

Character Study of King Saul

By

Heather Card
July 12, 2013

In the book of 1 Samuel, we are presented with a colourful portrait of personalities during the time that the nation of Israel was in transition from theocracy to monarchy. By examining various events, dialogue, and narration, this paper will examine the major components of King Saul's character and demonstrate how Saul's attitude changed from one that honours God, to one of false piety and, finally, to one of desperate apostasy. By way of introduction, a brief definition of character and context will be provided.

Character is the aggregate of traits and features that form a person's nature and includes mental, moral, and ethical qualities.¹ A person's nature is complex and cannot be discerned merely by surface observation. In *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Robert Alter describes how we can detect a richer picture of character within biblical narrative by examining a variety of sources. He notes:

Character can be revealed through the report of actions; through appearance, gestures, posture, costume; through one character's comments on another; through direct speech by the character; through inward speech, either summarized or quoted as interior monologue; or through statements by the narrator about the attitudes and intentions of the personages, which may come either as flat assertions or motivated explanations.²

The above passage provides an extensive reference list that directs our attention beyond what the character says and does to include what is said by others and what the narrator observes and interprets for us. Using this perspective, non-verbal cues, such as physical appearance, gestures, and posture, become more than just interesting facts—they give clues to meaning. Alter also argues that different methods are not all equally reliable.³ He suggests that actions and appearances of the character are at the low end of reliability and that the reader should not necessarily accept them at face value. Meaning must often be inferred. Direct speech by the

¹ Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/character?s=t>

² Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 116-7.

³ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 117.

character or others offers a higher level of reliability; however, the reader must weigh the claims of each carefully and take into account body language and action. The highest level of certainty is obtained from explicit statements from the narrator.⁴ In the biblical context, many would also believe that the narrator writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. By paying attention to the themes and details of the narrative, we can understand what God would desire to communicate both in the past and today.

In addition to a close examination of the narrative, context is also important when evaluating character because it helps us to understand the world in which the subject lived. Just prior to the time that Saul was anointed as king, the tribes of Israel had a common God and a common law; however, there was no organized government, political unity, or system of taxation.⁵ Although Saul could look at the nations around him for guidance on how to structure and administer the government, their brand of kingship did not include Yahweh as the one true God. At the beginning of his reign, Saul was a part-time farmer, part-time pioneer king who was building the institution of monarchy in Israel from scratch. We should also remember that Samuel, who was a voice against kingship, was still very much in the picture. Interacting with this established personality and the voice that the people revered as the voice of Yahweh could be considered both a guide and an impediment.

There is also evidence that the people of Israel had high expectations of a king. At several points at the end of the book of Judges we are reminded that Israel did not have a king and that the people had a pattern of doing what was “right in their own eyes.”⁶ Samuel was getting old and his children did not follow in the ways of Yahweh. This seems to imply an expectation that

⁴ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 117.

⁵ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 93.

⁶ Judg 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25, NRSV.

the monarch would “bring an end to lawless years.”⁷ The appointment of a king could bring stability with a line of rulers that would not be sporadic like the rise of judges had been. In ancient Israel, it was also a common idea that the king would be a saviour who would bring prosperity and ensure the welfare of the people.⁸ The king was not only expected to bring moral order, but also a mechanism for improved defence against Israel’s military enemies, particularly the Philistines.⁹ Unfortunately, Saul did not have the luxury of establishing organized government during a time of peace and prosperity—this transition came at a time when Israel’s very survival was at stake. With the definition of character and the historical context in mind, we turn our attention to specific character traits of King Saul.

During our introduction to Saul,¹⁰ we encounter two sides to the same person. On one hand, Saul is described as a tall, handsome man from a wealthy Benjaminite family who is “head and shoulders above everyone else.”¹¹ Ralph Hawkins notes that this would generally be seen as a positive introduction, possibly reflecting both physical strength and character. In Semitic thought, physical characteristics were often used to express abilities.¹² A similar type of description is found when David is selected as king.¹³ Conversely, the narrative shows Saul as one who desires to turn back and give up on finding his father’s lost donkeys, deferring to the suggestions and ideas of his servant and exhibiting political naivety with respect to the prophet Samuel and his long-time influence in Israel. There seems to be no passion, ambition, or particular leadership capability.¹⁴ After Saul’s private anointing ceremony, the narrator tells us that God gave Saul a new heart, that the spirit of God possessed him, and that Saul prophesized

⁷ Gordon, *I & II Samuel Commentary*, 109.

⁸ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 110.

⁹ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 94.

¹⁰ 1 Sam 9-10.

¹¹ 1 Sam 9:1-2.

¹² Hawkins, “First Glimpse of Saul,” 358.

¹³ 1 Sam 16:2

¹⁴ Payne, *I & II Samuel*, 46.

with the prophets. In spite of this significant, transformative event and accompanying signs confirming the message that Samuel had given, Saul is passive and silent and does not tell anyone in his family about his anointing.¹⁵ One commentator says that this lack of revelation might suggest that Saul had not fully come to grips with what had just happened.¹⁶ Another scholar puts forward the notion that this passage might be folk narrative designed to relate a theme of “providential leading towards a moment of high destiny.”¹⁷

During the public discernment process to appoint a king, the narrator reveals Saul’s curious behaviour as lots were being cast. Saul had already been anointed by Samuel, received specific signs of confirmation, and been possessed by the spirit of God, yet his response was to hide among the baggage. This seems to reflect a lack of confidence, a weak motivation to be a leader, and an absence of conviction that God has called him for this role. At best Saul seems tentative and at worst, cowardly. Brueggemann portrays Saul as a candidate who is not at all eager to assume the kingship,¹⁸ while the historian Josephus characterizes this act of retreat as one of modesty and humility.¹⁹ The negative leadership perception seems more in line with the other evidence we have observed about Saul. With this conflicting portrait of Saul’s readiness and ability to be king, the reader is definitely left with the sense if Saul was to lead, there would need to be an enabling from Yahweh.

In spite of this tentative start, Saul exhibits a degree of military competency and empathy for his people during his early reign. The first example occurs after messengers bring the news of an oppressive threat by the Ammonites against the people of Jabesh-gilead. Saul is coming in from the field and he takes particular notice of the distress of the people. He says, “What is the

¹⁵ Brueggemann, *Interpretation I & II Samuel*, 75.

¹⁶ Evans, *New International Commentary*, 49.

¹⁷ Gordon, *I & II Samuel Commentary*, 32.

¹⁸ Brueggemann, *Interpretation I & II Samuel*, 79.

¹⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 6:4.

matter with the people that they are weeping?"²⁰ It is this inclination to listen to others combined with the anointing of the spirit of God that kindles his anger and spurs him to action. He summons a military force from throughout Israel with authority, boldly promises deliverance to the people of Jabesh-gilead, and implements a military strategy that soundly defeats the Ammonites. These are the actions of a different Saul than we formerly encountered because the spirit of God is on him. He is bold, not tentative. He is a leader, not a follower. In the aftermath of this victory, Saul also shows mercy to those who had previously opposed his kingship²¹ and focuses on the victory God has given.²² Unfortunately, this generosity and mercy will not be a theme in future encounters involving Saul as he resorts to retaliating against those he perceives as a threat.

First Samuel 13–14 provides additional examples of Saul's military success and also character flaws that foreshadow trouble for Saul. The narrator portrays Saul as one who fights against enemies on all sides, rescues Israel from the Amalekites, fights continuously against the Philistines, and recruits strong, valiant warriors.²³ These are not insignificant statements, given the fact that Saul's kingdom was poor and that the army was not numerous compared to their foes.²⁴ However, against this backdrop of early military competency, we begin to see some serious character flaws. One of the most significant character flaws Saul displays during the remainder of his reign is his propensity to live by signs and superstitions versus faith and obedience to God. His attitude changes from one that honours God, as depicted in the Ammonite victory at Jabesh-gilead, to one of false piety and, finally, to one of desperate apostasy.

²⁰ 1 Sam 11:5.

²¹ 1 Sam 10: 27.

²² 1 Sam 11:13.

²³ 1 Sam 14: 47-48, 52.

²⁴ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 219.

The first instances of King Saul's obsession with ritualistic guidance and signs is most clearly illustrated in the battle against the Philistines in 1Sam 13-14 where King Saul offers a sacrifice without Samuel, utters two oaths, and inquires of God in a ritualistic manner. In offering the sacrifice before Samuel's arrival, David Payne identifies three faults: a lack of faith in God in a military situation where Israel was outnumbered, an abuse of office (because Saul acted as a priest when he was not authorized to practice sacred rituals), and a disobedience of instructions from Samuel, which was in effect disobeying God.²⁵ Other scholars agree that the most significant offense was the fact that Saul usurped the role of Samuel, which is representative of rejecting the ways of Yahweh. Ralph Hawkins elaborates that the chosen king would be one who had God's interests at the forefront. He said, "[The one] who truly has God's interests at heart...will submit himself to Yahweh's will rather than take matters into his own hands."²⁶ In this instance, Saul fell into the trap of relying on his own judgment. Brueggemann argues that when Saul was anointed, he was authorized as a judge and warrior, but not as a priest.²⁷ Saul would have known this because Samuel had expressly outlined the rights and duties of kingship in the presence of the people at his appointment as king.²⁸ Saul could not claim a lack of role clarity or ignorance.

The second example of Saul exhibiting a propensity for signs is the counter-productive oath that enforced fasting for his army during the Philistine battle. Even though Saul's army was substantially outnumbered and poorly equipped, Saul decreed that anyone who ate food before the battle ended would be cursed. Mary Evans notes that Saul's oath reflects a superstitious fear and a lack of understanding of what God required. She writes:

²⁵ Payne, *I & II Samuel*, 65.

²⁶ Hawkins, "First Glimpse of Saul," 361.

²⁷ Brueggemann, *Interpretation I & II Samuel*, 99.

²⁸ 1 Sam 10:25.

Saul again attempts to ensure that God is behind their action, but his understanding of what God requires (and presumably of who God is) is limited. His use of the oath suggests that he thought God could be bribed. Whether out of personal loyalty or out of superstitious fear, his troops, in spite of the difficulties that his oath will cause on a day of demanding military activity, follow the rigid fasting that Saul imposed upon them.²⁹

This argument points out a weakness in King Saul's theology toward God's requirements.

Yahweh required faith and obedience. One could speculate that perhaps practices of neighbouring countries had influenced King Saul, but in this leadership position that excuse would not be acceptable.

We can compare Saul's behaviour with respect to signs with his son Jonathan.³⁰ After the reprimand from Samuel regarding the sacrifice, Saul remains on the outskirts of the town and Jonathan takes the initiative to go to the Philistine garrison. After asking for a sign, Jonathan and his armour bearer kill about twenty men and eventually cause panic in the Philistine camp that could be seen from Saul's lookout. Saul's army eventually join them and there is a significant victory that day. Paul Evans notes that a different motivation is exhibited by Jonathan compared to Saul, because the request for a sign was supported by an overt faith in Yahweh,³¹ despite the disadvantage of Israel in terms of military might. In contrast to Jonathan, King Saul, though noticing the confusion in the Philistine camp as well as the opportunity to attack, initially instructs Ahijah the priest to inquire of God. Only when Saul feels he can no longer delay does he instruct Ahijah to withdraw his hand so that they can proceed to attack.³² Evans notes that Saul is paralyzed from action until he obtains a sign.³³

²⁹ Evans, *New International Commentary*, 69.

³⁰ 1 Sam 14.

³¹ Evans, "Not by Signs," 46.

³² Klein, *World Commentary I Samuel*, 137.

³³ Evans, "Not by Signs," 46.

After the initial success against the Philistines led by Jonathan, Saul desires to pursue his enemies further. He inquires of God, but receives no answer and immediately proceeds to use the Urim to determine why God is not responding to them. At this point he also utters the second oath that the person at fault would die. Jonathan is determined to be responsible because, unknown to him, he had eaten some honey against Saul's declared fast. Saul shows no compassion for his son, only cold resolution to keep the oath he has uttered. This rapid succession of oath, casting lots, and inquiry demonstrate Saul's nearly paralyzing dependence on signs.

We see King Saul's plummet to the lowest level with respect to seeking signs just prior to his last battle with the Philistines.³⁴ The following passage provides a graphic portrait of Saul's desperation and descent into divination and witchcraft:

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, not by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, 'Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.'³⁵

As king, Saul would have been very aware of God's law banning witchcraft.³⁶ Judaic scholar Shaul Bar notes that "inquiring of the dead is very similar to consulting with pagan deities, which is why it was banned in Israel."³⁷ Earlier in his reign, King Saul had removed witches from the land; however, they had not only returned, but it appears that Saul knows they exist and that his servants know exactly where to find one. When Saul fails to receive a response from God, he does not choose to repent and seek reconciliation with Yahweh, but rather he resorts to sorcery in order to receive the direction he feels he needs. Pamela Reis draws our attention to the

³⁴ 1 Sam 28.

³⁵ 1 Sam 28: 5-7.

³⁶ Deut 18: 11-12.

³⁷ Bar, "Witch of En-dor," 102.

repetitive detail in the narrative that tells us Saul “disguised himself and put on other clothes”³⁸ before going to the witch. Reis connects the figurative meaning of the root word selected for clothing and the word treachery, which she suggests the narrator intended as a descriptor for Saul’s infidelity to God.³⁹ Reis goes on to argue that Saul, after an unsuccessful encounter with Samuel, participated in a covenant ritual with the witch as one last attempt to save his life in the impending battle.⁴⁰ This deed was the last in a series of actions that showed the downward spiral of King Saul’s character. Initially, with the Ammonites, he acted under the influence of God and by faith. Later, his ritualistic reliance on signs led him to seek the sign instead of the God who provided the sign. He acted from a place of fear and panic, not from a place of faith. Finally, this need for signs led him on a desperate trajectory, which resulted in rebellious apostasy.

Saul was not only flawed in his character because of an over-reliance on signs, but he was also swayed to a particular course of action by listening to others. In 1 Samuel, Saul’s obedience to the voice, will, and desires of others is a significant theme.⁴¹ As king, however, his focus should have been on listening to Yahweh. The positive trait of sensitivity toward the plight of the people noted during the Ammonite battle early in his reign unfortunately developed into a pattern of being a people pleaser. For example, Saul was driven to make the sacrifice without Samuel because of the influence the people exerted on his judgement.⁴² Instead of calling them back to faith in God, Saul caved in. Later, in 1 Samuel 14, it was the people who saved Jonathan from being a victim of Saul’s rash oath. The narrator records that “the people ransomed Jonathan, and he did not die.”⁴³ Saul did a complete flip-flop. One minute he is calling down a

³⁸ 1 Sam 28:8.

³⁹ Reis, “Saul and the Witch of Endor,” 6-7.

⁴⁰ Reis, “Saul and the Witch of Endor,” 16-17.

⁴¹ Sellars, “An Obedient Servant,” 323.

⁴² Sellars, “An Obedient Servant,” 327.

⁴³ 1 Sam 14:45.

curse upon himself if he does not follow through and kill Jonathan; the next minute he acquiesces to the will of the people. We would normally applaud a leader who is able to admit when they have made a wrong decree, but in Saul's case there seems to be a pattern of being driven by the will of others instead of the will of God.

When Saul defeats the Amalekites, but spares their king, Saul confesses that he had feared the people and had allowed this fear to listen to them and do what they wanted in regards to sparing the sheep, cattle, and king. He says, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."⁴⁴ He does not exhibit the strength of character to stand up for the right course of action when challenged. Moreover, he seems more concerned with saving face in front of the people than truly repenting of his disobedience. Saul says to Samuel, "I have sinned; yet honour me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me so that I may worship the LORD your God."⁴⁵ Saul wanted to be viewed positively in the eyes of the people at the expense of real repentance.

A final example of Saul's propensity to listen to others occurs in the narrative with the witch of Endor. Samuel has just pronounced that he and his sons would die and Israel would be defeated in the impending battle with the Philistines. Saul is fearful, with no strength because he has been fasting. The witch and Saul's servants persuades him to listen to her and eat with her. As previously discussed, this was not a meal of hospitality, but rather a covenant meal with the witch. Pamela Reis examines the length of the narrative as well as the words used in preparation of the calf. She notes, "After the witch sacrifices the calf, we are not told how she prepares it. The absence of detail in this regard is especially noticeable because we are given so many

⁴⁴ 1 Sam 15:24.

⁴⁵ 1 Sam 15:30.

particulars to describe the preparation of the bread.”⁴⁶ She goes on to conclude that the meat was not cooked, but rather eaten raw with blood. Saul is swayed by listening to others to take part in a communal meal that was part of an abominable rite designed to change the outcome predicted to him by Samuel.

The tendency to be a people pleaser connects to other detrimental aspects of Saul’s character: insecurity, jealousy, and instability. Saul’s tentative nature was observed before Samuel appointed him as king. This insecurity intensified during Saul’s kingship and provided fertile ground for jealousy, rash actions, and destructive behaviour. Jealousy is defined as “resentment against a rival or against another’s success as well as a mental uneasiness from suspicion or fear of rivalry and unfaithfulness.”⁴⁷ These words accurately describe King Saul, particularly from the time the spirit of God left him. Samuel identifies Saul’s insecurity after the Amalekite defeat. Samuel says, “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?”⁴⁸ Samuel was exhorting Saul to have confidence, not only because he was king, but because he could rely on Yahweh.

Another example of Saul’s insecure, jealous behaviour occurred after David accomplished an amazing victory over Goliath, empowered Israel’s troops to defeat the Philistines, and entered the permanent service of Saul. David was successful wherever he went and Saul appointed him as commander over the army. The narrative reveals that both Saul and the people had trembled in fear because of the threat of Goliath. Everyone loved David because he was the catalyst of an amazing victory. Brueggemann asserts that though Saul outwardly celebrated with David, inwardly he felt threatened.⁴⁹ Hoping to kill David, he twice tried to pin

⁴⁶ Reis, “Saul and the Witch of Endor,” 17.

⁴⁷ Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/jealousy?s=t>.

⁴⁸ 1 Sam 15:17.

⁴⁹ Brueggemann, *Power, Providence, Personality*, 27.

David to the wall with a spear and he required him to kill one hundred Philistines in order to marry his daughter. All this was an attempt to kill David. The narrator in this passage shows us that Saul was so distressed that it drove him to consider David as an enemy: “But when Saul realized that the LORD was with David, and that Saul’s daughter Michal loved him [David], Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul was David’s enemy from that time forward.”⁵⁰ Saul progressively moved from insecurity to jealousy to murderous intent.

A further example of Saul’s disturbing, insecure behaviour occurred when he slaughtered eighty-five priests at Nob. David had fled from Saul and stopped to obtain food as well as the sword of Goliath. He then fled to various places with his band of mercenaries. Saul was paranoid. He accused his servants and his family of being disloyal and of conspiring against him,⁵¹ choosing to view everything through that lens. When it was revealed that Ahimelech the priest inquired of God for David and provided him with food and a sword, Saul responded by ordering the annihilation of the all the priests and their families. Saul said, “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also is with David; they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me.”⁵² In spite of Saul’s coercive power, he was unable to convince his servants to carry out his commands. By eliminating the priests, Saul cut off his conduit to God, which he so desperately sought. Brueggemann notes that it is both ironic and telling that Saul, who refused to execute God’s command to completely destroy the Amalekites, was willing to act so destructively against his own people.⁵³ Saul does not listen to the external evidence given to him that David is a faithful servant. Ahimelech’s explanations do nothing to change Saul’s mind.

⁵⁰ 1 Sam 18: 28-29.

⁵¹ 1 Sam 22:7-8.

⁵² 1 Sam 22:17.

⁵³ Brueggemann, *Interpretation I & II Samuel*, 160.

David Payne argues that this harsh execution shows that Saul has nothing left but raw power and an insane jealousy toward David. He said:

While Saul's actions were due to his morbid state of mind, they do nevertheless illustrate vividly the dangers of absolute power, and what is required in an ideal ruler. He must promote justice; and if injustice has to be punished, he must not pronounce vindictive and brutal verdicts.⁵⁴

Here Saul does not act as the saviour king who is charged with the responsibility to care for the people nor does he show respect for the office of the priest. He is driven only by the obsessive desire to dispose of David.

The next several chapters following describe two specific incidents where David spares Saul's life, in spite of Saul's intense, murderous pursuit. First Samuel 24 reveals that Saul has an army of three thousand men chasing David. Given the scarcity of available resources against Israel's enemies, it seems foolish to devote such time and energy to this cause. When Saul realizes that David did not capitalize on the opportunity to kill him, his dialogue indicates that he is remorseful;⁵⁵ however, this remorse is short-lived. In the second pursuit narrative, David takes Saul's spear and water jug, yet does not harm him. By this act David honoured Saul as the LORD's anointed out of reverence for God and tried to prove that he was not disloyal. Again, the dialogue of Saul is repentant, but the narrator reveals that Saul's outward words cannot be trusted. David escapes to the land of the Philistines so that Saul will stop his pursuit.⁵⁶ Saul's insane jealousy is counter-productive. Not only does he waste his own energies, but he also squanders the gifts of David to Israel.⁵⁷

One scholar suggests that there could be underlying medical conditions that led to Saul's bad behaviour. Gillian Williams posits that Saul might have suffered from post-traumatic stress

⁵⁴ Payne, *I & II Samuel*, 119.

⁵⁵ 1 Sam 24: 16-19.

⁵⁶ 1 Sam 27: 1.

⁵⁷ Jobling, *I Samuel*, 91.

disorder or depression. She argues that traumatic events, such as the slaughter of people in a battle situation, make the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder a relevant possibility. Further, she argues that Saul's insomnia, feelings of worthlessness, and indecisive behaviour would be consistent with symptoms of depression.⁵⁸ While this is an interesting theory on the negative personal characteristics of King Saul, it does not seem to fit with the overall narrative that Saul was rejected for his disobedience. If Williams' theory is true, we might ask whether God would reject someone for behaviours they exhibited that were caused by an illness outside of their control. Further, unlike the medical condition of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth⁵⁹, the narrator does not describe Saul's condition in medical terms.

Although this examination of King Saul's character in 1 Samuel has led an overall negative impression, it is important to recall that he did experience a flicker of greatness at the beginning of his reign. During the battle against the Ammonites, he was possessed by the spirit of God, which gave him the power and authority to command an unorganized, poorly-equipped army to victory. He was sympathetic to the plight of the people of Jabesh-gilead, which moved him to act justly, like the saviour king that Israel had been awaiting. He showed mercy to those who had opposed him and most importantly recognized that God had brought deliverance. Though the subsequent battles were not executed according to God's command, there was a measure of military success and positive recruitment of valiant warriors under Saul's leadership.

However, King Saul possessed several negative character traits that in combination led to his eventual demise. When the spirit of God left Saul, his insecurity and jealousy toward others intensified and, in the case of David, resulted in a murderous chase around the country. He accused his children, priests, and servants of conspiring against him and his paranoia resulted in

⁵⁸ Williams, "Saul's Mysterious Malady," 2.

⁵⁹ 2 Sam 9:3.

a massacre of priests and their families and an unwise use of his own energies and the country's resources.

Most notably, Saul did not live by faith and in whole-hearted obedience to God. He allowed himself to be swayed by others in his decision-making, instead of anchoring his actions to the direction that God had provided. He was insecure and fearful of the people. As a result, he tried to please people rather than lead people. King Saul also demonstrated that he did not truly understand what God required of him. He treated legitimate, orthodox, and sacred things in a way that caused an unhealthy reliance on the signs themselves. As a result, he did not approach God or the sacred rituals with a spirit of faith and obedience. This pattern of ritualistic dependence eventually led him to consult with a witch for guidance, an open rebellion against God.

Bibliography

- Atler, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1981.
- Bar, Shaul. "Saul and the 'witch of En-Dor'." *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (April - June 2011): 99-107.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *First and Second Samuel: Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1990.
- . *Power, Providence & Personality Biblical Insight Into Life and Ministry*. Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990.
- De Vaux, Roland. *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions*. Translated by John McHugh. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997.
- Evans, Mary J. *1 and 2 Samuel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.
- Evans, Paul S. "Living by Faith and Not by Signs: Seeking But Not Divining the Will of God." *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry*, 2010-2011: 33-60.
- Gordon, Robert P. *I & II Samuel A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.
- Hawkins, Ralph K. "The first glimpse of Saul and his subsequent transformation." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 22, no. 3 (2012): 353-362.
- Jobling, David. *1 Samuel*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical , 1998.
- Klein, Ralph W. *1 Samuel*. Second. Vol. 10. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.
- Josephus *The New Complete Works of Josephus Revised and Expanded Edition*. Translated by William Whiston. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999.
- Payne, David F. *I & II Samuel*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1982.
- Reis, Pamela Tamarkin. "Eating the Blood: Saul and the Witch of Endor." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 1997: 3-13.
- Sellars, Dawn Maria. "An obedient servant? The reign of King Saul (1 Samuel 13-15)." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35, no. 3 (March 2011): 317-338.
- Williams, Gillian Patricia, and Magdel Le Roux. "King Saul's mysterious malady." *HTS* 68 no. 1, 2012: 1-6.