

## **PHD THESIS SUMMARY**

**THESIS TITLE:** The Dynamics of Divine Sovereignty in 1 Samuel 9-15

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### **Chapter 1 - Introduction / preliminaries**

In this chapter we will present the necessity and the importance of the subject and in the second part we will pay attention to the presentation of the methodology used in this paper.

The thesis we want to deepen in this paper is: The Dynamics of Divine Sovereignty in 1 Samuel 9-15. The proposed thesis falls into the field of biblical theology and makes a major contribution to it by proposing a holistic perspective on God's sovereignty, a perspective in which God is in control of all things, and His sovereignty is

manifested in and through the human agent. This control of God over all things is manifested in an individual, community and socio-political context. Thus, the proposed thesis goes beyond the reductionist discussions of God's Sovereignty (Calvinism) and Human Responsibility (Arminianism) and aims to explore the methods by which God's sovereignty is manifested through the human agent, for the good of all creation in the context of the covenant. The applicability, importance and contribution to biblical theology of a study that presents the dynamics of divine sovereignty are highlighted by the limitation of the literature.

The narrative of King Saul (1 Samuel 9-15) was chosen as a biblical paradigm that emphasizes and reflects the dynamics of divine sovereignty because in this narrative can be seen the way in which the dynamics of divine sovereignty in relation to the human agent are fully manifested. This is by raising Saul to become the agent through which this sovereignty is manifested, then the narrative shows the way in which the actual manifestation of divine sovereignty takes place, and finally the failure of the human agent (Saul) in fulfilling his mandate is

presented. At the same time, the limitation of the study to the narrative of King Saul is justified by the fact that the dynamics of divine sovereignty through its three major elements become paradigmatic for the way YHWH manifests as sovereign in other Old Testament narratives (David, Solomon, etc.).

Although Saul appears as a character until the end of the book of 1 Samuel (9-31), as the protagonist of the narrative he is identified only in the section of chapters 9-15. Kyle McCarter Jr. develops an argument in this regard by analyzing literary history. McCarter identifies three major categories of the text in 1 Samuel and put together by Deuteronomy, the three categories of the text form the history of the beginning of the monarchy in Israel. The three categories identified by McCarter are: the story of the ark of the covenant (chs. 2-7), the cycle of Saul (chs. 9-15) and the history of David's reign (1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5). An additional argument in justifying the limitation of the analysis only to the "Saul cycle" is provided by Marcel Măcelaru, who states that this section of 1 Samuel is "more than just a distinct material, these

chapters form a narrative with a coherent content, which it has a meaning of its own. "Thus, the limitation of the analysis of the biblical text only to the section starring Saul is justified and supported by other academic opinions.

We will pay special attention to reading the Bible text with two questions in mind. On one hand, we will look for the answer to the question: "How is divine sovereignty manifested in relation to the human agent?" And the second general question in mind is about the human agent's response to divine sovereignty. "How does the human agent respond to the divine sovereignty manifested in his law?" Through this second question we will make a psycho-social portrait of Saul and for this we will analyze Saul's relationship with Samuel. Following the analysis of the text from this perspective of the dynamics of divine sovereignty and the search for the answer to the question of how the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty takes place, certain principles regarding the dynamics of divine sovereignty will be elaborated to the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

From this point of view, we consider that the method used is part of the category of deductive methods, offering the possibility of the biblical text to present the theological principle.

It is necessary to write a paper like this and because some studies by David Gunn or Sarah Nicholson provide a dark picture of how the person of YHWH should be viewed in the text of Saul's narrative. From the perspective of these researchers, YHWH is acting in a whimsical and malicious way to prove that the people's request to be ruled in a monarchical way is wrong. Saul is being hunted by YHWH, he has no chance of being rejected from the very beginning. These perspectives require a coherent theological answer and through this study we believe that this answer is offered. The emphasis of the work on the dynamics of divine sovereignty that is favorable to the people of Israel highlights the opposite of the perspectives held by Gunn and Nicholson.

After framing the subject appropriately in the literature and observing the biblical paradigm on the dynamics of divine sovereignty in 1 Samuel 9-15, we will

develop a chapter to show how the principles deduced from previous chapters can shape an outline of the beginning of biblical theology regarding the dynamics of divine sovereignty. Thus, we will elaborate a work of theological synthesis that we will frame in the context of the Deuteronomistic history, emphasizing the dialogue with the specific works for the theology of the Old Testament. In this analysis we will also pay attention to the concept of "man after God's own heart" which from the perspective of this paper does not refer to a particular man, as is often considered to refer to David, but considers a model of man which as we will see in the analysis, fails to be met by any of the candidates (Saul, David, Solomon or the rest of the kings). The interpretation we will give to this concept will be of a messianic nature.

From a methodological point of view, given that the work is part of the field of biblical theology, we intend to analyze some relevant passages for the subject and for this we chose the Old Testament narrative, specifically the narrative of the reign of King Saul (1 Samuel 9- 15). In the analysis of the biblical text we will have a synchronic

approach, because the purpose of the paper is not to present a historical exposition of the reign of Saul (diachronic) but rather to observe the way in which divine sovereignty is manifested. The method we propose in approaching and analyzing the biblical narrative is similar to what some researchers call "surface reading," that is, it does not seek a detailed analysis of the passage structure or the discovery of linguistic or symbolic details, but rather the evolution of a certain concept. In other words, we aim to approach the biblical text with the desire to observe how the concept of divine sovereignty is developed. In the close reading of the 1 Samuel narrative we will look for answers to two questions.

For the analysis and interpretation of the biblical text we will use our own construct called contemplative hermeneutics. When we refer to contemplative hermeneutics we have in mind that time of hermeneutics focused on discovering the character of God. Unlike contemplative hermeneutics, classical hermeneutics can be considered a directive, focused on extracting practical applications from a particular biblical passage. Such a

man-centered approach, be it the biblical character or the contemporary reader, has in itself an accentuated limitation and a form of legalism. Focusing on practical principles without contemplating God, causes the reader and interpreter of the sacred text to miss the beauty of the sacred text, which consists in presenting and discovering the character and Person of God. If directive hermeneutics focuses on discovering the rules and applications that the human agent must implement, contemplative hermeneutics focuses on discovering the person of God, as He describes in the sacred text? How does God relate to the human agent?

Knowing God requires an answer from the human agent, but this answer does not come from a set of rules but rather from knowing God. If through directive hermeneutics the motivation for applying scriptural principles comes from outside, through contemplative hermeneutics the motivation comes from within. The end result of contemplative hermeneutics is not the observance of rules that must be followed, but the fact that



the human agent is an integral part of God's plan, "Missio Dei," and will act for God's common good.

In other words, contemplative hermeneutics does not only apply to the biblical text but becomes a way of thinking, a way of existence, it is superior to directive, limited and legalistic hermeneutics. This concept of contemplative hermeneutics can be identified as a form of theological reading of the sacred text, a reading in which it is not only intended to extract principles applicable to Christian ethics but by approaching the text through theological reading theology occurs at the reader's level.

Applying this contemplative hermeneutics to the text of 1 Samuel 9-15 makes the approach distinct from other theological approaches to the text. The uniqueness of this paper is precisely by reading the biblical text applying this contemplative hermeneutics. The application of this hermeneutics, centered on the person of YHWH, will provide a holistic picture of the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

Regarding the methodology approached in this paper, it is necessary to elaborate the definition of some terms that we will often encounter during the paper. First of all, it is necessary to define what is meant in the context of this work by divine sovereignty. When we speak of divine sovereignty, we do not limit ourselves to the fact that YHWH is omnipotent and acts according to His own will, independently of any other external factor that might influence Him.

From the perspective of Christopher Wright, who emphasizes the redemptive dimension of God's mission, we will say that YHWH manifests himself as sovereign in this redemptive purpose. The choice of the people of Israel to reflect the relationship that YHWH desires to have with the entire creation is the defining element of the identity of the people of Israel and at the same time represents the main act by which divine sovereignty is manifested. As we will see in the course of the paper, the monarchy demanded by the people posed a danger to the identity of the people of Israel and thus to their mission. The dynamics of the manifestation of divine sovereignty

are intended to keep the people of Israel on the path of fulfilling their mission to reflect YHWH's relationship with all of creation.

Thus, by the dynamics of divine sovereignty, in this paper we understand the process by which YHWH manifests Himself as the Lord of all creation, who wants to keep the chosen people in the paradigm by which the relationship between YHWH and the people reflects the relationship with all mankind. The tendency of the people to become like the surrounding nations requires that the dynamics of divine sovereignty include elements such as the entry of the Covenant into a new phase of its manifestation by introducing the office of נָגִיד or raising and sustaining the agent by which divine sovereignty is manifested. And when the human agent deviates from his mission, the disciplinary dimension of the dynamics of the manifestation of divine sovereignty can be observed. In the chapters on the analysis of the biblical text (chapters 3 and 4) the distinction between נָגִיד and מְלִיךָ regarding the role played by the human agent will often be used. It is necessary to define these terms not only from an

etymological point of view but also from the point of view of their functionality in this paper.

מֶלֶךְ is the term that from an etymological perspective is defined as king, emperor, monarch. But as will be demonstrated during the paper, the connotation of the term is much broader. In the context of the OAA, מֶלֶךְ is seen as the sovereign with divine abilities. Thus, in the context of the people of Israel only YHWH can be considered מֶלֶךְ. From this perspective, the request of the people of Israel presented in 1 Samuel 8 is interpreted as a rejection or detachment of the people from the true מֶלֶךְ, YHWH.

שָׂרֵפָה from an etymological perspective refers to a crowned prince who does not have full powers in a kingdom. In this paper, the term שָׂרֵפָה is presented as an alternative to YHWH for מֶלֶךְ requested by the people. Thus the term will be used to describe the human agent by which divine sovereignty is manifested. This human agent is a vassal of the true מֶלֶךְ, that is, YHWH. Through this office YHWH remains Sovereign in Israel and the people receive a visible form of administrative leadership. שָׂרֵפָה cannot act

independently but rather is totally dependent on YHWH in the whole act of leading Israel. The mission of נָגִיד is a limited one, it is presented in 1 Samuel 9:16 where it is stated that the duties of this office are exclusively military and administrative. Exceeding these duties, leads to the transformation of the human agent from נָגִיד to מְלִיךָ. Thus, the boundary of the functionality of the two terms is very fine and materializes in the ability of the human agent to submit to YHWH, as Sovereign. In the context of the narrative studied in this paper, this is exactly the failure of Saul, he is meant to occupy the office of נָגִיד but through his actions he proves that he behaves like a מְלִיךָ. The dynamics of the manifestation of divine sovereignty, as defined above, take place in order to preserve the identity of the people of Israel in the broader context of YHWH's mission.

## **Chapter 2 - Framing in the specialized literature**

From the presentation of the way in which this paper is included in the literature, both in terms of the studies elaborated on the text analyzed in 1 Samuel 9-15 and on the topic of divine sovereignty, several perspectives can be observed.

Regarding the main studies of the analysis of the text in 1 Samuel, it can be seen that there are perspectives that present this narrative as a tragedy. In turn, this perspective is divided into two, on one hand it is the perspective in which Saul's narrative is a tragedy due to the fact that from the very beginning he is doomed to failure, he is hunted by YHWH to prove the seriousness of the people's mistake to ask for a king. So in this perspective, it is not Saul who is to blame for his failure, but YHWH places Saul's tasks in a very ambiguous way so that he can fail and prove the inability of human leadership. This perspective is supported by David Gunn, Sarah Nicholson, Tomás Czövek or Lyle Eslinger. On the other hand, Saul's life is seen as a tragedy but not with the

responsibility of YHWH, but Saul is presented as responsible for his own mistakes, we have the perspective offered by Lee Humphreys.

Of course, the text of 1 Samuel is not only seen as a tragedy, there are other perspectives we mention: an autobiography of the people of Israel (David Jobling), then the text can be seen as an essential step in forming the identity of the people of Israel (Marcel Macelaru). Also the text of 1 Samuel is also seen as a specific narrative of the people of Israel, in this type of narrative the possible contradictions are not taken into account but the narrative responds to several needs of the original recipients (Peter Miscall).

By being included in the literature, it can be seen that from a methodological point of view there are works that have applied the same methodology, but with different research questions. Lyle Eslinger uses the method of reading the Bible text closely in order to demonstrate the consistency of the text in 1 Samuel 1-12. Then Tomás Czövek applies the same method to observe how the analyzed characters (Saul, David and Solomon)

succeed or not, to acquire the charisma with which they were endowed. And another study on 1 Samuel that applies the same method as in this paper is the one developed by Diana Edelman, and it seeks to answer the question: how did the original recipients receive and view the text of 1 Samuel.

### **Chapter 3 - Manifestations of Divine Sovereignty in the History of Saul**

In the first section of this chapter we set out to observe how divine sovereignty manifests itself in the context in which the people demand a change of form of government, in a similar one to the people around Israel, this demand of the people of Israel is a clear form of idolatry and separation from YHWH. But YHWH acted as Sovereign by an act of mercy, bringing His Covenant with the people of Israel into a new phase of its dynamics. This, by introducing a new office, נָגִיד. The office by which not a human agent was the true sovereign, but YHWH remained the true King מֶלֶךְ, but as a visible form



of leadership a representative was introduced, נָגִיד. In order to fulfill this office, YHWH sends a real candidate, who meets the necessary characteristics of a leader but also has a humble attitude. This candidate is Saul, through a series of circumstances that will be presented below, Saul is in YHWH's attention and from an ordinary man, submissive to his father, Saul becomes the agent by which divine sovereignty is manifested in the new paradigm demanded by the people of Israel.

The section of chapters 9 and 10 of 1 Samuel shows that YHWH is working to lift up the human agent who will take over the office of נָגִיד. The story begins with the loss of Saul's father's donkeys, although a seemingly unfavorable element in Saul's family life (probably the family's source of income) turns out to be the circumstance that Saul is sent by YHWH to meet Samuel. Thus, we can see that YHWH uses even unfavorable circumstances to carry out His plans.

Dialogue with Samuel is another element in which divine sovereignty is manifested. In this discussion, Saul partially understands YHWH's plan for him and that he

will be the one to manifest divine sovereignty among the people of Israel.

The intensity of the manifestation of divine sovereignty in relation to Saul is constantly rising through the act of anointing Saul with oil in private. I demonstrated that by the private nature of anointing with oil, Saul had to understand very clearly what his status was in relation to YHWH. Even though Saul was to be the leader of the people of Israel, the true Sovereign remains YHWH, and Saul is only a representative, a vassal of Him.

The confirmation received by Saul brings the intensity of the dynamics of divine sovereignty to an even higher level. This confirmation received by Saul by the fulfillment of the signs shows that indeed what is happening to Saul is in accordance with the will of YHWH which manifests itself as Sovereign in Saul's life. Equipping Saul by changing his heart is also important because it reflects the principle that YHWH provides the skills needed to accomplish a mission when one receives the divine call to fulfill that mission. The public portrayal of Saul as the one who holds the office of מַלְכֵי, including

overcoming Saul's hesitation by the act of divination, reflects the fact that YHWH acts as Sovereign among His people.

Divine sovereignty is not only manifested in the face of Saul and is not perceived only by him, but as we have shown in the paper and we will summarize below, there are some collective perceptions of the dynamics of divine sovereignty. The public table presented in 1 Samuel 9 draws attention to the need for the presence of YHWH's man to conduct this meal. Moreover, it is emphasized that in all public actions there had to be a form of divine presence. It is interesting that although now the people are demanding the presence of the prophet, the man of YHWH as the representative of the divinity for the public mass, but shortly before the people are asking for an emperor, an element that implies the rejection of YHWH. So we can see an oscillating attitude of the people towards divine sovereignty.

As we have shown, the ecstatic manifestation of Saul is not intended to have any effect on Saul, but in our view this ecstatic manifestation is intended to draw the

attention of the people to the fact that Saul is in the attention of YHWH. Therefore YHWH in His sovereignty draws the attention of the people through this manifestation of Saul under the influence of the Spirit of YHWH.

The public presentation of Saul as the one who holds the office of נָגִיד is the episode in which YHWH makes public the way he responded to the people's request by adapting the covenant with him. YHWH moves the hearts of the people to become loyal to Saul. This is the final act described in the process by which Saul becomes an agent of divine manifestation.

The section on chapters 11-12 of 1 Samuel is classified as the episode in which the manifestation of divine sovereignty takes place through Saul. I have noticed throughout this section that the dynamics of divine sovereignty are fully manifested. This is even if the human agent in the first phase is hesitant in assuming the role entrusted to him. In fact, Saul's lack of commitment led to unfavorable consequences for the people of Israel. The people were vulnerable and defenseless against their

enemies, so in the face of real threats, Israel was ready to conclude a vow of vassalship, thus recognizing the sovereignty of the Ammonites to the detriment of YHWH's sovereignty over Israel. However, even though Saul is hesitant and returns to his daily activities, we notice that YHWH does not give up Saul and the people of Israel, but intervenes sovereignly by stimulating both the human agent and the people to engage in battle. Following this divine intervention, Saul proves to be a good strategist and confirms the position of agent through which divine sovereignty is manifested, thus leading the people of Israel to victory in the battle with the Ammonites.

The second part of this section (1 Samuel 12) brings to our attention Samuel's retreat. The text having the form of a discourse, the theme of the dynamics of divine sovereignty is not as intense as in the narrative texts analyzed so far. However, the summary presentation of the history of the people of Israel reflects the sovereign rule that YHWH has exercised over the people of Israel throughout its history. Thus we can understand that the

dynamics of divine sovereignty is not a new concept, which we encounter for the first time in the narrative of Saul, but this dynamic of divine sovereignty can be observed throughout the history of Israel. But even if the way YHWH has manifested himself as sovereign throughout history is presented, Samuel's speech also involves elements that come into the present history of Israel. This happens through two elements. On the one hand, Saul is invoked to be the Lord's Anointed One, recognizing here the paradigm of leadership that YHWH implements at the request of the people. On the other hand, warnings about disciplinary intervention in the event of disobedience to Israel are another sign of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

Therefore, regarding the dynamics of divine sovereignty in 1 Samuel 10-11 we can observe the following: YHWH intervenes for the human agent to assume the role of *נָגִיד*, and to begin to act for the benefit of Israel. This intervention by YHWH leads to the release of the ammunition threat. Then YHWH is presented as sovereign in the entire history of Israel. At the same time,

he is now represented in the people of Israel by the human agent who is recognized by all the people as the Lord's Anointed One. And the fact that YHWH is presented by Samuel as the one who will act for the benefit of the people even if it may mean disciplinary intervention both on the human agent through which divine sovereignty is manifested and on the people, if the people or the leader does not they will also recognize YHWH's divine sovereignty over Israel.

In this last section of the present chapter of this paper (1 Samuel 13-15) we have looked at how the dynamics of divine sovereignty in relation to the human agent are manifested. I could see Saul's rejection from the office of נָגִיד because of his disobedience and oversight of the duties assigned to him. From the point of view of structuring the narrative, there are three stages in Saul's rejection. On the one hand we can see the rejection by the prophet. In chapter 13, when Saul goes beyond his duties and even if he is to have only military actions in total dependence on YHWH, we find Saul sacrificing and giving up his cultic duties. Then Saul's rejection is

presented in the second stage, when Saul is rejected by the people.

Chapter 14 of 1 Samuel brings to our attention this episode in which Saul tries to re-enter the grace of the divinity through various manipulative techniques, techniques that do not have the expected result due to the fact that YHWH cannot be manipulated by the human agent. Instead, YHWH raises another potential candidate for the office of מֶלֶךְ, in the person of Jonathan, who acts for the benefit of the people. Saul is rejected by the people when in his desperate attempt to re-enter the grace of the divinity he is willing to kill Jonathan who acted for the good of the people, even if he disobeyed his father's command.

The third stage of Saul's rejection is presented in chapter 15, when Saul receives the chance to manifest divine sovereignty by destroying Amalek, but he only partially fulfills YHWH's command. The partial fulfillment of the assigned mission reflects Saul's individualistic approach, in which he decides how far YHWH's commandment must be fulfilled. So Saul is



rightly accused by Samuel, under the authority of YHWH, of acting in the same way as a king of the surrounding nations with cultic and idolatrous actions. Only one verdict can be pronounced in the face of these proven accusations, Saul is rejected from the office of לְגִי. Although this is the case, Saul creates a pseudo-leadership of Israel through which he continues to exercise military power but outside the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

Regarding the dynamics of divine sovereignty, we can observe the following elements in this section: YHWH remains sovereign in Israel even when the human agent acts without His consultation. This self-inflicted act of Saul at the beginning of chapter 13 has negative consequences for the people, they have an unequal conflict with the Philistines, and without YHWH's help, the people can be defeated. YHWH acts for the benefit of the people and announces the removal of Saul and his replacement with a human agent who will do YHWH's will, which is for the benefit of the people. YHWH raises another potential candidate, Jonathan, who will act for the

benefit of the people of Israel. YHWH does not allow himself to be manipulated by Saul even though he uses various techniques to re-enter the divine graces. YHWH's righteousness is reflected in the actions of the human agent. YHWH uses Samuel for the full fulfillment of the assignment given to Saul.

## **Chapter 4 - The Human Agent in Relation to Divine Sovereignty**

This chapter focuses on the relationship between Saul and Samuel. By observing this relationship, Saul's character traits were identified. The chapter begins by introducing the type of relationship between Saul and Samuel, it has been shown that we are dealing with a mentoring relationship. The relationship between Samuel and Saul can be considered a cyclical one, starting at Rama with Saul presented as the guest of honor and ending at Rama with Saul presented as humiliated, walking naked in front of Samuel.

Saul has been shown to have both positive and negative traits. The analysis of the biblical text (1 Samuel 9-15; 19; 28) presents five episodes, where important and dominant features of Saul are highlighted, moreover the organization of the exegetical analysis of the biblical text and the relationship with Samuel is done around these five episodes that present these dominant features of Saul. These episodes are as follows: 1 Samuel 9: 1-11: 7 - Saul oscillates between responsibility and lack of responsibility; 1 Samuel 11: 8 - 12:25 - Saul a good strategist and Anointed of the Lord; 1 Samuel 13: 1 - 14:15 - Saul acts under the pressure of the moment; 1 Samuel 15 - Saul acts under the rule of fear of the people; 1 Samuel 19 and 1 Samuel 28 - Saul is dishonored and falls into total decay. Of course, there are secondary features of Saul's character, these were presented in the text of the paper and are also systematized in the tabulation made in the paper. The table presented in this section highlights Saul's character trait and then presents the context in which this trait is shown. In the final part, a graphic representation was made, which results in a sinusoidal presentation of Saul's characteristics presented

during his relationship with Samuel. The positive and negative traits that define Saul are presented alternately. In this sinusoidal presentation we can see the intervention of the Deuteronomist editor, so we can identify four positive presentations of Saul each followed by a series of negative presentations. Throughout the paper I have shown that these types of sinusoidal presentations actually form the stages of Saul's becoming.

We conclude by saying that in the relationship with Samuel, Saul is presented with both positive and negative traits, and due to the predominance and severity of negative traits, Saul ends up decaying his position, and being rejected by YHWH from the position of נָגִיד.

## **Chapter 5 - Towards a Theology of Divine Sovereignty in the Context of Deuteronomy History**

In this summative chapter we have noticed that the history of Deuteronomy through its peculiarity regarding the critique of sources and the editorial critique of the

texts from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings offers a vacant niche regarding the dynamics of divine sovereignty. Concern for identifying pro-monarchical and anti-monarchical traditions or identifying the unitary approach to the text is a beneficial theological exercise, but through these approaches the perspective of the dynamics of divine sovereignty in the history of the Israeli monarchy is lost sight of. This vacancy that I have identified is addressed in this paper and is one of the major contributions of this thesis.

The role of 1 Samuel 9-15 in the context of Deuteronomy has been interpreted in various ways. From a warning that monarchy can facilitate idolatry to offering a theological role in inserting the concept of monarchy into the theology of the people of Israel. But through this work the text of 1 Samuel 9-15 is given the role of reflecting the dynamics of the manifestation of divine sovereignty. Thus, the fulfillment of this role leads to the formation of a hermeneutic paradigm of the dynamics of divine sovereignty applicable to the entire history of Deuteronomy. The formation of this paradigm was made

possible by the application of contemplative hermeneutics to the text of the "Saul cycle," a text that is part of Deuteronomist history.

The functionality of this paradigm of observing and interpreting the dynamics of divine sovereignty has been demonstrated by applying the principles derived from the analysis of Saul's narrative to King David's narrative. We have shown that the three phases of the dynamics of divine sovereignty can be identified in David's life. Both the lifting phase of the human agent and the manifestation of divine sovereignty, but especially the disciplinary phase of the human agent, are found in the story of David as well as in the story of Saul.

The similar application of the principles of the dynamics of divine sovereignty to both Saul and David has led to the need to analyze and reinterpret the concept of a man after YHWH's own heart. In this reinterpretation, I have shown that this concept does not refer to a particular human agent but to a pattern of the human agent that is compatible with the standard of YHWH's will, being ready to fully manifest the office of

לְגִיד. I have shown that this pattern cannot be fully fulfilled by any agent presented in Deuteronomic history, so an intervention outside of humanity is necessary, this intervention and the full compatibility with the concept of man after the heart of YHWH belongs only to the Messiah.

## **Chapter 6 - Final Conclusions**

In the final conclusions section, we will say that in this paper we set out to observe how the dynamics of divine sovereignty manifest themselves in Saul's narrative in 1 Samuel 9-15. We have shown the need for such a work as a result of two limited theological approaches (Chapter 1). On one hand, the discussion of divine sovereignty is limited to the discussion of YHWH's supremacy over all things (Calvinism) and human responsibility in soteriology (Arminianism). Through this paper, I have presented a holistic perspective on the dynamics of divine sovereignty. This perspective has nothing to do with the categories mentioned above but

rather shows how YHWH manifests Himself for the good of the people of Israel in the context of the covenant with them. To highlight how this divine sovereignty manifests itself, we have analyzed what is called the Saul cycle, that is, Saul's account in 1 Samuel 9-15. The second limited theological approach that results from the need for this paper is the existing approaches to Saul's narrative. I pointed out throughout the paper that one of the most common approaches is that of David Gunn and Sarah Nicholson. They claim that Saul's life is a tragedy, and the responsibility for it lies with YHWH who turns out to hunt down Saul to prove the failure of human government as opposed to divine rule. Such a perspective requires a well-argued answer, and through this paper we consider that this answer has been offered. From a methodological point of view, this paper is a close reading of the biblical text. It can be seen that the approach to the biblical text is by analyzing each verse of the passage indicated and highlighting the dynamics of divine sovereignty in each passage. The concept of contemplative hermeneutics was used in this analysis. This contemplative hermeneutics means focusing on the discovery of the Person and



character of YHWH. The approach of the text is not to highlight the actions of the human agent, but to identify the way in which YHWH manifests Himself as Sovereign.

The literature (Chapter 2) has highlighted the fact that there are several perspectives on how the text of 1 Samuel 9-15 can be approached. These perspectives are: Saul's life as a tragedy; then as an autobiography of the people of Israel; an essential stage in the formation of the identity of the people of Israel or as a narrative specific to the people of Israel, a narrative that responds to the different needs of the original recipients. Also in the literature can be highlighted the use of a methodology similar to that of this paper, the method of reading close (close reading) but with other analytical questions.

In order to highlight the way in which the dynamics of divine sovereignty are manifested, concepts such as מֶלֶךְ and מֶלֶךְ were introduced in the paper. מֶלֶךְ refers to a Sovereign ruler who in the context of the OAA was considered a divine king. For this reason, the request of the people of Israel to have a מֶלֶךְ according to the model of the surrounding people represented dissolution and the

abandonment of YHWH's rule over the people. But YHWH does not give up His people but makes His Covenant with the people enter a new phase by introducing the office of נָגִיד. By this office is meant the presence of a human agent who represents divine authority. YHWH remains the sovereign of the people of Israel, but this sovereignty is manifested through a human agent who has the role of a leader, being totally dependent on YHWH.

The whole presentation of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty in the life of Saul (chapter 3) was built around these concepts of מַלְךְ and נָגִיד. We have shown that through the dynamics of divine sovereignty manifested in the law of the human agent, three stages develop. The first stage has to do with the fact that the human agent is raised by YHWH, from a simple man to become the agent of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty. This stage is characterized by the use of the agent's (unfavorable) life contexts to be taken to the place where the divine plan concerning him is made known to him. Then, also in this

stage, can be found elements of supernatural equipment of the agent, elements of bringing the agent to the collective attention of the people and elements of putting the agent in the office of נָגִיד. The second stage of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty has to do with the actual manifestation of divine sovereignty through the human agent. At this stage we see YHWH supporting the human agent in his hesitant, specific moments. At the same time, under divine authority, the human agent develops military strategies as a result of which the main beneficiary is the people. Therefore, we consider that the manifestation of divine sovereignty is done through the human agent for the benefit of the people, even if sometimes this manifestation takes the form of warnings regarding discipline in case of lack of loyalty. The third stage of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty is the discipline of the human agent. By this stage we mean the sanctioning of the human agent when he exceeds his duties specific to the office of נָגִיד. Even if the human agent tries to influence the will and actions of YHWH through manipulative techniques, he does not allow himself to be influenced by such practices. Also in

this stage of disciplining the human agent we can see that discipline is also for the good of the people of Israel, so although this stage of discipline is unpleasant it works as a benefit to the dynamics of Israel's relationship with YHWH in the covenant context.

By observing how the dynamics of divine sovereignty manifest themselves in the three phases of the “Saul cycle” narrative, several principles were detached that, put together, formed a paradigm of the functionality of the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

In the face of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty in his right, the human agent has different reactions. Thus, in this paper, a section has been developed that addresses the question: how does the human agent respond to the divine sovereignty manifested in his law? (Chapter 4). In this section, a psycho-social profile of Saul was made by analyzing his relationship with Samuel. Both the positive traits that recommend Saul for the office of מֶלֶךְ and the negative traits and responses that led to Saul's transformation into a מְלִכָּה after the model of the nations around Israel were highlighted. Following

these transformations, Saul acts to the detriment of YHWH's people, which is why YHWH's disciplinary action is needed.

After observing how divine sovereignty manifested itself toward Saul and after observing his response to divine sovereignty, the entire paper was framed in the context of the discussion of Deuteronomy history. Thus, being realized the outlines of a theology of the dynamics of divine sovereignty in a deuteronomist context (chapter 5). This framing was achieved by presenting perspectives on Deuteronomic history. These perspectives consist of discussions of the critique of sources and the editorial critique of texts that fall into this category of Deuteronomic history. At the same time, interpretations of the role of 1 Samuel 9-15 in the discussion of Deuteronomy are presented. Following these interactions, the place of this paper in the discussion of the Deuteronomist can be identified. Thus, these interactions highlight one of the major contributions of this paper to the study of biblical theology. This contribution consists in the application of contemplative

hermeneutics to texts belonging to Deuteronomist history. Thus, the application of contemplative hermeneutics led to the formation of a paradigm of the manifestation of divine sovereignty. It has been shown that the principles pertaining to the dynamics of divine sovereignty applied to Saul are applicable to every king mentioned in Deuteronomy history. To demonstrate this statement, this paradigm was briefly applied to David's narrative in Deuteronomy history. It has been pointed out that all three stages specific to the paradigm of the dynamics of divine sovereignty (lifting the agent, manifesting sovereignty, and disciplining the agent) are also valid in David's case. Thus proving the fact that through this work we have developed our own methodology for applying the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

Observing this methodology specific to this paper, a methodology that consists in applying the paradigm of the manifestation of the dynamics of divine sovereignty to human agents, we consider that this study can be further developed with the following trajectories:

Detailed analysis of the dynamics of divine sovereignty in David's life. In this paper, in the section that demonstrates the applicability of this paradigm in David's narrative. David's narrative was briefly analyzed without going into the technical details of the text.

Applying the paradigm of the dynamics of divine sovereignty in Old Testament narratives. This paradigm is applicable beyond the borders of the monarchy, so that the narratives of the patriarchs can be the object of a study of the dynamics of divine sovereignty.

At the same time, the dynamics of divine sovereignty can be a study that goes beyond the limits of the literal genre, so that this dynamic of the manifestation of divine sovereignty can be observed not only in the narratives. The subject of a study of the dynamics of divine sovereignty may be the prophetic literature.

Exploiting the way the Messiah fully corresponds to the concept of man after the heart of YHWH is another direction in which this study can be developed and continued.

The last study trajectory we present here is one with pastoral connotations. The office of  $\text{לְגִי}$  and the risks of turning it into a community-damaging  $\text{אֶלֶּל}$  may be the subject of an applied study of how the leadership of local communities should be manifested in YHWH's people.