; 39:6 and so on. A similar phrase appears mainly in Isaiah (9:8; 19:21; 37:20; 41:20; 49:26).



supported by Samuel. In other words, Saul's leadership was not a completed kingship because the kingship of Saul was oriented in keeping with Samuel. In the end, the original royal ideology of Saul paved the way to David, according to the Dtr. Saul was refuted by Samuel and rejected by Yahweh as king of Israel. Indeed the intention of the phrase, "after Samuel," is not for Saul but for Samuel. It is the history of the Dtr!

The summary of the synthesized research is concisely as follows:

- Saul was king of Israel when he rescued the people of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sm 11:1-11).
- A major historical and religious thrust brought the multiple traditions into the dtr narrative.
- The social and religious background of Saul in the emergence of his kingship pinpointed his close connection with ecstatic prophetic group of the high place.
- 1 Samuel 11:1-11 highly idealized Saul's divinely sanctioned kingship in the prophetic narrative of Saul (1 Sm 9:1-10:16).
- The research proposed the characterization of Saul in terms of a prophetic tradition and a dtr redaction.
- The methodology distinguished embedded historical information in the text from a final redactional intention, that is, theological purpose of the redactor.

The discussion in the dissertation confirms my hypothesis, namely that two prophetic groups were directly involved in the emergence of the kingship of Saul: Samuel and his priestly prophetic group based on Ramah and Saul and the group of ecstatic prophets of the high place in Gibeah. Their prophetic distinction was focused on their different prophetic and cultic base. The kingship of Saul was negatively characterized with the prophets of the high places (1 Sm 19:24; cf 1 Sm 28:6, 15) by the Dtr who inherited a prophetic tradition from Samuel. The divinely sanctioned leadership of Saul in 1



Samuel 11:1-11 was paradoxically devaluated in the dtr context. The dtr redaction aimed not only to demonstrate Saul's unqualified kingship but also the evil origin of the kingship so that the Dtr could protect the kingship of David in the exilic time.