

SAUL IS ESAU: THEMES FROM GENESIS 3  
AND DEUTERONOMY 18 IN 1 SAMUEL

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Significant Pentateuchal themes serve a major leitmotif in 1 Samuel that narratologically shape Saul's demise (as well as David's rise) in the language of Gen 3:15, 4:5b–8, and 25:19–34 (as well as 27:37–41). David is predictably portrayed as the "Seed of the Woman," but the reader is increasingly shocked by the gradual typecasting of Saul as a manifestation of the "Seed of the Serpent" (Gen 3:15) and "another nation" (Gen 25:23), first appearing like Cain and then Esau. Moreover, thematic links between Gen 3:17 and Deut 18:9–22 find redemptive-historical development in 1 Samuel as Saul, like Adam, does not hear/obey the voice of the LORD. The entire David-Saul struggle, therefore, is read against the backdrop of Genesis as a whole and Deut 18. This reading provides theological depth to the characterization of Saul and further elucidates the contribution of 1 Samuel to redemptive history.

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**T**he first time I read *Animal Farm* I did not understand, nor much like, the ending. I grew up on Billy the Kid and Indiana Jones stories, so I expected a shoot-out, a fist fight, a car chase, or all three to mark the grand conclusion of the conflict between the animals and the people. Instead, the story concludes with the more affable animals looking through a window to observe a meeting between their old masters—the people—and their new masters—the pigs. As they look on, it appears that the pigs start to morph into people and the people start to morph into pigs until there are no distinguishing characteristics between any of them. The pigs have become people-ish and the people have become pig-ish. And this is how the book ends. The other animals, after observing these transformations, simply walk away and go back to their lives of tedium and suffering. The end. Nothing more. While disappointed in this apparent anti-climax, I could not stop thinking about it. Only after months of pondering, and with a second reading, did I finally realize that it was the *perfect* ending because it ties off several threads that appear throughout the narrative, and hammers home the larger point of the book as a whole. It was not only that last scene where the pigs took on the traits of the people; the

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morphing had been happening throughout the story. The pigs had started using phrases they used to hear from people, they started to walk up-right on two feet, and so on. The final scene is, therefore, designed to fully capture in one place the point readers have suspected through well-placed details along the way.<sup>1</sup> Once enemies, the pigs were now no different from the people. In fact, what made the people the “bad guys” at the beginning is exactly what the pigs are now. The power therefore is in the subtlety and the final ah-ha moment it creates for the reader.

In this article I propose that in 1 Samuel the character Saul is slowly and subtly typecast as the “Seed of the Serpent” of Gen 3:15.<sup>2</sup> While initially Saul makes a good start of being king, he slowly but surely drifts into comparability with Cain and then with Esau. There is no single defining passage that does this outright, but it is found in the cumulative effect of several (seemingly) minor details throughout the narrative, reaching a startling—though not entirely unpredictable—finale in 31:8–10. Over against Saul, of course, stands David who is presented as the “Seed of the Woman” through whom the LORD regularly brings “salvation” for his people. In exploring these characterizations I will briefly cover the primacy effect of Gen 3:15 on the Genesis narrative as well as on the rest of the Pentateuch (esp. Numbers), followed by the way Gen 3:15 and its related concepts show up in 1 Samuel. I will also explore the relationship between Gen 3:17 and Deut 18:9–22 and the very significant role the latter plays in accomplishing the promise of Gen 3:15.<sup>3</sup>

There is, of course, no shortage of literature on Gen 3:15.<sup>4</sup> Most deal with identifying the “seed” and its meaning. This article will focus, however, on the darker side of Gen 3:15: the nature of the “enmity.” The connections I make are mostly lexical, though I agree with James Hamilton that synonymous terms

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<sup>1</sup> Orwell’s point is, of course, that capitalism and communism as economic and political systems are not the problem, but the abuse of power to which both are susceptible.

<sup>2</sup> As is clearly evident, this article concerns itself with literary, canonical, and theological issues. Matters of composition and redaction are left aside.

<sup>3</sup> Other rich studies that compare Genesis and 1 Samuel are Sean M. McDonough, “And David Was Old, Advanced in Years: 2 Samuel 24:18–25, 1 Kings 1:1, and Genesis 23–24,” *VT* 49 (1999): 128–31; Dominic Rudman, “The Patriarchal Narratives in the Books of Samuel,” *VT* 54 (2004): 239–49; Peter J. Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003), passim. Rudman comments, however, that “much research remains to be done on the relationship between Genesis and Samuel, for even now, many correspondences and allusions in Samuel have yet to be investigated” (“Patriarchal Narratives,” 239–40).

<sup>4</sup> The following works cover a lot of the issues well: Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 197–200; T. Desmond Alexander, “Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1995), 19–39; James Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30–54; Jared M. August, “The Messianic Hope of Genesis: The *Protoevangelium* and Patriarchal Promises,” *Them* 42, no. 1 (2017): 46–62.

and concepts/ideas are also bona fide intertextual links highly worth pursuing.<sup>5</sup> Lexical relatedness is but the lowest common denominator which, when found, invites more reflection on the higher levels of biblical theological methodology.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, enough such connections invite large-scale comparisons.<sup>7</sup> In this case, because “seed” language is so important and pervasive in Genesis, and David and Saul are the main figures in 1 Samuel, these two books *in their entireties* are brought into intertextual conversation with each other. Considering, therefore, not just details—as important as they are—but seeing how details affect and shape whole books, and then how whole books interpretively influence other whole books, will open up these interpretive vistas.

### I. *The Primacy of Genesis 3:15*

Genesis 3:15 is commonly called the *protoevangelium*, the first announcement of the gospel.<sup>8</sup> As soon as the serpent tempts Adam and Eve to sin, plunging the entire human race into “death,” the LORD says to the serpent:

I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your seed [זָרַע] and her seed [זָרַע].  
He shall strike your head,  
and you shall strike his heel.<sup>9</sup>

The one to come from the woman will step on the serpent’s head, and reverse the work of the serpent: he will bring humanity back to its pre-sin and pre-death felicitous Edenic state.<sup>10</sup> When and how remains to be seen; the promise is undetailed but nonetheless clear.<sup>11</sup>

This seems to be, however, more than a prediction of the “One Seed” who is to come. It is equally a paradigm for the rest of Genesis and even the rest

<sup>5</sup> James Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 77; Hamilton, “Skull Crushing Seed,” 34.

<sup>6</sup> For issues of intertextual legitimacy I point my reader, of course, to Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 14–33. Rudman is correct, “Parallels in theme and vocabulary between these texts point to a relationship that goes beyond coincidence” (“Patriarchal Narratives,” 239).

<sup>7</sup> See Nicholas G. Piotrowski, *Matthew’s New David at the End of Exile: A Socio-Rhetorical Study of Scriptural Quotations*, NovTSup 170 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 24–30.

<sup>8</sup> On the different views of this aspect of Gen 3:15, see August, “Messianic Hope,” 49–51.

<sup>9</sup> “Bruise,” “snap at,” and “crush” are also suitable translations for הָרַג. But the first two are just too weak to capture the vicious sense of the “enmity.” The third is much stronger but feels to me too determinative. “Strike” can capture the ongoing nature of the struggle better *and* the sense of a final decisively fatal blow.

<sup>10</sup> “The triumph of the woman’s seed would suggest a return to the Edenic state” (Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003], 68). See also Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 21, 30–32, 35–36; August, “Messianic Hope,” 56–62.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 102–9; note also the references Alexander cites.

of the Pentateuch.<sup>12</sup> There will emerge within humanity two distinct groups of people.<sup>13</sup> One group will act like the serpent, disobeying the Word of the Creator and attempting to bring death to the other group. This is the “Seed of the Serpent.” They are not genetic descendants, but ideological and moral descendants.<sup>14</sup> They think and behave like the serpent.<sup>15</sup> Their posture toward the other group is one of enmity, a ferocious hostility to the point of death.<sup>16</sup> The other group is the “Seed of the Woman.” They are not perfect (indeed Genesis is clear about one thing: sin leads to death, and all sin, therefore all die). Nonetheless, they are the group through which the “One Seed” will come.<sup>17</sup> Along the way, though still sinners, they express better faith in the Word

<sup>12</sup> Says Walter C. Kaiser, “This whole line builds and the promise continues in Ex 32:13; 33:1; Deut 1:8; 11:9; 34:4; Josh 24:3” (“zera’,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Walke, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:253). See also Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 19–39; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 245–47; John D. Currid, *Study Commentary on Exodus*, 2 vols. (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2000), 1:17–21. This view is commonly attested; see, e.g., John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 587–90, who engages Heinrich A. Hävernick’s work of 1848. It could be argued that it is a paradigm for the rest of redemptive history. T. D. Alexander, “Seed,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 769–74; and Hamilton’s “Skull Crushing Seed,” 30–54, are two very good surveys of this reading.

<sup>13</sup> I am taking the noun זרע as both collective and singular. Kaiser states that “the word designates the whole line of descendants as a unit, yet it is deliberately flexible enough to denote either one person who epitomizes the whole group ... or the many persons in that whole line of natural and/or spiritual descendants” (“zera’,” 1:253). See also n. 17 below.

<sup>14</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 6–18; Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 24, 30–31; Bruce K. Waltke with Cathi J. Fredericks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 93–94.

<sup>15</sup> This sense of זרע is expressed in Prov 11:21; Jer 2:21; Mal 2:15; Isa 1:4 (cf. also John 8:44; 1 John 3:12). “If this meaning of *zera’* would play any role at all in Gen. 3:15 then one might, while retaining something of the ‘offspring’ notion, understand the two ‘seeds’ to stand for two ‘races,’ two ‘communities,’ each marked by a moral quality. These communities are headed up by two distinct principals, the one principal being the woman, the other the serpent, each of which had just been set at enmity with the other by God himself. Upon this view both of these ‘seeds’ could be found among the children of men” (Marten H. Woudstra, “Recent Translations of Genesis 3:15,” *CTJ* 6 [1991]: 198).

<sup>16</sup> “The language of the passage indicates a life-and-death struggle between combatants” (Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 245).

<sup>17</sup> The basic concept here is the relationship between the corporate and singular. Jack Collins is right that the pronouns and verbs of Gen 3:15 indicated a singular “seed” (“A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman’s Seed Singular or Plural?,” *TynBul* 48 [1997]: 139–48). Yet, Collins himself comments that syntactical analysis “is a fairly low level of integration” (p. 145). When the reader considers the larger arc of the “seed” in the final form of Genesis these expansive dynamics emerge. In fact, no verse in any book should be read in isolation from the whole; authors do not write single sentences or even pericopae, but they write whole texts where the individual parts are designed to interact with the whole (on Genesis particularly, see Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 22–23, 32, 37). As Alexander comments, “It is not inconceivable that *zera’* is deliberately used, because it can denote both singular and plural. Eve’s use of the term in 4:25, suggests that it is to

of God than Adam and Eve did.<sup>18</sup> Genesis 3:15 is, then, also the *protohistoricus*.<sup>19</sup> It is a paradigm for how these two groups will act towards each other: the “Seed of the Serpent” will persecute the “Seed of the Woman,” and the “Seed of the Woman” will deliver the “One Seed” to crush the serpent’s head, restoring humanity to Eden. While such deliverance of the latter is commonly emphasized in the scholarly literature, Gen 3:15 itself emphasizes the *enmity* of the former by placing it at the front of the sentence.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the coming restoration to Eden is important in the scope of Genesis, but so is the “Seed of the Serpent’s” belligerence toward the “Seed of the Woman.”<sup>21</sup>

This pattern is immediately evident in the very next chapter where “Cain burns greatly [with anger]” (וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד) toward “his brother” (אָהֵיוּ) Abel, “and kills him” (וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ) “in the field” (בְּשָׂדֵה).<sup>22</sup> Abel represents the “Seed of the Woman” and Cain the “Seed of the Serpent.”<sup>23</sup> In so far as the latter succeeds in his bellicose intent it would appear that the promise of the coming “One Seed” is lost. But out of death comes life as Eve also gives birth to Seth, “another seed” (4:25; וַיֵּצֵא אֱחָד; וַיֵּרַע אֶחָד), and so the program continues.<sup>24</sup> Noah appears next, and despite the serpent’s corruptive influence sown over all the earth (Gen 6:5) and the promised death for sin (Gen 6:7), Noah and his family are

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be understood in the singular. On other occasions in Genesis it clearly has a collective meaning (e.g., 15:5) (T. Desmond Alexander, “From Adam to Judah: The Significance of the Family Tree in Genesis,” *EvQ* 61 [1989]: 16; see also pp. 5–6). It is these different later uses—sometimes singular, sometimes collective—that cause the reader to reconsider the notion in 3:15. In fact, 22:17–18 makes it clear that in Genesis וַיֵּרַע can be read as plural (22:17a) and singular (22:17b–18) in the same immediate context (see esp. T. Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” *TynBul* 48 [1997]: 363–67; Hamilton, “Skull Crushing Seed,” 31–33). Thus, *pace* Hamilton (*Genesis*, 199), one is not so “hard-pressed to find examples of this flexibility in the OT itself.”

<sup>18</sup> Of course Abram is the paradigm of this faith; the LORD speaks and Abram believes (Gen 15:6). Yet this could be seen as early as Gen 3; following von Rad, Dempster contends that calling Eve “the mother of the living” (v. 20) is an expression of faith in God’s word in Gen 3:15 that she will deliver the “One Seed” to restore true life (*Dominion and Dynasty*, 68–69).

<sup>19</sup> Alexander says the enmity of Gen 3:15 “denotes a lengthy hostility,” the seed “suggests that the conflict will continue for generations,” and the verb strike/bruise/crush “is used in the imperfect form with an iterative sense indicating repeated actions” (“Messianic Ideology,” 30–31; so too Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 [Waco: Word, 1987], 79–80).

<sup>20</sup> Woudstra, “Recent Translations,” 200.

<sup>21</sup> Thus, Gen 3:15 is no etiology, nor is it enough to say it describes the triumph over evil of humanity in general (*pace*, e.g., Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 81).

<sup>22</sup> The significance of Cain’s “burning anger” and the location of the murder will be explored below.

<sup>23</sup> So too Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 246, 275–76; John D. Currid, *Study Commentary on Genesis*, 2 vols. (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2003), 1:142, 146; Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 81. Some have commented that Eve perceived Cain to be the “Seed of the Woman,” but his crime disqualifies him (e.g., August, “Messianic Hope,” 57). In 4:25, however, Seth is “another seed” to replace *Abel*. In fact, I think the LORD’s reaction to Cain and Abel should be understood within the larger Genesis theology of the election of younger brothers (Isaac not Ishmael, Jacob not Esau, Judah not Reuben; later the reader sees David not Eliab).

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 68–72.

nonetheless given grace (Gen 6:8) so the “Seed of the Woman” can continue.<sup>25</sup> When humanity next decides not to “fill the earth” and instead “make a name for themselves” (compare Gen 11:4 with Gen 1:28), the LORD intervenes to disperse them (11:8–9). At the very next moment, the reader is given the genealogy that will lead to Abram (11:10–26) which, the subsequent narrative clearly demonstrates, represents a newly focused effort on the LORD’s part for bringing the “One Seed” into the world—through Abram “all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen 12:3). As Walter C. Kaiser puts it, “This promise to Eve was enlarged and made more specific in the Abrahamic Covenant.”<sup>26</sup>

In Gen 12–17 the LORD calls Abram and promises him a “seed” (זָרַע; 12:7; 13:15–16; 15:5, 13, 18), through whom more “seed” will continue the line (17:7–9; 22:17–18).<sup>27</sup> Isaac is first (17:19), and Jacob is next (26:1–5, 24; 28:13–14). Especially important to note is the promise in 22:17–18 that the “seed” (זָרַע) will possess the gates of “his enemies” (אֹיְבָבָיו), which shares a root with Gen 3:15’s “enmity” (אֶבְרָתָהּ). But the line between promise and fulfillment is never a straight one. If the LORD can focus his intentions for the “Seed of the Woman” then so can the serpent, and the “Seed of the Serpent” now has a very particular target in the world.

The intensity of the persecution of the “Seed of the Woman” at the hands of the “Seed of the Serpent” intensifies at Jacob’s birth (25:21–26). There Rebekah is told two *nations* (לְאֻמִּים/גּוֹיִם; 25:23) are in her womb, who will be against each other. Indeed, the sons in her womb are already “crushing” one another (וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבְּנִים; 25:22). This is truly an echo of Gen 3:15 and the enmity between the two seeds. The rest of the story bears this out as Esau threatens to do to Jacob exactly as Cain did to Abel: “I will kill [אֶתְרַגְּלָהּ; cf. Gen 4:8] Jacob my brother [אֶתְאָחִי]” in 27:41 (cf. Gen 4:8).<sup>28</sup> The next time these two face each other, Jacob is rightly concerned that his brother will try to kill him *and his children* (32:11).<sup>29</sup> This would mean the extinction of the “Seed of

<sup>25</sup> For the linguistic connection, compare the cursing of the ground and pain/toil language in Gen 3:17 with the naming of Noah in 5:29. The latter expresses hope to reverse the former and restore “rest.” Additionally, זָרַע is again used in 9:9. The “Sons of God” in 6:2 are likely the descendants of Seth and therefore the “Seed of the Woman” (argued very well in Rita F. Cefalu, “Royal Priestly Heirs to the Restoration Promise of Genesis 3:15: A Biblical Theological Perspective on the Sons of God in Genesis 6,” *WTJ* 76 [2014]: 351–70). The “daughters of men,” equally, are the “Seed of the Serpent.” The mixing of their lines is part of the serpent’s animosity (Currid, *Genesis*, 1:173–75).

<sup>26</sup> Kaiser, “*zerá*,” 1:253.

<sup>27</sup> That this “seed” is the continuation of the promised “seed” of Gen 3:15, see esp. Alexander, “Adam to Judah,” 5–19; Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 19–39; Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 80–89; August, “Messianic Hope,” 56–62. Those opposed to the “Seed of the Woman” continue the “curse” (Gen 12:3b; cf. 3:14, 17), whereas those who bless the “Seed of the Woman” are themselves blessed (Gen 12:3a, 3c; cf. 1:22, 28; 2:3).

<sup>28</sup> “Esau reveals himself to be seed of the serpent.... [He] hates Jacob ... and wants to kill him” (Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 83).

<sup>29</sup> It may also be significant that the first time the reader is introduced to the territory of Edom,

the Woman.” But time does heal wounds and the two have a friendly meeting (33:4–17). Yet, as the reader knows, the story is far from over between these two. For as early as Esau’s birth, 25:30, the reader knows that he is the father of the nation of *Edom*, a point emphasized many times so the reader does not forget (36:1, 8, 9, 19, 21, 31, 43)—the importance of which we will revisit in just a moment.<sup>30</sup> For now, it is important to note that Edom is the “other nation” of Gen 25:23 against Jacob’s nation, Israel. This first identification of Esau as the father of Edom is where, for bread and stew, the former “despises the birthright” (25:34).<sup>31</sup> The scene ends with four staccato verbs: he *ate* and he *drank* and he *rose* and he *went* (וַיֵּאָכֵל וַיִּשְׂתֶּה וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ). Again, the significance of this observation will surface below.

These passages clarify two things about the ongoing struggle since Gen 3:15. (1) It is not unprecedented that the “Seed of the Serpent” can actually emerge from within the community of the “Seed of the Woman.” The reader has already seen that the two seeds can be *brothers* (Cain and Abel). But now, even with a clear designation that through Isaac the line of the “Seed of the Woman” will continue, one of his sons—Esau—is the “Seed of the Serpent.” And (2) the determination of who will comprise which line is wholly at the LORD’s discretion—to invoke Paul for a moment—“in order that God’s purposes of election might continue” (Rom 9:11).<sup>32</sup>

Back to the unfolding of Gen 3:15 in the Pentateuch, Jacob is of course the father of the twelve tribes of Israel (cf. esp. Gen 28:13–14). Judah, in particular, plays a kingly role among his brothers (Gen 49:8) and indeed among the nations (Gen 49:10).<sup>33</sup> Again, as in 22:17–18, it is significant that in 49:8 it is said

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in the context of Jacob and Esau’s reunion, it is called a “field” (שָׂדֵה אָדָם) all the more to evoke memories of Cain’s murder of Abel “in the field” (בְּשָׂדֵה) (Gen 4:8).

<sup>30</sup> But it is worth mentioning in passing now that Edom is the progeny of Esau and his *Canaanite* wives (36:1–5).

<sup>31</sup> I believe something is lost in translating Gen 25:34 as “his birthright,” as is commonly done. Restoring the truer sense of the Hebrew to “*the* birthright” (הַבְּכֹרֶה) anchors this moment more firmly into the larger drama of Genesis. There is only *one* birthright that matters: to be part of the “Seed of the Woman.” Esau has despised *that* birthright.

<sup>32</sup> In fact, Paul’s point in Rom 9:6–13 is just that: physical descent is not a defining mark for who belongs to the line of promise. If I can slightly contextualize Rom 9:6 for this study, we could say “not all who are descended from *Isaac* belong to *the ‘Seed of the Woman.’*” Thus, Rom 9:13 means “Jacob I chose to continue the ‘Seed of the Woman,’ but Esau I rejected, and he is therefore the ‘Seed of the Serpent.’”

<sup>33</sup> On the climax of Gen 3:15 in Gen 49:8–12 with Judah, see esp. T. Desmond Alexander, “Genealogies, Seed and Compositional Unity of Genesis,” *TynBul* 44 (1993): 255–70; Alexander, “Adam to Judah,” 5–19; Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 19–39. He determines that “narratives and genealogies are carefully combined so as to highlight this line of descent. Almost all of the material in the book relates in one way or another to this feature” (“Adam to Judah,” 14). Alexander also takes the next step when he asks “why the book of Genesis is so intent on tracing this lineage” (“Adam to Judah,” 15). He concludes, “The book of Genesis provides a very remarkable and distinctive record of the early ancestry of the royal lines of David” (p. 15). He does concede, “This connection between the seed of Eve and the Davidic dynasty may at first appear somewhat tenuous.

to Judah, “You will have your hand on the neck of *your enemies* [אֹיְבֵיךָ],” showing the “Seed of the Woman’s” victory over the “Seed of the Serpent.”<sup>34</sup> In this way, Eden will be restored.<sup>35</sup>

To move with a quicker pace now, the “Seed of the Serpent” is relentlessly belligerent against the “Seed of the Woman” in Egypt, but the LORD delivers Israel with a mighty outstretched arm.<sup>36</sup> When the children of Israel pass through the wilderness, however, the animosity between the *nations* of Israel and Edom forecast in Gen 25:22–23 becomes real. Edom refuses to let them pass, blocking them with a great army (Num 20:14–21), and Israel has to go around resulting in more external and internal dangers (Num 21; note esp. v. 4).<sup>37</sup>

A lot more could be said in a survey of the primacy of Gen 3:15 for reading the Pentateuch. I have merely summarized a few details highlighting Cain and Esau (and subsequently, Edom) as manifestations of the “Seed of the Serpent” and its violence toward the “Seed of the Woman.” On the other hand, it is particularly to the tribe of Judah that the reader looks for the revealing of the “One Seed” (Gen 49:8–12) to crush the serpent and bring humanity back to its blessed Edenic life once again.

## II. *The Echo of Genesis 3:17 in Deuteronomy 18:15–19*

Let us reset for a moment. What was the nature of the serpent’s original attack on the image of God? In Gen 3 the serpent speaks lies and confusion *about the word of the Almighty*. The serpent’s own first words are “Has God really said...” (אִם כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים...). Thus, the origin of all of humanity’s problems is disobedience to the Creator’s word. Significantly, when the LORD chides Adam in Gen 3:17 he begins, “Because you heard/obeyed (שָׁמַעְתָּ) the voice (לְקוֹל) of your wife...” The point is not so much his *wife* per se, but that he heard/obeyed someone *other than* the voice of the LORD. In fact, in Gen 3:8 and 10 when Adam hears (שָׁמַע) the voice (קוֹל) of the LORD he specifically *hides*. So he heard the voice but he had not *heard* (= obeyed) the voice of the LORD.

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However, when we consider the conclusion of the family tree in Genesis it is noteworthy that special attention is given to Judah, the ancestor of David” (p. 17; see also Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 31–38). It is precisely these connections that I am exploring here on the 1 Samuel end of things. Dempster summarizes well: “The genealogical focus has shifted from Adam, to Seth, to Shem, to Abraham, to Israel, to Judah and finally to David” (*Dominion and Dynasty*, 40; see also Waltke with Fredericks, *Genesis*, 93n52).

<sup>34</sup> The “hand on the neck of [his] enemies” in Gen 49:8 is certainly a conceptual echo of Gen 3:15’s foot on the head of the serpent, the one with enmity.

<sup>35</sup> The “seed” leitmotif of the book culminates in Judah, and also the fertility of the earth in 49:11–12 is reminiscent of Eden (see the suggestive comments by Alexander, “Messianic Ideology,” 34–36). Thus, at the end of Genesis, the reader expects a son of Adam and Judah to reclaim kingly authority over a new creation.

<sup>36</sup> See esp. Currid, *Exodus*, 1:17–21, 41–49.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. also 33:37 and 34:3; the reader is not allowed to forget that they are never able to pass through Edom. Edom is a major recurring obstacle against Israel trying to enter the land. This sort of behavior toward Israel is, of course, not forgotten, as evinced in Obadiah.

Not surprisingly at all, therefore, hearing/obeying the voice (or the word) of the LORD becomes a major theme in establishing the covenant with Abram. Genesis 22:18 reads, “In your seed (בְּזַרְעֲךָ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have heard/obeyed (שָׁמַעְתָּ) my voice (בְּקוֹלִי)” (cf. also Gen 26:4–5).<sup>38</sup> Thus, a significant characteristic of the “Seed of the Woman” (and subsequently the “One Seed”) is *hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD*, the antithesis of the first disobedience. I would even conclude that restoring *hearing/obedience to the voice of the LORD* is part and parcel of the coming redemption and restoration of the Edenic state.<sup>39</sup> The new humanity will hear and obey, led in so doing by the “One Seed.”

How, though, will the “Seed of the Woman” continue to hear the voice of the LORD? Deuteronomy 18 tells us: *through prophets*. The LORD tells Israel that they are not to *hear/obey* anyone else (Deut 18:14 uses a form of שָׁמַע), but they are to *hear/obey* the prophet (Deut 18:15; אֲלֵי תִשְׁמָעוּן).<sup>40</sup> Why? Because the prophet of the LORD mediates the voice of the LORD (Deut 18:16; לִשְׁמַע אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה).<sup>41</sup> I conclude, therefore, that Deut 18:9–22 is a direct response to Gen 3:17. The entire struggle between the two seeds originated with not hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD, but instead someone else’s voice. Accordingly, a significant component of redemption must include again hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD. Prophets in the life of Israel, therefore, comprise a significant institution whose very existence both remembers the original disobedience of Adam and points forward to the coming *one* prophet (note Deut 18:15 and 18 are

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<sup>38</sup> It is also very interesting that throughout Rebekah’s web of deceit she constantly urges Jacob to hear/obey (שָׁמַע) her voice (קוֹל) in Gen 27:8, 13, 43. And in Pharaoh’s thematic challenge of Exod 5:2 he refuses to hear/obey the voice of the LORD (לֹא־אֶשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלֶךָ).<sup>40</sup> Why? Because the prophet of the LORD mediates the voice of the LORD (Deut 18:16; לִשְׁמַע אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה).<sup>41</sup> I conclude, therefore, that Deut 18:9–22 is a direct response to Gen 3:17. The entire struggle between the two seeds originated with not hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD, but instead someone else’s voice. Accordingly, a significant component of redemption must include again hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD. Prophets in the life of Israel, therefore, comprise a significant institution whose very existence both remembers the original disobedience of Adam and points forward to the coming *one* prophet (note Deut 18:15 and 18 are

<sup>39</sup> August is absolutely correct that redemption in the context of Genesis means restoring Edenic conditions in these three ways: (1) destroying evil, (2) restoring creation, and (3) bringing God’s presence to dwell again with humanity (“Messianic Hope,” 56–62). I would add, though, that the language of *hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD* is equally prevalent throughout Genesis and should be considered the fourth aspect of the Edenic state that the “Seed of the Woman” will revive.

<sup>40</sup> Important to note here is that the prohibitions in Deut 18:9–14 are not against general pagan religious practices, but specifically against *forms of divining revelation* from their gods (Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 260–62; Ian Cairns, *Word and Presence: A Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, ITC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 173–74; Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, New International Biblical Commentary [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996], 216–17; J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC 5 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002], 300–302).

<sup>41</sup> To be clear, the point of Deut 18:16 is that the people at Sinai could *not* bear to hear the “voice of the LORD.” But therein lies the need for the prophet: despite their inability to hear directly the divine voice, some way of receiving the word of the LORD is still absolutely essential for the “Seed of the Woman.” That is a major point of redemption: to bring humanity back to hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD and not other voices as Adam did in Gen 3:17. Hence the voice from the cloud at the transfiguration: “Listen to him” (Luke 9:35).

singular).<sup>42</sup> This prophet will lead humanity back to that primordial goal for humanity: obedience to the voice of their Creator.<sup>43</sup>

As we turn now to 1 Samuel, we will see that the dynamic of hearing/obeying the voice/word of the LORD, particularly in the language of Deut 18, plays a major role in the struggle between the “Seed of the Woman” and the “Seed of the Serpent.” Thus, when the reader hears echoes of Deut 18, traces of Gen 3 reverberate as well.

### III. *Developments of Genesis 3:15 in 1 Samuel*

Without being reductionistic, we might be able to say that 1 Samuel is a large-scale narratological outworking of Gen 3:15 and Deut 18:9–22. David is the “Seed of the Woman” who brings salvation to the LORD’s people whereas Saul is the “Seed of the Serpent” who persecutes and tries to kill the former. David’s and Saul’s responses to the prophet Samuel bear this out most clearly. Additionally, small details (the beauty is always in the details!) surrounding David and Saul round out these two characters to create the full effect. In short, David is from the tribe of Judah, does all things well, heeds the voice of Samuel, and “saves” his people. Saul, on the other hand, burns with anger like Cain, tries to kill David in a field, does kill Israelite priests, is in league with an Edomite, is described the way Esau is in Gen 25:34, and is finally beheaded.

#### 1. *Early Hints of Genesis 3:15, 17*

To begin, commentators often recognize the thematic nature of Hannah’s prayer in 1 Sam 2.<sup>44</sup> The humble are exalted and the proud are brought down

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<sup>42</sup> Craigie calls the singular prophet in v. 15 “a collective form indicating the succession of prophets” (*Deuteronomy*, 262n18; so too McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 303). I contend it is working the same way “seed” does in Genesis: collective with a climactic individual. In this way the reader does not have to choose between a corporate or singular interpretation. Even Daniel I. Block, who argues strongly for the former (“My Servant David: Ancient Israel’s Vision of the Messiah,” in *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003], 28–31), concedes that it “does not rule out an individual fulfillment.” More than not ruling out, however, I would say the singular pronouns together with Deut 34:10–12 is just the “hint” Block says is missing from the context (p. 31).

<sup>43</sup> See the very insightful article by Dane C. Ortlund, “And Their Eyes Were Opened, and They Knew”: An Inter-Canonical Note on Luke 24:31,” *JETS* 53 (2010): 717–28.

<sup>44</sup> “The Song of Hannah constitutes the interpretive key for all that follows” (William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 82). See also, e.g., Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 20–21. Particularly it forms a theme-governing inclusio with 2 Sam 22–23 (Randall C. Bailey, “The Redemption of YHWH: A Literary Critical Function of the Songs of Hannah and David,” *BibInt* 3 [1995]: 213–31). To be sure, though, it should not be neglected as a culmination to her own story as well in chs. 1–2 (A. Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*, OTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011], 39). Understandably, therefore, Walter Brueggemann also highlights the thematic nature of 1 Sam 1 (“1 Samuel 1: A Sense of Beginning,” *ZAW* 102 [1990]: 33–48).

throughout 1 and 2 Samuel (cf. 2:4–5, 7–8), and the LORD delivers his people from death, but not through human might (cf. 2:6, 9). Most significantly, though, the LORD gives strength to *his* king in order to fight against *his* adversaries, as Hannah’s prayer reaches its climax in v. 10:

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces;  
From heaven He will thunder against them.  
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.  
He will give strength to His king,  
And exalt the horn of His anointed.

The LORD’s king, therefore, will be the LORD’s instrument of judgment over the LORD’s enemies.

It may be too early to say this verse is an allusion to Gen 3:15 (and Gen 49:8), but the thematic coherence of all 1 Samuel around such concepts will make the point.<sup>45</sup> For now, two stories of the *decapitation* of the LORD’s enemies point in this direction.<sup>46</sup> In 5:3–4 the false god Dagon falls face first down to the ground in front of the ark of the LORD (דָּגוֹן נָפַל לְפָנָיו אֲרָצָה לְפָנֵי אַרְוֹן יְהוָה; said twice) with his head cut off (וְרֵאשׁ דָּגוֹן...כָּרַתוֹת).<sup>47</sup> Equally in 17:49–51 Goliath falls on his face down to the ground (וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו אֲרָצָה) at which time David cuts off his head (וַיִּכְרֶת...אֶת-רֵאשׁוֹ). That the LORD has broken Dagon *to pieces* and then done the same to the Philistine champion *through his king*<sup>48</sup> are unmistakable echoes of 1 Sam 2:10, and powerfully suggestive of Gen 3:15’s crushed *head* of the serpent.<sup>49</sup> These accounts retrospectively bring 2 Sam 2:10 and Gen 3:15 into interpretive alignment.<sup>50</sup> The king is the LORD’s instrument to judge his enemies—the latest installment of the ongoing program to realize the “One Seed” as the LORD’s instrument to trample the head of the serpent.

Equally thematic for 1 Samuel is the narrative of ch. 3. In v. 1 “the word of the

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton says 1 Sam 2:10 is one example where the “fundamental imagery” of Gen 3:15 is “reused and interpreted” (*God’s Glory*, 76–77).

<sup>46</sup> Again, as with Gen 3:15, 1 Sam 2:10 must be read as an integral part of the whole narrative whereby the reader allows later material to clarify the earlier.

<sup>47</sup> Both “Dagon” in vv. 3 and 4, as well as the “head of Dagon” in v. 4 are emphatic with the noun before the verb. The point might be expressed, “Whoa, *Dagon* is even fallen before the Lord and *his* head is cut off!” Robert P. Gordon is insightful to identify this as the ongoing motif of Yahweh versus the gods in Exod 12:12, now in Philistia (*I & II Samuel*, OTG [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984], 35).

<sup>48</sup> David is anointed king in ch. 16 (compare the uses of מְלִיךָ and מְשִׁיחַ in 2:10 and 16:1, 6) and defeats the “Seed of the Serpent” in ch. 17. As Dempster adroitly comments, “David has become the focus of world genealogy. The seed of the woman has arrived, and in David’s first action as king he is a warrior, an anointed one who conquers and beheads a monstrous giant, whose speech echoes the serpent’s voice” (*Dominion and Dynasty*, 140).

<sup>49</sup> Of the latter point, so too Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 139–40; Leithart, *Son to Me*, 62.

<sup>50</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014) is a wonderful and short illustration of how later texts help readers reevaluate and fill out their understanding of earlier texts.

LORD was rare in those days,” but by the end Samuel is “established as a prophet of the LORD” (v. 20), and his “word came to all Israel” (4:1). Samuel bears all the right marks of a Deut 18 prophet: he reports what he is told despite the fact that he is afraid (vv. 15–18; cf. Deut 18:18), none of his words fail (v. 19; cf. Deut 18:22), and his words come directly from the LORD (v. 21; cf. Deut 18:18–19). Now the question is, Will Israel *hear/obey* (שמע) the voice of the LORD through the prophet as expected in Deut 18:15, 19? As we will see, this question persists throughout 1 Samuel with positive and negative consequences.

Thus, 1 Samuel 2 and 3 are determinative for framing 1 Samuel with the concepts of Gen 3:15 and Deut 18:9–22. These chapters turn the reader’s antenna on to detect more Gen 3 and Deut 18 language/motifs throughout. And, as argued briefly above, Deut 18:9–22 is reminiscent of Gen 3:17; wherever the reader sees the former the *need* for Gen 3:15 is remembered. In fact the drawing together of Gen 3:15 and Deut 18:9–22 is already sensed in 2:25 where the first of the LORD’s enemies, Eli’s sons (!), are put to death because they do not *hear/obey the voice* of their father (ולא ישמעו לקול אביהם).<sup>51</sup>

## 2. Saul Is of Benjamin

For our purposes here, these themes re-converge in ch. 8. There the people want a king, but not with the same nations-judging ethos of 2:10. Rather, they want a king to be *like* the nations (8:5, 19–20), even though most of the nations surrounding Israel are actually their enemies (case in point, chs. 4–5). Here the “Seed of the Woman” comes dangerously close to simply devolving into the “Seed of the Serpent.” How did it come to this? The question we asked above regarding whether Israel will *hear/obey the voice* of the prophet is now answered in the negative. Verse 19 says “the people refused to *hear/obey the voice* of Samuel” (וימאנו העם לשמע בקול שמואל). The Deut 18 program, therefore, designed (in part) to reverse the fall, seems not to be working. Instead, Israel is acting again like Adam. Ironically, then, Samuel is told to *hear/obey the voice* of the people (vv. 7, 9, 22). The rest of the story surrounding the king of *their* choosing should be read like the effects of Adam’s first *hearing/obeying the voice* of his wife: death is on the horizon.<sup>52</sup>

The preliminary sign of trouble is the very first verse of ch. 9: “There was a man from [the tribe of] Benjamin.” He is Saul. There is nothing wrong with the tribe of Benjamin *per se*, only that Benjamin is not Judah.<sup>53</sup> Israel’s first prophet, Moses, had foretold that Judah would be the tribe of the royal line (Gen 49:8–12). Thus, an emphasis on Saul’s Benjaminite heritage is never far from view, repeated in 9:16, twice in 9:21, and twice again in 10:20–21. All the

<sup>51</sup> Similarly Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 161–62.

<sup>52</sup> Most notably in 22:16–19, which we will consider shortly.

<sup>53</sup> But see Judg 19–21 when the problem is the lack of a king in Israel.

same, in their first encounter Samuel speaks to Saul the word of the LORD in 9:27, again begging the question as to whether he will hear/obey the voice of the prophet. This call to *hear/obey the voice* of the LORD goes forth from Samuel again in 12:14–15 with promises and threats depending on the people’s reaction.

Initially, things look promising. In ch. 11 Saul delivers the LORD’s people from their enemies.<sup>54</sup> Saul’s comment in 11:13 that the LORD has accomplished “salvation” in Israel reads like 2:10. Great! And Saul is told that he is to *hear/obey the voice of the LORD* (12:14–15; וְשָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וְשָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה), echoing again Deut 18:15–19. But it does not take long before Saul is making unsanctioned sacrifices in 13:8–15. All the same, the LORD saves Israel through Saul’s son Jonathan (13:3; 14:1–5), and the summary of Saul in 14:47–52 is very positive in the light of 2:10 (cf. also 14:23).

With ch. 15, however, Saul’s place in redemptive-history moves in a disappointingly clear direction. In v. 1, because Saul is king he is commanded “now *hear/obey the voice* of the words of the LORD” (וְעַתָּה שָׁמַע לְקוֹל דְּבַר יְהוָה). But sadly, he does not. He does not follow through on the command to destroy the Amalekites (thus decidedly *not* looking like the king of 2:10, not judging the LORD’s enemies). When Samuel confronts him in v. 19, the prophet asks why he did not “*hear/obey the voice* of the LORD” (וְלָמָּה לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה), and restates in v. 22 the paramount nature of “*hearing/obeying the voice* of the LORD” (בְּשָׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה).<sup>55</sup> This is a very clear echo of Deut 18:15–19.<sup>56</sup> Yet, as argued above, Gen 3:17 lingers in the background, too. Like Adam, Saul has heard/obeyed someone else’s voice: in v. 24 he says, “I feared the people and I *heard/obeyed their voice*” (וְאָשָׁמַע בְּקוֹלָם).<sup>57</sup> The consequences are both that the word of the LORD is no longer available to Saul (v. 26) and *death*, which is already foreshadowed in v. 35.<sup>58</sup> Not hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD, and instead hearing/obeying someone else’s voice, was the cause of the original death in Gen 3. So it is again. With Saul’s inability to respond to the LORD’s corrective program—the employment of prophets—he is starting to resemble

<sup>54</sup> This, however, is not without the interesting comment in v. 8 that the men of *Judah* were there to help.

<sup>55</sup> See a much larger analysis in V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence*, SBLDS 118 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 133–69.

<sup>56</sup> A Deut 18 background also provides an explanation for why Saul’s actions are equated to “divination.” Divination is one of the forms of revelation forbidden in Deut 18:10, 14. It is functionally “hearing/obeying” other voices besides the LORD’s/the prophet’s. It may well serve also as a foreshadowing of ch. 28 (Saul’s “For I Feared the People, and I Yielded to Them” (1 Sam 15:24): Is Saul’s Guilt Attenuated or Intensified?,” ZAW 108 [1996]: 101; Stephen B. Chapman, *1 Samuel as Christian Scripture: A Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016], 204).

<sup>57</sup> The play on שָׁמַע and קוֹל in 15:14 helps keep this emphasis relentlessly at the fore. On the very significant role that Saul’s *hearing/obeying the voice of the people* has in not only ch. 15, but all of 1 and 2 Samuel (particularly in comparing Saul to David for fitness to be king), see Frisch, “For I Feared,” 98–104.

<sup>58</sup> So too Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 154.

the “Seed of the Serpent.”<sup>59</sup> First Samuel 15, in short, is a recapitulation of Gen 3: another king hearing/obeying someone else’s voice other than the LORD’s, and death is the consequence.

### 3. *David Is of Judah*

In stark contrast, the next two chapters immediately present a man *from Bethlehem* (16:1), which the reader knows is in *Judah* (17:12; cf. also significantly Ruth 1:1). He becomes the king, the LORD’s anointed (16:1, 6; cf. 2:10). This is, of course, David. And right away, when the enemies of the LORD taunt his people, “David *hears*” (17:23; יִשְׁמָע אֶת דָּוִד). His immediate victory over Goliath is, as mentioned above, the affirmation that the Philistine warrior is the “Seed of the Serpent”; David chops off his head (17:49–51). David then puts Goliath’s armor in his tent (17:54), shows the head to Saul (17:57), and tells him that he is the son of Jesse, *of Bethlehem* (17:58; inclusio with 16:1). Collectively this amounts to the confirmation that David is the “Seed of the Woman” who brings the LORD’s salvation to his people by decapitating the hostile “Seed of the Serpent.”<sup>60</sup> So clear is it that *even Jonathan*, the heir apparent to Saul, submits to this Judaic king (18:3–4). The author then goes on to celebrate David’s other victories (18:5, 7, 14, 27, 30).<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Frisch also compares Saul’s words in 15:24–25 to Pharaoh’s in Exod 10:16–17, esp. “please forgive my offense” found “in its present form only twice throughout the entire Bible” (“For I Feared,” 102–3).

<sup>60</sup> Collins concludes, “The clearest syntactic parallel to [Gen 3:15] is 2 Samuel 7:13” (“Syntactical Note,” 145; see also Kaiser, “zera’,” 1:253). Given that 2 Sam 7 is the height of David’s story, the employment of Gen 3:15 language there adds support that such themes are latent already in 1 Sam 16–17. As mentioned above, this article does not concern itself with compositional issues, but the connections Walter Wifall makes between the language and themes of Gen 2–3 and the stories of David are nonetheless quite illuminating on a biblical-theological level (“Gen 3:15—A Protevangelium?,” *CBQ* 36 [1974]: 361–65; cf. esp. the references listed in n. 9). Likewise, Walter Brueggemann himself admits that the direction of literary dependence between Gen 2–11 and the stories of David “can be argued either way,” but the connections he observes between the two are intriguing despite his view that the former depends on the latter (“David and His Theologian,” *CBQ* 30 [1968]: 156–81; quote from p. 158n17). See also n. 33 above on the relationship between David and Genesis.

<sup>61</sup> McDonough makes the case that David’s purchase of the threshing floor in 2 Sam 24:18–25, acquiring it *from a Jebusite*, parallels Abraham’s purchase of a burial site for Sarah in Gen 23, acquiring it *from a Hittite* (cf. also the openings of the next stories, 1 Kgs 1:1 and Gen 24:1). The former, therefore, represents the fulfillment of the promise of the land begun with the latter (McDonough, “And David Was Old,” 128–31). “The temple to be built here represents the ultimate meeting-place of YHWH and his people in the land promised to Abraham” (pp. 128–29). This reading furthers the understanding of David as the “Seed of the Woman” through whom the covenant God is bringing his Eden-restoring purposes to pass. David’s song at the end of his career also evokes the language and themes of Gen 3:15 in 2 Sam 22:37–43 (which Hamilton calls an inclusio with 1 Sam 2:10 [“Skull Crushing Seed,” 38]). This understanding of David seems to appear in the Psalms as well; see Pss 8:6; 72:9; 89:5, 24, 30, 37; 110:1 (so too Wifall, “Protevangelium?,” 363).

#### 4. *Saul Is Cain*

But not all are enthusiastic about David's election. In 18:8 we read that "Saul burns greatly [with anger]" (וַיַּחַר לְשָׂאוֹל מְאֹד). This is the exact same construction in Gen 4:5 (וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד). While this construction can also be found in other places (Gen 34:7; Num 16:15; 1 Sam 11:6; 2 Sam 3:8; 13:21; Neh 4:1; 5:6), it is particularly poignant here to evoke the Cain and Abel story because of the other Gen 3:15 language throughout *and particularly because of Saul's behavior just prior in ch. 15*.<sup>62</sup> Chapters 16–17 are David's introduction as the "Seed of the Woman" but it was ch. 15 where the reader last saw a concentration on Saul, then acting like Adam (cf. 1 Sam 15:24 and Gen 3:17). Now ch. 18 throws the two together, at which time the LORD is very favorably disposed to David (cf. esp. 18:14), but Saul reacts like Cain in v. 8. Then in 19:1–3 Saul wants to *kill* David and the setting moves *to a field* (בְּשָׂדֵה). While the verb "to kill" in 19:1 (מָוַת) is different than that in Gen 4:8 (הָרַג), all the same, the intent to kill mixed with the burning anger and the setting of the field is strongly reminiscent of Gen 4:5, 8 where Cain "burns greatly [with anger]" (וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד) and kills Abel "in the field" (בְּשָׂדֵה).<sup>63</sup> Jonathan even calls this action "to sin" (חָטָא) in 19:4–5, the root from which comes the noun "sin" used in Gen 4:7 (חַטָּאת), the concern being for David's "blood" (דָּם) as was Abel's "blood" (דָּם) in Gen 4:10.<sup>64</sup> This collection of lexemes surrounding Saul demonstrating his belligerence toward the "Seed of the Woman," especially after ch. 15's hearing/obeying the voice of the people instead of the LORD, dresses Saul in Cain's clothing. He is looking more and more like the "Seed of the Serpent." In 18:29 the narrator even says Saul became David's "enemy" (אֵיב) whose root also forms the noun "enmity" in Gen 3:15 (אֵיבָה).<sup>65</sup>

*Jonathan*, then, becomes a significant character in this narrative. In 20:14–16 he speaks of David in the language of 1 Sam 2:10, seemingly another recognition of David's role as the chosen "Seed of the Woman" to which he wisely submits—for the "Seed of the Woman" (= the LORD's "king"/"anointed" of 2:10) destroys his enemies. But the "Seed of the Woman" has always had enemies

<sup>62</sup> Klein comments, "The long and bitter struggle between Saul and David throughout the rest of 1 Samuel is lived in the shadow of chaps. 13–15" (*1 Samuel*, 155).

<sup>63</sup> Peter Jackson's cinographic interpretation of *The Hobbit* has an unmistakable example of this when in the third movie Thoren says, speaking of the hoard of gold, "I will not part with a single coin, not one piece of it," which is exactly what the dragon said in the previous movie. The point: Thoren's lust for wealth is corrupting him into a dragon.

<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, Saul *does not* kill David at this time because he *hears/obeys the voice* of Jonathan (19:6; וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׂאוֹל בְּקוֹל יְהוֹנָתָן).

<sup>65</sup> It is also illuminating to observe that 18:10 says, "Saul had the *spear* in his hand (וְהַחֲנִית בְּיָדוֹ)," which can only mean one thing in this context: *Goliath's spear* of 17:7, 45, 47 (Leithart, *Son to Me*, 108, 113, 127). I will argue below that more comparisons between Goliath and Saul mark the latter's determinative characterization as the "Seed of the Serpent."

close to him (Cain was after all Abel's brother),<sup>66</sup> and when Saul challenges Jonathan in 20:31 with these words the atmosphere reaches its highest intensity:

For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the land, you [emph.] will not be established, nor your kingdom. Now go and seize him for me, for he shall surely die.<sup>67</sup>

This is not just a rant on Saul's part, but a very real challenge to Jonathan.<sup>68</sup> What will Jonathan do? This is the first indication from the mouth of Saul that Jonathan will be his successor. Will he establish his own kingdom? Will he satisfy his father? If so, he sides with the "Seed of the Serpent." Or will he remember his oath of 18:3–4 and 20:14–16, bearing in mind that "the enemies of David" (20:15) are his father (and his father's house)?

This is the narratological tension in 20:35 when Jonathan goes into the field (הַשָּׂדֶה), *the same field into which he had invited David in v. 11!*<sup>69</sup> Is he luring him there? With the Gen 4 themes swirling around the previous story in ch. 19 (and 18:8), the reader trembles at the prospect that the "Seed of the Serpent" will again kill the "Seed of the Woman." Cain is again following Abel into the field.<sup>70</sup> The fact that David waits there three days contributes to this anxiety. Three days is symbolic of death.<sup>71</sup> But three days is also the symbol of resurrection.<sup>72</sup> For at the end of the pericope Jonathan *reverses* the imagery and aligns himself with David *in the language of Gen 3:15*. Verse 42 states,

The LORD will be between me and you (בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ)  
and between my seed and your seed forever. (וּבֵין זֶרְעִי וּבֵין זֶרְעֶךָ)

Again, Gen 3:15a reads,

I will put enmity between you and the woman, (בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה)  
and between your seed and her seed. (וּבֵין זֶרְעֶךָ וּבֵין זֶרְעָהּ)

<sup>66</sup> That Cain "spoke" to Abel in Gen 4:8 suggests some relational closeness, as of course does the oft-repeated comment that they are brothers in Gen 4:2, 8–11 (Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 273).

<sup>67</sup> While it is true that in v. 34 Jonathan grieves for David, that is still no indication as to what he will do in the rest of the chapter, only that he is torn between David and his father. Loyalty calls from opposing directions.

<sup>68</sup> Brueggemann comments here, "Saul pulls out all the stops of woundedness and indignation. He reminds Jonathan ... that Jonathan will not have a kingdom as long as David lives" (*First and Second Samuel*, 151). But how can the reader conclude as Brueggemann does, "Jonathan does not seem to care" (p. 151)? The Gen 3–4 overtones have to make the reader wonder what exactly Jonathan thinks and will do.

<sup>69</sup> One has to wonder if the textual variant in Gen 4:8, "Let us go into the field," might have been influenced by 1 Sam 20:11.

<sup>70</sup> Says Leithart, "Significantly, much of this episode took place in a 'field' (20:5, 11, 24), the same location where Cain killed Abel (Gen. 4:8)" (*Son to Me*, 120).

<sup>71</sup> See the beautifully insightful piece by Stephen G. Dempster, "From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone: The Resurrection of Christ on 'The Third Day' According to the Scriptures," *WTJ* 76 (2014): 371–409.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

The parallel language is clear. Despite the anticipation that Jonathan might kill David in the field as another manifestation of the “Seed of the Serpent’s” enmity toward the “Seed of the Woman,” a surprising and beautiful twist comes at the end: Jonathan affirms his *allegiance* to the “Seed of the Woman” in the very language of Gen 3:15 itself.<sup>73</sup> Only instead of enmity “between” them and their seed, *the LORD* is “between” them and their seed.

It is only from this moment on that Jonathan can be trusted. If the reader only thinks good about Jonathan all the way through the narrative, then 1 Sam 20:42 loses its climactic power as a sudden last-second *inversion* of Gen 4.<sup>74</sup> Jonathan has prudently sided with Gen 3:15’s “Seed of the Woman” (surely as a narratological example to all readers) against all cultural, human, and *intertextual* expectations.<sup>75</sup> In this way, Gen 4 provides the theological overtones to all of chs. 18–20.<sup>76</sup>

### 5. *Saul Is Esau*

With ch. 21 the imagery does not so much shift, as follows the same development of Genesis itself. If Saul—and potentially Jonathan—as the new Cain cannot kill the “Seed of the Woman,” perhaps Saul as the new *Esau* can.

As David visits Ahimelech the priest, the reader is suddenly introduced to “a certain man of the servants of Saul” (v. 7; v. 8 in MT). “And his name was Doeg the Edomite.”<sup>77</sup> Every time, save one, that Doeg is mentioned he is again

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<sup>73</sup> Pace Brueggemann who says, “The tenseness of the narrative is for a moment resolved, because Saul is not present” (*First and Second Samuel*, 152–53). Rather, the tenseness is only resolved because Jonathan, from the House of Saul, has invoked the language of Gen 3:15 to ally himself with the “Seed of the Woman,” whereas moments earlier it looked like he might kill him as the “Seed of the Serpent.”

<sup>74</sup> Comments like this are ubiquitous: “He has such magnanimity of spirit that he can envisage David as king of Israel (v. 13) *without any shadow falling across their friendship*; he is uncorrupted by ambition and he asks in return a love which matches his own (v. 17)” (William McKane, *1 & 2 Samuel: Introduction and Commentary* [London: SCM, 1963], 130). But vv. 13 and 17 come before Saul’s challenge to Jonathan in vv. 30–31. The narrative drama and shocking conclusion are lost if readers wash the end of the pericope over all before it. Instead, vv. 30–31 should be read as a new point of data that could alter Jonathan’s posture toward David entirely. Or Tony W. Cartledge: “The story of Jonathan and David’s friendship is one of the more heart-warming stories in all the world’s literature of any age” (*1 & 2 Samuel* [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001], 244). No, it is not “heart-warming” but harrowing. In fact, I would contend that 18:3–4 and 20:14–16 are not just data points or all-encompassing summary statements of their relationship, but are designed to create the close ties between Jonathan and David to strengthen the Cain and Abel comparison all the more. For before the reader knows what Cain will do, it is known they are brothers. So here, in ch. 20 it is unclear what Jonathan will do, but their close ties in no way remove the Cain and Abel comparison. Rather it heightens it.

<sup>75</sup> Leithart suggestively calls Jonathan in this passage the “anti-Cain” (*Son to Me*, 120).

<sup>76</sup> Moreover, I am arguing that Gen 3–4 provides the interpretive frame for all of 1 Sam 15–20.

<sup>77</sup> Says Klein, “His Edomite nationality marks him as a potentially sinister character (cf. Gen 25:25, 30; Num 20:14–21; 2 Sam 8:13–14; 1 Kgs 11:14–22)” (*1 Samuel*, 213).

and again called “the Edomite” (1 Sam 21:7; 22:9, 18, 22).<sup>78</sup> It is not typical to continue to include a disambiguator for characters after the first time they are introduced. The text will not allow the reader to miss the significance of this point therefore: Saul is associated with *Edom*, the “other nation” of Gen 25:23. This “Doeg the Edomite” reveals to Saul where David is, and how Ahimelech helped him (22:9). For helping David in this way, Saul says Ahimelech and his entire house shall surely die (22:16; מוֹת תָּמוּ as in Gen 2:17 and 3:4 ironically), but none of his servants are willing to lift a hand against the LORD’s priests (22:17). None except “*Doeg the Edomite*” that is, who then kills eighty-five priests and their entire village (22:18–19). Frighteningly, “Doeg the Edomite” does to Israelites in an Israelite town what Saul would not do to the Amalekites when commanded by the voice of the prophet in the pivotal ch. 15 (compare the language of 15:3 and 22:19).<sup>79</sup> This is a terrible moment when the king (הַמֶּלֶךְ) of Israel (22:17) *through the hand of an Edomite* does to the people of the LORD what *he* was supposed to do to the enemies of the LORD.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, by killing Israelites by the hand of an Edomite, Saul fulfills Esau’s threat of Gen 27:41, “I will kill my brother Jacob.” Thus, in his association with Edom and in killing the descendants of Jacob (who are also a form of the “Seed of the Woman” by the reading of Genesis above) Saul becomes the “other nation” in Gen 25:23. Again, Saul is devolving more and more into the “Seed of the Serpent” who, by the reading of Genesis above, is affiliated with the house of Esau/Edom, bent on killing the house of Jacob/Israel.<sup>81</sup>

Moving now to the conclusion of Saul’s narrative, ch. 28 draws together many key themes. For one, Samuel is dead and the LORD does not answer Saul (vv. 3, 6, 15), which forms an *inclusio* with the determinative ch. 15 when, because of Saul’s disobedience to Deut 18:9–22, the LORD takes prophecy away from him (cf. esp. 15:35).<sup>82</sup> Samuel even specifically recalls in v. 18 that Saul did “not *obey/hear the voice* of the LORD” (לֹא-שָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה). Because Saul does not have a word from the LORD, he turns to a “medium” to call up the dead, which itself is strictly forbidden in Deut 18:9–22.<sup>83</sup> And by the end the reader comes to the

<sup>78</sup> The only time he is not also designated “the Edomite” is in 1 Sam 22:18a, yet in the very next sentence he is. So in one way of thinking he is never not called by this name. Psalm 52’s superscript also includes “the Edomite.”

<sup>79</sup> Says Robert D. Bergen, “Saul’s stunning inversion of the revealed will of the LORD in this instance is consistent with the text’s portrayal of Saul as a king ‘such as all the nations have’ (8:5)” (*1, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996], 230).

<sup>80</sup> The MT emphasizes the pronouns in v. 18, highlighting the comparison all the more (Klein, *1 Samuel*, 225). Auld comments, “It adds to the scandal: Doeg is more punctilious over the destruction of priests in Israel than Saul has been with Agag and the Amalekites” (*I & II Samuel*, 269–70).

<sup>81</sup> Without naming him as such, Dale Ralph Davis compares Saul at this point to several other “Seeds of the Serpent” throughout the Bible (*1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart* [Grand Rapids: Baker; repr., Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2000], 185–86).

<sup>82</sup> See also *ibid.*, 235–36; McKane, *I & II Samuel*, 163.

<sup>83</sup> While I cannot agree with all of his redactional conclusions, see nonetheless Herbert Donner, “Basic Elements of Old Testament Historiography Illustrated by the Saul Traditions,” in *Die*

pronouncement of Saul's death (v. 19) which also recalls ch. 15 (esp. v. 35).<sup>84</sup> In short, the original failure of Saul through the lens of Deut 18:9–22 comes storming back into view.<sup>85</sup> As argued above, the evoking of Deut 18:9–22 brings with it the memory of Gen 3:17. Saul's failure is the same as Adam's: the failure to hear/obey the voice of *the LORD* and instead hear/obey the voice of *others*. In both cases, the result is death.<sup>86</sup>

It would seem, therefore, that 1 Sam 28:19 should be a suitable ending to this episode. Everything expected from the determinative ch. 15 has come to roost. What, then, is the point of vv. 20–25? The witch of En Dor insists on making Saul some food.<sup>87</sup> He resists at first, but then “hears/obeys” (again,  $\text{וְשָׁמַע}$ ) her word.<sup>88</sup> She kills a fattened calf and bakes him bread.<sup>89</sup> Then comes the penultimate

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*Ou-Testamentiese Werkgenenskap in Suider-Afrika* 24 (Potchefstroom: Old Testament Society of South Africa, 1982), 46–47, on the strong linguistic ties between 1 Sam 28 and Deut 18. As to why/how the witch was successful in conversing with Samuel, Chapman suggests this should be viewed much the same way as Balaam's prophecy (Num 22–24), “divine concessions that can be understood as heightening, rather than diminishing, God's sovereignty” (1 *Samuel*, 203).

<sup>84</sup> See also Chapman, 1 *Samuel*, 200 (though Chapman seems to confuse just whose death is in view in 1 Sam 15:35). Leithart comments that Samuel's robe (28:14) also recalls 15:27–28, the last time his robe was mentioned (*Son to Me*, 155).

<sup>85</sup> “His great error at the outset was to listen to the people and not to Samuel; that is, not to Yahweh” (Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 196).

<sup>86</sup> The result is also disqualification from kingly rule over the LORD's garden/kingdom.

<sup>87</sup> Pamela Tamarkin Reis makes the case that she is trying to save her own life after the less than encouraging news she just delivered to Saul (*Reading the Lines: A Fresh Look at the Hebrew Bible* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002], 147–67). It was, after all, commonly believed that conduits of revelation (either mediums or prophets) had control over their messages (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 22:8, 18), which could be the sense behind v. 16—Saul thinks he might get a better answer this time around. But of course that is exactly the opposite point of Deut 18:18 (“I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him”) and the very expectation that is prohibited by Deut 18:9–14. David Toshio Tsumura, however, suggests she may be some kind of sorceress of a sun goddess who makes food for the dead—and soon-to-be-dead, thus Saul should eat—that the goddess carries through the underworld at night (*The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 630–31). Maybe this is why he refuses to eat at first!

<sup>88</sup> Again, this is another person Saul “hears/obeys,” whereas he did not “hear/obey the voice” of the LORD in v. 18. “The repeated use of *sāma*’ underscores an important theological point. ‘To listen’ is also ‘to obey’... When Saul finally does *listen* to someone, it is to the voice of a divining woman, who acts in direct violation of Yahweh's law” (Cartledge, 1 & 2 *Samuel*, 326). If Tsumura's understanding of the nature of the meal is correct (see n. 87 above), then his yielding to eat the meal also constitutes idolatry. Leithart also comments that “the emphasis on ‘listening to the voice’ is deliberate and pregnant” (*Son to Me*, 155), and then intriguingly says, “Ultimately the roots of this scene go back to Eden, for Adam was also condemned ‘listening to the voice’ of a woman and accepting the food she offered, rather than listening to the voice of Yahweh (Gen 3:17)” (p. 156). While I do not think so much emphasis needs to be placed upon the observation that a *woman* gives *food*, I obviously agree that we are thinking in the right direction when language of “listening/hearing/obeying” the voice takes us back to Gen 3 (through Deut 18).

<sup>89</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood says 1 Sam 28:34 is “very similar” to Gen 18:6–7 and 19:3 (“1, 2 *Samuel*,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 3 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 784), but makes nothing more of it. I contend here, however, that more similarities between 1 *Samuel* and the Esau story evoke Gen 25 far more than Gen 18–19.

scene in Saul's story in 28:25 (short only of narrating his death), and it is the final characterization for this king of Israel: in three staccato verbs, he and his servants *ate* and *rose* and *went* (וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ). These three verbs are found in this order *only* here and in Gen 25:34, the moment of Esau's crass recusal from among the covenant people.<sup>90</sup> Thus, in one sudden moment Saul looks indistinguishable from Esau, the father of Israel's historic enemy, Edom. All are the "Seed of the Serpent."<sup>91</sup>

It seems so anti-climactic. Samuel's words in vv. 16–19 surely read as enough to conclude Saul's last night on earth. Why this meal and exit? It is one final typecasting—indeed the clearest if there still remained any question—that Saul is the latest manifestation of the "Seed of the Serpent" who wants to kill the "Seed of the Woman." Saul is Esau, just as Esau was Cain.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, there is a line of redemptive-historical indistinguishability running from Cain through Esau, Edom, and Saul. Adam's original failure was hearing/obeying the voice of others in contradistinction to the voice of the LORD; and prophets were given to Israel to start to redress such a habit among fallen humanity. "The Seed of the Woman," in order to be the redeemer, will *hear/obey the voice* of the LORD through the prophet; the "Seed of the Serpent" will not and instead attempt to destroy the "Seed of the Woman." The book of 1 Samuel takes readers through this dynamic very slowly and reaches its denouement in the ah-ha moment when Saul looks exactly like Esau—speaking and acting like Cain, in league with an Edomite killing Israelite priests and civilians, and finally acting in the same manner as Esau's defining moment in Gen 25:34.

But alas, unlike *Animal Farm*, there is an ultimate showdown. When Saul's death is finally narrated in ch. 31, it is like watching an inevitable car crash, from which one helplessly recoils before it even happens. The only thing left is for the wreckage to just ensue. With no narratological buildup and very little detail, first Saul's sons die, including Jonathan (v. 2), then Saul falls on his own sword (v. 4). Verse 6 provides the last validation that Samuel was a true prophet: his word of 28:19 comes to pass (cf. Deut 18:21–22). But it is vv. 8–10 that provide the final crunching of glass and screeching of metal: *the Philistines decapitate Saul's dead body and put his armor in Ashtaroth's temple*. At this point the

<sup>90</sup> First Samuel 9:24–26 uses the verb נָצַח instead of יָלַח.

<sup>91</sup> Again, Leithart is provocative in calling this scene "a counterfeit Passover" with its unleavened bread at night and coming death of a firstborn (*Son to Me*, 156). This too may be in view in addition to the Esau imagery. Either way (or both ways) the reader ends up in the same place: "true Israel, David" escapes the serpent. While I have commented positively on Leithart's *Son to Me*, one only wishes Leithart showed a little more of the textual evidence leading to his conclusions, rather than just making glancing suggestions.

<sup>92</sup> Of course the parallel would be stronger if Saul also "drank" as Esau did. Instead only three of the four verbs are repeated. I ascribe this to the author's historical restraints. In creating the textual parallel the author stays within the details of what actually happened. All the same, this reading does not depend only on the echo of Gen 25:34 in 1 Sam 28:25, but also on the "recurrence" and "thematic coherence" of the whole narratives (cf. Hays, *Echoes*, 14–21, 29–32).

reader says, “I knew it; indeed Saul *is* the ‘Seed of the Serpent’ for this is the same fate that befell *Goliath* in 17:51, 54.”<sup>93</sup> A little postscript softens the blow a bit—the men of Jabesh collect and bury Saul’s and his sons’ bones (v. 13; cf. also 2 Sam 21:11–14). But that does not change the cumulative effect of the seemingly minor details, now appearing like dozens of other cars bowling into an awful pileup, that typecast Saul as Esau, and equally as Cain—the “Seed of the Serpent.”<sup>94</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Dominic Rudman comments,

Historical writing is not so much about the setting down of dry objective facts as the telling of a narrative in order for a reader to draw appropriate lessons.... A close examination of the narratives of David reveals the hand of a writer unafraid to retell events with reference to the great stories of Israel’s more distant past. For the reader [comes] alive not just to the immediate context of the story of David, but to the wider one of the Primary History.<sup>95</sup>

He goes on to conclude that these sorts of allusions have “a narrative function, allowing the writer to characterise individuals and pass judgement on their actions without the need for excessive intervention in the text.”<sup>96</sup> *Allusive* characterization is just what I am proposing here.

The narrative of 1 Samuel is subtle but effective in its employment of Gen 3 and Deut 18 themes. The victory of the “king” in 2:10 reads like the triumph of Gen 3:15’s “Seed of the Woman,” and in ch. 3 Samuel becomes the new prophet forecast in Deut 18:15, 18. While it is clear from the moment the reader meets David (ch. 16–17) that he is the son of Judah and the “Seed of the Woman,” Saul’s characterization comes more slowly. He seems to make a good start at first, but in ch. 15 he does not hear/obey the voice of the LORD through the prophet as required in Deut 18:15–19. In this he looks like Adam in Gen 3:8, 10, 17. From there, chs. 18–20 typecast him as a new Cain in so far as much of the narrative takes place in the field and his burning anger incites the desire to kill David, the “Seed of the Woman.” Next, Saul is typecast as a new Esau in that he links arms with an Edomite to kill Israelite priests (ch. 22) and behaves like Esau at his last meal (28:25). Finally, Saul receives a strike to

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<sup>93</sup> See also Leithart, *Son to Me*, 170–71. The hint of this association may already be laid in 28:20 when Saul falls “full length on the ground, almost like the statue of Dagon in presence of the ark (1 Sam 5:3–4)” (Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 329), and as far back as 18:10 when Saul has “*the spear*” (cf. n. 65 above).

<sup>94</sup> That Saul is an Israelite does not matter; we have already seen in Genesis that both seeds can arise from the same genetic stock. Hamilton uses Abimelech in Judg 9:1–5, 34–49, 53 as an example of this as well. And again, of course, see Paul in Rom 9.

<sup>95</sup> Rudman, “Patriarchal Narratives,” 248.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

the head, incurring the same treatment as Dagon and Goliath before him, two very clear manifestations of the “Seed of the Serpent.” In the final analysis, Saul has progressively devolved into a clearer and clearer mold that makes him redemptive-historically indistinguishable from Cain and Esau—now the latest “Seed of the Serpent.”

There are only two groups of humanity as far as Gen 3:15 is concerned: the “Seed of the Woman” who has faith in the LORD’s purposes, hears/obeys the voice of the LORD, and will someday deliver the “One Seed” to restore Eden; and the “Seed of the Serpent” whose only mission in the world is the blood-thirsty attack on the “Seed of the Woman” at every opportunity. The people of God and the enemies of God are, therefore, locked in this permanent battle. While the “Seed of the Serpent” will achieve swiping victories, the “Seed of the Woman” will deliver crushing blows to the head. Who is who in this battle is, therefore, evident by their actions and what happens to them. In so far as Cain succeeds in his vicious assault on his brother, and Esau threatens the same, the conclusion can only be drawn that in 1 Samuel Saul is the latest manifestation of the “Seed of the Serpent” as he speaks and acts like both Cain and Esau. All three—Cain, Esau, and Saul—occupy analogous places on the map of the Creator’s redemptive-historical design. It is tragic because Saul starts well and is himself an Israelite *king*. But the “Seed of the Serpent” arises wherever there is willful ignoring of the voice of the LORD and murderous intent toward the “Seed of the Woman.” In the end, however, the “Seed of the Woman” has and will prevail, despite such enmity, as the “One” delivers the decisively mortal wound to the serpent’s head.<sup>97</sup>

Reading books as whole texts, and allowing details to work forwards and backwards through the narratives has opened up the space to see these connections. Authors do not write sentences. They write whole texts where the sentences all hang together in a coherent unity. When readers allow the full narrative to have its full effect, the more opaque details come into a colorful mosaic. So here, Genesis and 1 Samuel *as whole texts* interface to provide a redemptive-historical characterization of Saul. In short, the reader discerns the message: David I loved, Saul I hated.

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<sup>97</sup> Obviously, the Lord Jesus Christ is the “One Seed” who delivers the decisive strike to the head of the serpent in his salvific mission to bring humanity back to Eden. See Luke 3:23–4:13; 24:25–32 (comparing Gen 3:6–7, 15); 1 Cor 15:21–28 (citing Ps 8, a reflection on Adam’s role in creation); Gal 3:16 (on the understanding that the Abrahamic promises are the continuation of Gen 3:15 as argued above); Col 1:15–20; 2:15; Heb 2:5–18 (again, citing Ps 8); 1 John 3:8; Rev 12 (read in its whole-book context with the new Eden in Rev 21:1–22:5). His already-not-yet ongoing victory is in the life of the church; see Luke 10:18–19; Rom 16:20; Gal 3:29; 1 John 3:4–18; Rev 12:17. It is only methodologically narrow approaches that conclude “Gen 3:15 gets little if any attention in the NT” (*pace* Jack P. Lewis, “The Woman’s Seed (Gen 3:15),” *JETS* 34 [1991]: 303).

Table 1. Genesis 3:15 Themes in 1 Samuel

Genesis and Numbers	1 Samuel
<p><i>Genesis 3:15</i>            “I will put enmity [אִיבָה] between you and the woman [בְּיַנְדְּ גִבִּין הָאִשָּׁה], and between your seed and her seed [וּגִבִּין זְרַעִי וּגִבִּין זְרַעֲךָ]. He shall strike your head, and you shall strike his heel.”</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 2:10</i>            “The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces. From heaven he will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed.”</p>
<p><i>Genesis 4:5, 8</i>            And Cain burned greatly [וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד] ... [toward] his brother [אָחִיו], and when they were in the field [בַּשָּׂדֶה] Cain rose up against Abel his brother [אָחִיו] and killed him [וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ]” (cf. also הַטְּסֹאת and דָם in 4:7, 10).</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 5:3–4</i>            And behold, Dagon [!] had fallen to his face [to] the earth [וַיִּפֹּל גִּבְעוֹן אֶרֶץ] before the ark of the LORD.... And behold, Dagon [!] had fallen to his face [to] the earth [וַיִּפֹּל גִּבְעוֹן אֶרֶץ] before the ark of the LORD, and Dagon’s head and two hands had been cut off....</p>
<p><i>Genesis 12:3, 7</i>            “I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 17:49–51</i>            And then [Goliath] fell to his face [to] the earth [וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו אֶרֶץ] ... and [David] cut off his head [וַיַּכְרֹת...אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ].</p>
<p><i>Genesis 22:17–18</i>            “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your seed [זְרַעֲךָ].... And your seed [זְרַעֲךָ] shall possess the gate of his enemies [אֹיְבָיו], and in your seed [זְרַעֲךָ] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed....” (cf. also 12:7; 13:15–16; 15:5; 13, 18; 17:7–9, 19; 26:1–5, 24; 28:13–14).</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 18:8</i>            And Saul burned greatly [וַיַּחַר לְשָׂאוֹל מְאֹד]....</p> <p><i>1 Samuel 18:29</i>            And Saul became David’s enemy [אִיב]....</p>
<p><i>Genesis 25:22–23</i>            And the sons were crushing [one another] [וַיִּתְרַצְצֵנּוּ] within her.... “Two nations are in your womb; two peoples shall be divided from your body....”</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 19:1–3</i>            And Saul spoke to Jonathan ... that they should kill [לְהַמִּית] David ... [the setting is] in the field [בַּשָּׂדֶה] (cf. also הָטָא and דָם in 19:4–5).</p>
<p><i>Genesis 25:30</i>            ... [Esau’s] name was called Edom [אֱדוֹם] (cf. also 36:1, 8, 9, 19, 21, 31, 43).</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 20:11</i>            And Jonathan said to David, “Let us walk out into the field [הַשָּׂדֶה].” And the two went out [into] the field [הַשָּׂדֶה].</p>
<p><i>Genesis 25:34</i>            And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils. Then he ate and drank and rose and left [וַיֵּאָכֵל וַיִּשְׂתֶּה וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ]. Thus Esau despised the birthright [הַבְּכֻרָה].</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 20:35</i>            And in the morning Jonathan went out into the field [הַשָּׂדֶה]....</p>

<i>Genesis and Numbers</i>	<i>1 Samuel</i>
<p><i>Genesis 27:41</i>            “I will kill [אֶהְרֹגָה] Jacob my brother [אָחִי].”</p> <p><i>Genesis 49:8</i>            “Judah, ... your hand [will be] on the neck of your enemies [אֵיבֹיָדָי].”</p> <p><i>Numbers 20:21; 21:4</i>            Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory... Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom.</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 20:42</i>            “The LORD will be between me and you [בְּיַי וּבַיְיָדְךָ] and between my seed and your seed [וּבֵין זַרְעִי וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ] forever.”</p> <p><i>1 Samuel 21:7</i>            And his name was Doeg the Edomite [דֹּעַג הָאֶדְוִמִּי] (cf. also 22:9, 18, 22).</p> <p><i>1 Samuel 22:18–19</i>            And the king said to Doeg, “You [!] turn and attack the priests!” So Doeg the Edomite turned and he [!] attacked the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod. Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep with the edge of the sword.</p> <p><i>1 Samuel 28:25</i>            And then [Saul and his servants] ate and rose and left [וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ].</p> <p><i>1 Samuel 31:9–10</i>            And [the Philistines] cut off [Saul’s] head...(cf. also 31:9–10 with 17:54).</p>

Table 2. Genesis 3:17 and Deuteronomy 18:9–22 Themes in 1 Samuel

Genesis and Deuteronomy	1 Samuel
<p><i>Genesis 3:17</i> And to Adam he said, “Because you heard/obeyed the voice of your wife [בְּיִשְׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ]...” (cf. also the combination of שָׁמַע and קוֹל in 3:8 and 10).</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 3:1, 19–20</i> And the word of the LORD was rare in those days, no widespread vision/revelation.... And then Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD.</p>
<p><i>Genesis 22:17–18</i> “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your seed.... And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you heard/obeyed my voice [יִשְׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי]” (cf. also 26:4–5).</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 12:14–15</i> “If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice [וַיִּשְׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלִי], and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. But if you do not obey the voice of the LORD [וְאִם-לֹא תִשְׁמַעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה], but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as against your fathers.”</p>
<p><i>Deuteronomy 18:14–19</i> “For these nations which you will dispossess hear/obey [יִשְׁמַעוּ] soothsayers and diviners [קִסְמִים (emph.)]. But as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you. A prophet [emph.] from amongst you—from your brothers, just like me—the LORD your God will raise up. Him [emph.] you must hear/obey [אֲלֵיוֹ תִשְׁמַעוּן]. This is according to all you asked from the LORD your God at Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God [לִשְׁמַע אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי], nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’... ‘A prophet [emph.] I will raise up for them—from among their brothers, just like you—and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be whoever will not hear/obey [הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשְׁמַע] my words, which he speaks in my name, I will require of him.”</p>	<p><i>1 Samuel 15:1</i> “The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people, over Israel. So now hear/obey the voice of the words of the LORD [וְעַתָּה שָׁמַע לְקוֹל דְּבַרֵי יְהוָה].”</p>
	<p><i>1 Samuel 15:19, 22–24</i> “Why did you not hear/obey the voice of the LORD [וְלָמָּה לֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה]?... Has the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in hearing/obeying the voice of the LORD [בְּשָׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה]? Behold, to hear/obey [שָׁמַע] is better than sacrifice, to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is the sin of divination [קִסְם], and stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.” Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and heard/obeyed their voice [וַיִּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָם]” (cf. also 8:19; 28:18, 21–23).</p>