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DISCERNMENT IN THE FORMATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS IN A TRANSITION PERIOD: AN EXAMINATION OF THE VOCATION OF SAMUEL (1 SAM. 3.1-10).

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Abstracts

The passage of our consideration narrates the ‘call of Samuel’ and how the priest Eli guided him to properly decipher the voice of Yahweh and disposed him to the vocation and mission that Yahweh would assign to him and how he on his part made a final and definitive response to his Vocation in a transition period in the life of the Jewish people (1 Sam. 3.1-10). His formation has an enduring implication for the Jewish nation by providing a necessary guidance and needed unique identity in the Ancient world upon which successive generation continue to build on. This passage is still relevant today as we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of our seminary and examine the theological relevance of priestly formation in this third millennium, prospects and challenges. Therefore, a proper examination of this passage will help candidates to the sacred priesthood present themselves for proper formation that has a transforming effect for the work of evangelization to which God is calling them. However, without proper disposition and opening of self to true discernment which is the action of the Holy Spirit, in the humble efforts of the Formators, who like Eli, should help the candidates to decipher and discern the true voice of God calling; it will be difficult to achieve the desired result, which is furthering the kingdom of God on earth.

Keywords: Discernment, Formation, Vocation, Formators, Holy Spirit

Introduction

There are so many concerns about the books of Samuel among scholars but some areas that constantly receive scholarly attention include the composition of the book itself, the source and the question of its authorship. These areas continue to re-appear in biblical scholarship and they often generate and shape the direction of the discussion among scholars. That this is nearly so can be seen in the work of Moshe Garsiel.¹ In his work, he notes that the book of Samuel appears at the most “crucial period in the history of the Israelites...The book, as is seen even at first sight, is a unique combination of historiography, literary poetics and ethical and theological perception.”² However, other scholars have also contributed to the discussion by raising the relevance and the novelties of the different narratives, the characters, their social and theological innovations for social and religious transformation, the geographical settings and their importance for the future of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his Chosen People.³

Making a comprehensive excursus into the different debates will be too cumbersome for this paper. Therefore, the scope of this paper shall be limited to the Character of Samuel and his involvement in the different transitions that led to the stability of the Chosen People and gave a unique identity to them as a nation and see how it can be a guide for a nation like Nigeria in her identity crisis. The approach to be employed will be synchronic and canonical, as such, the textual criticism of the pericope may not be necessary.

This passage reflects the final stage as it were in the formative period of the life of the young Samuel who was dedicated to the service of Yahweh immediately after he had been weaned by his mother.⁴ *“And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young....Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.* (1 Sam 1.24-28).

When Samuel was given to Eli, the best the mother could have hoped for, was to assist the old priest of Yahweh at Shiloh, because priesthood in those days was tribal and hereditary, of which his family was not a part of (Num 18.1; 1 Sam 2. 28, 30). Thus, the young Samuel’s works would have consisted of, looking after the person of the priest, Eli and the place of worship, taking charge of the work connected to the place of worship. The proper sacrifice and the sacred vessels shall be handled by the priests of Aaronic lineage (Num 18.2-4). It is for this reason that the Chroniclers in their short genealogical tree of the workers at the Temple named his grandson Heman among those who were listed as choirs of the temple by King David (1 Chron 6.18). While doing this,

the boy Samuel was growing physically and inwardly as he also found 'favour with God and man' (1 Sam.2.26). This terminology is found only once again in the whole of the Bible in the Gospel of Luke when the boy Jesus was found in Temple teaching elders and later followed his parents home (Luke 2.52).

However, the historical context of his call showed a nation in transition and the need for a strong, God fearing, committed and faithful leader, who would help to direct and midwife the various institutions necessary for its continued existence as a nation and as the Chosen People of God (1 Sam. 2.26).⁵ He was called particularly to guide and to take a leading role in this transition, so that, this plans of God would not be truncated. Giving a summary of the life of Samuel, the author of the book of Sirach notes that he "*was the beloved of his Lord; prophet of the Lord, he instituted the kingdom, and anointed rulers over his people. By the Law of the Lord he judged the assembly, and the Lord watched over Jacob. By his loyalty he was recognized as a prophet, by his words he was known to be a trustworthy seer*" (Sir. 46.13-15). This also corresponds to the Deuteronomic summary of his life (1 Sam. 3.19-20).

The Literary Classification 1 sam 3.1-10.

Every piece of literature can be classified according to its literary genre. While many scholars classify this pericope as 'the call of Samuel', they do not assign a special literary structure to it or at best they compare it with other prophetic commission narratives especially that of Moses.⁶

A commission narrative is usually the last process of a call narrative and as such they are two different things. There are so many commission narratives in which nothing are known about their birth such as those of the prophets and the apostles yet God called and sent them on mission. Some others see the passage as that of the Birth narrative like other birth narratives of great people in the bible.⁷ It should be noted that birth narrative is a prelude to the story of a great personage of historical importance; it may not necessarily lead to a special vocation. Others see it as a divine revelation or a theophany of Yahweh to the young Samuel.⁸ In another respects some compares it to the dreams in the Ancient Near East.⁹

It is true that this passage has some characteristics of theophanic revelatory call and dream like commission narratives; it is the opinion of this work that it best fits into the literary pattern of the vocation narratives. Vocation as a literary type or genre has its own form in both the Old and the New Testament. An examination of a few examples will show the pattern of this literary structure as a unique genre for this pericope.¹⁰

Call of Moses: Ex. 3

Initiative of the Deity: Natural State: Moses was tending the Flock of Jethro Ex. 3.1

Apparition of the Deity: The angel of the Lord appeared Ex. 3.2

Sacred Location; The Burning Bush Ex. 3.2,5b

Call by Name: Moses, Moses Ex. 3.4b

Challenges of Certainty: Moses turned around to look Ex. 3.3-5a

Confirmation of the Call: Ex.3.6

The Reason for the Call: I have seen the affliction of my people Ex.3. 7-9

The Commission- I will send you to Pharaoh Ex.3.10

Time for Maturity and Assurance: Discussion between the Deity and the person, Ex. 3.11-4.17

Positive Response: He returned to Jethro. Ex. 4.18

Call of Samuel I Sam. 3.

Initiative of the Deity. Samuel was sleeping; 1 Sam 3.3

Apparition of the Deity: The Lord stood by him; 1 Sam. 3.10a

Sacred Location: The Temple and the Ark of God 1 Sam. 3.3

Call by Name: The Lord Called Samuel; 1 Sam. 3.4,6,8,10b

Challenges of Certainty: The boy Samuel went to meet with Eli thrice; 1 Sam. 3.5-8

Confirmation of the Call: The Boy Samuel answered; 1 Sam. 3.4,10c

The reason for the Call: God wants to do a terrifying thing in Israel; 1 Sam 3.14

Time for Maturity: Discussion between the deity and the person; 1 Sam. 3.11-15

The Commission: I will judge the house of Eli; 1 Sam.3.13

Positive Response: lay down and sleep over the words; 1 Sam. 3.15

The Call of the First Disciples (Luke 5.3-11)

Initiative: He went into one of the boats; Luke 5.3

Sacred Place: After teaching people; Luke 5.3

Call by Name: He Called Simon to thrown into the deep; Luke 5.4

Challenge of Certainty: We had toiled all night Luke 5. 5-7

Confirmation of the Call: Simon fell on his feet; Luke 5.8

Reason for the Call: not applicable

Time for Maturity: They dragged their catch to the shore; Luke 5.9-10a

The Commission: Hence you will catch men; Luke 5.10b

Positive response: They left everything and followed him; Luke 5.11

The Call of Paul of Tarsis (ACTS 9.3-20)

Initiative: He was on a journey; Acts 9.3a

Sacred Place: A light from Heaven; Acts 9.3b

Call by Name: God called Saul, Saul; Acts 9.4

Challenge of Certainty: Who are you? Acts 9.5a

Confirmation of the call: What do you want me to do; Acts 9.6

Reason for the Call: It is hard to kick against the pricks; Acts 9.5b,

Time for Maturity: between the incidents and Brother Ananias; Acts 9.6b,9-14

The Commission: He will be told what to Do as a Chosen vessel unto the Lord; Acts 9.6c

Positive Response: They brought him to Damascus, Acts 9.8

Call Literary Structure:

- i. Initiative of the Deity: Natural State
- ii. Apparition of God, An Angel of God, The word of God
- iii. Sacred Location- A description of the location; Temple, Burning Bush¹¹
- iv. Call by name- call is given to individual/ vocation is person
- v. Challenges of certainty, Doubt and Assurance
- vi. Confirmation of the Call- Giving Sign
- vii. The reason for the Call- Description of the situation
- viii. Commission- brings about a lasting Change
- ix. Time for Maturity: preparation for the mission
- x. Positive Response

The Characteristics of Vocation Genre

The first consideration about the genre of Vocation is that, it is not the individual that calls himself to the service of God rather the initiative is always from God. As noted by Fretheim, “the emphasis throughout is on the divine initiative. It is God who confronts Moses and calls him to a task. Moses does not prepare for the encounter, nor does he seek it.”¹² Hence, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews notes ‘No one takes this honour on himself except he is called as Aaron was’ (Heb. 5.4). Since the initiative is from God, the recipient of such a privilege calls, is presented in his natural state. It is not a reward for a good done or a prize won for a previous action. Hence, it is always related to a divine revelation or a vision of the divine.¹³

Such vocation is always an invitation to participate in a transformation that will have a universal implication of great importance rather than a personal glorification or a prize, or a reward, given for what one has done in the past.¹⁴ The manner and pattern of each vocation narrative depends on the nature of the mission to be accomplished. For instance, Abraham was called to leave his father’s house for a Promised Land (Gen. 12.ff). Moses was called to lead the people from slavery into the Promised Land (Ex. 3.1ff). Samuel was to help them make necessary

transition from a loose Tribal Amphitony to a United Kingdom under one leader in the Promised Land (1 Sam. 3.1ff). Hence, because the mission God is entrusting to this individual is enormous, He also prepares them for it.

One other characteristic of this literary genre is the mentioning of the recipients' personal name by God before revealing to them his purpose of calling them. This name calling shows the personal relationship with the divine who knows his messengers by name (Is. 49.1). In the case of Moses, Samuel and Paul, their names were repeated twice by God as a sign of "endearment" to authenticate their vocation.¹⁵ Even in some other instances, God gave new names to those He called which would correspond to their mission. God calls individual for particular mission. It is therefore God's knowledge of the individual as well as a reminder to the individual's response to God's invitation (Hos. 11.1). It is from this name calling, that the literary genre as it were, bears its special character of 'Vocation'.

Another important aspect of the vocation genre is the centrality of the word of God. According to Zimmerli, "the particular significance of the account of Jeremiah's call's to be seen in the firm subordination of all its features to the Word of Yahweh."¹⁶ This word of God is central to all the prophetic vocation. In the case of Samuel, there is an emphasis from the beginning that the word of God was not common. At the end of this narrative, God does not allow the word to fall to the ground without being fulfilled. This also puts him in the same position like that of the prophets of old because "the messages are more important than their experiences".¹⁷

In all of these examples of Vocation literary genre given above, the recipients, Moses, Samuel, the Apostles and Paul in a special way, were called to be involved in a transition that will have a lasting and more enduring effect. Thus, the "account of Samuel's vocation is a good example of a divine calling to perform a special mission, it shows both the attitudes that the person called should have and the demands that the divine call implies."¹⁸ This is also reflected in the manner of their vocation to set up a special people for God through their own person charisma and formation. Moses formation was God himself through the different dialogue. Samuel had the old priest to help him, the apostles and Paul had Jesus as their teacher (Matt. 23.8; Mark. 3.13-14; Gal. 1 15-16). Furthermore, the resemblance between Moses and Samuel is telling because the circumstances of their birth and the relationship of their parents, were involved in their narratives (Ex. 2.1ff; 1Sam. 3.1ff).

Examination of the Narrative of Samuel's Vocation

Samuel is described as one who “stands at the intersection of a cephalous clan culture and the hierarchy of the nascent monarchy he inaugurates. He is charged with preserving the conservative values of the past while also plotting out the future during a period of national transition.”¹⁹ His contributions and actions are pivotal to the eventual emergence of the people both as geographical entity and in their self-religious group. Indeed, the book could be called Book of Transition of which Samuel enjoyed not only a luminal figure but also, has consistently shown him as a leading figure.

According to some authors, Samuel's vocation was necessary because of both the physical and spiritual weakening of Eli's strength and Yahweh has found himself a strong man in the young Samuel. This passage of our consideration is the centre of the story which began in Chapter one with Hannah's prayer. It is the summit and the beginning of the great Israelitic institutions of the vocation to the special priesthood, the distinctive prophetic ministry and the Yahwistic monarchical election.²⁰ For this reason, some scholars note that to “Samuel's is the credit for one of the greatest contributions ever made to the political thought of man.”²¹

Thus, this call was necessitated by the “historical and moral limitations” that created a crisis point in Israel and needed divine intervention before it becomes catastrophic. God called Samuel to cart a new cause of direction for the leadership of the people that might eventually restore the people to the right path through the word of God.²² However, by helping him to answer this call, the old man, Eli, shows that Yahweh has a special assignment for the boy as indeed indicated in the narrative of his infancy. Yet he must not only consult and seek the guidance of the old priest Eli, but also complete the period of his formation.

Consequently, the call of the boy Samuel begins a new personal relationship between Yahweh and his Chosen People.²³ Samuel is in the vanguard because he must instruct the new leaders including himself that leadership in “Israel were not allowed to do whatever they fancied. They were subjects to a higher power and to the rule of law and morality, upheld by the prophets.”²⁴ Hence, “as has now been addressed directly by Yahweh, and the significance of this fact extends beyond the immediate circumstances, for the closing verses of the account make it clear that Samuel is henceforward to be the medium through which Yahweh will address his people.”²⁵

Therefore, this passage is a bridge between the old order as it were and the new things that Yahweh wants to do. This is the nature of God that time and again, in different circumstances, he intervened and

gets involved directly in the affairs of his Chosen People. In doing this, he calls individuals to partner with him in bringing about this radical change. Samuel will now be called a prophet. A term which in its Akkadian root means to be called or summoned by the gods “one called to duty by a god.”²⁶

If Samuel was courageous and successful in his ministry as a prophet and a judge (1Sam. 3.19-20), it was because he has disposed himself favourably through obedience under his master Eli. Thus, he became a model of obedience as he listened to what Eli taught him to say if he should hear the voice of God calling him again (1 Sam. 3.9).²⁷ He repeated the words just as Eli told him. Eli also showed by his own example of life, how to submit to the will of God, when Samuel narrated to him the message of God which he has just received. Although, challenging and difficult, Samuel told him what God had threatened to do to his two sons Hophni and Phinehas and his family. Eli responded, He is the Lord, let him do what seems good to him (1 Sam. 3.18b). Bowing to the will of God is a sign of true vocation, Mary (Luke 1.38) and Jesus (Matt. 6.10; 7.21;26.42) would later give us models by the examples of their lives.

However, the vocation of Samuel needed a special period of discernment because of the theological implication it would have for the future of the People of God. Hence, the place of Eli in this discernment was of great significance because helped the young Samuel during this formative period so to say, to learn by every call experience, the voice of God in the many deceptive voices that could be speaking to him (1 Sam. 3.5). Two caveats that are significant here in the beginning of the narrative of the vocation are: (a) the description of Samuel as a ‘young boy’ or a child and (b) that the ‘word of God’ was not common in those days (1 Sam. 3.1).

Having completed his period of formation, he was able, through the discernment of Eli, to make appropriate response that guided him throughout his life. He learnt that he was a Servant-leader between God and his Chosen People. This becomes very obvious in the words of his response to the call of God as directed by his master Eli; ‘speak Lord your servant is listening’ (1 Sam. 3.9). Therefore, he must listen to the Word of God and act accordingly before the people and that makes his a prophet like Moses. To underscore the importance of the Word in the life of Samuel, his mission was summarized in the following words ‘Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did not let none of his words fall to the ground’ and from Dan to Beersheba, he was recognized as a prophet (1 Sam. 3.19-20).²⁸ This was evident when he was to chide Saul for his disobedience “and Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee for you have rejected the word of God: (1 Sam. 15.16).

Implications of Samuel's Vocation for Israel as a Nation

There is no doubt that the theology of the Books of Samuel shows that the narrators/redactors re-worked the different historical traditions at their disposal to give appropriate place to God's intervention in the unfolding of events in the pre monarchical period. Mark Leuchter, notes that this was the major concern of the Deuteronomic Historian who constructed "a theoretical narrative of Israel's landed experience ...for the purpose of establishing a vision of society where sacral leadership and old covenantal ideals formed the basis for evaluating righteousness, theological fidelity, and social responsibility."²⁹ In spite of this, the importance of a visionary and dedicated leader in a transition period cannot be over emphasized. This is where the person of a Priest leader like Samuel becomes inevitable.

In these twin books, the combine efforts of the Deuteronomic and Priestly traditions, both of which are steeped in the theological ideologies of the Chosen People are openly manifested. This theological outlook particularly reflects the "religion of a people deeply rooted in the life of a people settled on their land and leading a natural agricultural and political existence."³⁰ It is therefore reasonable to assume that they have placed the different characters in these books at some special junctures in the history of the Chosen People of God as a nation, to give credence to their assumptions. The character of Samuel as a dedicated man of God who received the Word that was very rare and the vision that was uncommon, yet that would eventually shape the history of the people along the traditions received, bearing in mind their relationship with Yahweh as his covenanted people, at the beginning of this journey, was inevitable.

The narrative of the vocation of Samuel presents him as the personage that bears this new theological vision on his shoulder and thus incorporates other narratives that have implication not just for the immediate moment but also for the exilic period and even beyond. Samuel thus functions within a work that was not always a single narrative, but which was always part of a textual curriculum with an interconnected vision. His diverse roles as priest, prophet, and judge are the end result of careful hermeneutical creativity on the part of the redactors who recognized Samuel's liminality and its potential as an interface between tradition.³¹

In order to do this properly, he had to undergo tutelage and formation under an experienced priestly figure like of Eli. This period helped him not only to respond properly to God's call as he should, but also, it helped him to navigate the different contours of transitions even without an already worked-out road map, to guide him. Thus, "the narrative of 1 Samuel could be described as a narrative of transitions. It

details the transitional phase from the era of the judges to the era of the monarchy; its transitions from one failed dynasty (saulide) to one successful dynasty (Davidide).³²

It must be mentioned that all the primary characters in this book “stand in transitional relationship to each other so that the narrative tells of the transition from one leader to another: from Eli to Samuel, from Samuel to Saul, from Saul to David.”³³ However, the character, Samuel, that concerns this work, has at least four different accounts of transitions recorded in which he played major roles. He became intuitive and creative as he responded to the exigencies of his vocation right from the beginning of his ministry to the end and endeared himself to the heart of the people. He did this very well as he made the uncommon transition from one leadership institution to another, until till Kingdom was securely established in David, the man after God’s heart.

On the person of Samuel, his identification has been difficult because he has been described with various epithets: A seer, a priest, a prophet and a judge.³⁴ These roles singled him out as a man with special character in the development of Judaism and Jewish history. Little wonder, it was said that he had favour with God and with men (1 Sam. 2. 26). The ‘Word and the Vision’ he received from God continued to be the major instruments of his vocation and the guide of the Chosen People afterwards.³⁵ These institutions though common to the people of Ancient Near East, gave the Israelites a unique identity among their neighbors because of what Samuel did.³⁶ It is necessary to examine some of these transitions and how he had contributed to the establishment of the theological focus on the one hand and how such focus had helped to establish, stabilize and give an enduring identity to the people in later Judaism.

Priest

Priesthood until the time of Eli was tribal and hereditary. This was in accordance with the plan of God when He gave the nations their inheritance. God speaking through his Servant Moses says, “the Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi will be without share or heritage of their own in Israel... For Yahweh your God has chosen him from all your tribes to stand before Yahweh your God, to do the duties of the sacred ministry, and to bless in Yahweh's name -- him and his sons for all time” (Deut. 18. 1a, 5). According to the introductory words of the First book of Samuel, he was an Ephraimite from Ramathaim the place of his father as such he is not of the priestly lineage (1 Sam. 1.1).³⁷ This passage presented his parents as faithful Israelites who went to perform their religious duty at Shiloh regularly.

Through his association with Eli, “he is depicted as to a point, the heir to the functions and authority of exercise by the Elide priesthood”.³⁸ Thus, the institutions of the priesthood which hitherto belonged to the Aaronic and Levitical family, began a new order in him. Hence, Samuel grew up to occupy the priestly position in Shiloh because the sons of Eli dishonor Yahweh while He too vowed to take this privilege from their house. Samuel brought a new candor to the priestly office through the restoration of the true worship of God rather than idols of the nations (1. Sam. 7.3ff).

In him also the office of priesthood and prophecy were held together under one person that constituted another turning point in the history of God’s relationship with his people. This would be followed by many other priests after him (cf Ahimelek: 1 Sam. 22.10; Abiathar 1 Sam. 23.9-12). As a priest he carried out his duty throughout their cities, blessing the people, their food and offering their sacrifices (1 Sam 9.12-13). He also anointed the first and the second kings of Israel: Saul (1 Sam. 9.14-27) and David (1 Sam 16.12-13). The narratives of Samuel’s life record his various activities in carrying out his priestly duty throughout the towns and villages of Israel and the people deferred to him after the death of Eli without any constraint. Through him, a new line of priesthood was open to those who were not Aaronic or Levitical lineage which will eventually pave way for a universal priesthood in the future.

Prophet

Another area of transition that occurred under the guide of Samuel was the introduction of the prophetic institution.³⁹ Although the Deuteronomic historians concluded that Moses was the prototype, the model and the standard of prophetic vocation (Deut 34.10), yet, it can be said that classical prophecy began with Samuel. In fact, in Judaism, the Books of Samuel with that of Kings are parts of the corpus called Earlier Prophets. Under his guidance and direction, the institution grew to a major and pivotal one in Israel and became formalized. This is evident in the narratives of his vocation, the summary of his life even from the beginning of his ministry (1 Sam. 3.20) and through the various prophetic activities he carried out (1 Sam. 9.15).

His importance was such that the author of the book of Samuel credited him with this assertion that, “Formerly in Israel, anyone who went to inquire of God would say, “Come, let us go to the seer”; for the one who is now called a (‘aybiN”) prophet, was formerly called a (ha,(roh’) seer” (1 Sam. 9.9). A seer (ha,(roh’) known as the ‘man of God’ ‘~yhil{a/-vyai was consulted by the people like a divine and to inquire about what the Lord wants (1 Sam. 9.6). He was a precursor of the classical prophetism (‘aybiN”) of a sort in Israel who spoke the word of

God to the people (1 Sam. 4.1) It is noted by scholars that “it was principally as a prophet that Samuel’s memory was preserved in the tradition, so much so that, as an exponent of prophetic intercession he takes his place in later literature alongside Moses.”⁴⁰

Like Moses, he combined in himself the role of offering sacrifices and intercession on behalf of the people (Jer. 15.1, Ps. 99.6). Eventually, some of the prophets after him would combine these roles; Gad (1 Sam 22.5); Nathan (1 Sam. 7.3). Hence, he was credited as the one who made the transition from the various visionary movements to the prophetic institution initiated by the so-called bands of prophets, to the eventual classical prophets of which the writing prophets represented fully (1 Sam 9.9; 19.18-20).⁴¹

As a prophet, he guided the leaders to make the right decisions that will help the people to remain faithful to the covenant relationship with Yahweh. He was fearless in admonishing and speaking against the evil of the leaders in order to correct and to guide them in the right part (1 Sam. 15.10ff). He made the will of God known to the people by telling them the words of God as revealed to him just as he told Eli his master (1Sam. 10.17ff; 12.1ff). All these contributed to the strong and solid foundation of the Monarchy, the United Kingdom and the prophetic ministry after him. He was acknowledged as one of the greatest prophets in Israelitic history if not on the same level with Moses but also very close. For this reason, the prophet Jeremiah sees him as a credible and powerful intercessory figure before God in company of Moses (Jer. 15.1).

Monarchy

In the opinion of some scholars, “it is with the rise of the monarchy that we can truly speak of Israel as a nation.”⁴² If this is true, Samuel can then be credited as the architect of the foundation of the monarchical institution in Israel because it was to him that the people turned in their quest for a king (1Sam. 8.5). His efforts to guide and administer the people after the demise of the *Charismatic* leaders of the book of Judges, whom we could classify as the Classical Judges, until they had and built the sense of a United people and instituted and enthroned their own king is remarkable and noteworthy (1 Sam. 12.1-24). Samuel appointed so to say, a transitory leader dygIn" *nagid* in Saul (1 Sam. 9. 16; 10.1b) and then appointed a king %l,m,(*melek* in David (1 Sam. 16.1).⁴³

In their quest for a king, he did not appoint a leader who would lord it over the people (1 Sam 8.11ff) but the one, who would have the ‘heart of God’ and would try to do the will of God (Acts 13.22). He warned them about the abuses that might come from such a blind quest for a king as they wanted and so directed their yearnings lest they had

tyrants reign over them (1 Sam. 8.9-22). He approved this leader only when he had given them a constitution that defined the roles, the rights and the powers of the king (1Sam. 10. 25).⁴⁴ This transition into monarchical leadership was well instituted by the change of baton from one a priest-Judge which was himself, to a leader, *nagid* in Saul and eventually to a king, *melek* in David.

It must be mentioned that the transitions were not as smooth as they seem, rather, they had their own attendant intrigues and challenges, yet, by discerning the will of God, he was able to manage it through. Thus, he made an uncommon transition from the *Charismatic* leadership to an organized form of leadership which found resonance in the monarchical institution. To sustain this momentum, he built a special relationship between the monarchy and the prophetic leadership that would eventually characterize successive monarchical periods till the dissolution of the United Kingdom (1 Sam 15-16; 18.8-19.24; 23.25-23).

The importance of the monarchy cannot be over-emphasized in the self consciousness of the people of Israel. This gave them identity and the unity they needed as a people. The monarchy helped them to realize how related they were as a nation under Yahweh' rule. It also helped them especially through the efforts of David in uniting the entire kingdom a territory and establishing a Capital where they all could call their own (2 Sam. 5.7-12). It gave them security from the marauding enemies who hitherto were pillaging them at will. It became their identity throughout ages (2 Sam. 5.17-25; 7.1).

Therefore, the cry for a monarch to lead and rule over them like some of the nations roundabout so that they too could be an organized state having their own military and form of government to lead them seem justified (1 Sam. 8). The monarchy gave birth to the so-called Davidic *Berith* which introduced the messianic expectation as the fulfillment of the promise made by Yahweh (2 Sam 7.14). It became a model for the kingship of Yahweh and a foundational influence to the establishment of the reign of God now termed Kingdom of God. The preparation and the constitution made by Samuel with the people at Mizpah concerning their request were integral to the stability of the monarchy in the heart of people even after the destruction and the exile (1 Sam. 10.17ff).

Judge

When they were just members of the tribal league and led by charismatic leaders such as Samson, Gideon etc. they were plagued by all sorts of invasion from the neighboring nations who were best organized than themselves. This perhaps happened because the foreign nations manipulated their disunity and unleashed terror on them. Eventually, he

became their Judge and appointed his children as Judges over the people. As a judge, he arbitrated between the people and Yahweh, among the people and between the king and the people, between the king and God. Although, he still saw the need for the person of a Judge to hold the people responsible in the ethical demands of the covenant and so he appointed his own children as judges but because they were not like him and did not follow his ways, the people rejected them (1 Sam. 8.1-5). That was the end of the institution even in his own life time as the people clamored for a king who would double as the judge (1 Sam. 8.5, 20).

Although his role as a judge was not so much highlighted, yet he was considered a reputable, incorruptible and the last of the Judges in Israel even by his own account at the farewell speech (1 Sam. 12.3-4). He assumed the office of a judge at Mizpah after the death of Eli (1 Sam 7.6). He composed law concerning the monarchy and explained them to the people (1 Sam 10.25). He judged Israel as long as he lived and even appointed his sons to judge as well (1 Sam 7.15-17; 8.1). As a judge, he counseled the people as to the appropriateness of having a king and its implication; he reminded them of their sacred duty to Yahweh and judged King Saul about his failure to carry out the order of the Lord (1 Sam 15.16-19, 28-29).

The three institutions of the Monarchy, Priesthood, and Prophetism, gave the Jews their special identity among the people of Ancient times and even till today. The uniqueness of each of these institutions to the preservation of the religion of YHWH cannot be overemphasized. Each of the institution is seen as having a special relationship with the God of Israel as such they become messianic institution. The efforts of Samuel in giving this special identity to these institutions are noteworthy and remarkable because even after the dissolution of the kingdom and the subsequent exiles, a new rejuvenated Judaism arose from the remnants. This foundation is still the force behind the many dreams of the people till today.

The Nigerian Situation Today

The socio-political, religious context of Nigeria today is similar to that of the time of Samuel in many respects. For this reason, a number of challenges are confronting our nation begging for definitive intervention to chart a way from the quagmire that beset our country, Nigeria. There is the political clamour for a leader to lead us so that we can participate in the comity of nations. This is compounded by all sorts of religious aberrations and syncretism that lay heavily on the shoulders of the people like the sons of Eli. On the social level, there are the daily threats and insecurities to lives and properties in every part of the country. Moral

decadence and anti social activities run unabated from the old to the young, no one is left behind (Is.1.6). In all of these, priests and prophets ply their trade without any clue (Jer. 14.18b). There is a grave need for a someone who can be a moral compass to our nation; one will *grow in favour with God and people* (Luke. 2. 52).

There is no doubt that the books of Samuel and in indeed the person of Samuel have a deep implication for formation today as the world gradually settled into the Third Millennium. It is more so for a country like Nigeria where its corporate identity is a mirage of a sort. There are more than three hundred ethnic nationalities and 3 major tribal groups, different in language, cultural and religious values, political and social worldviews. The country was born out of a colonial amalgamation and given a name that makes no sense to all its component parts together. Incidentally, there were some charismatic leaders as founding fathers. After their death like Israel of the Judges era, everyone does whatever the heart dictates.

From the foregoing, it is very clear that we are grappling with various transition programs ranging from cultural, tribal, clan and societal perceived forced amalgamation to a state that must participate in a globalization program. As a young fledging nation like Israel of the Samuel era, there is also the leadership struggles of transition in the political arena with the nascent democracy wrestled from the military rule being led by already militarized minds in all tiers of government. We live in a country and times where democratic principles are subverted and manipulated for person ideologies and gain. We live in the times where elections are held and the results are sometimes declared to the amazements of the electorates.

The religious atmosphere is similar to that of the Idolatrous society of pre Samuel era where everybody did what pleased him (Judg.21.25). Therefore, we live in times of perennial religious transition from Traditional religious worldview to embracing a Judeo-Christian/ Islamic religious worldview. We live in the country where any religious novelty finds a breeding ground from among the so-called Christians, where orthodoxy easily bows to various forms of aberrations and syncretism; where voodooism and paganism are gaining ascendancy. The worship of idolatry in various forms and shades are constantly in the increase with everyone bringing his own novelty to bear. Scandalously sometimes, we live in the times where Church leadership that was once seen as a sacred precinct, where the Holy Spirit chose the one he wanted, are now fraught with manipulations, acrimonies, defamation, intrigues and libels, very unfortunately.

On the social level, the society seems to be on a loose spree in all sorts of anti social behaviours without any control or qualm. There is no

sense of any moral value in the mind of many citizens in the name of civilization and development. Individual has become the measure of all things and relativism as an ideological concept is enthroned over the collective and shared values. All the traditional and religious checks and balances are eroded and lost without any replacement or hope of replacement. All of these have created crises of unimaginable proportion in the society and often created setbacks and social tensions that threatened the cooperative existence of the nation. Many have often called to question the necessity of the corporate existence all together as if it was a malediction.

The socio-political and religious situation was similar to the bankruptcy that Samuel inherited at the time of his calling. Samuel was called to save and stabilize the covenant relationship hitherto promised to Abraham and inherited by his descendants so that the kingdom promised by God for which Moses led the liberation from slavery may survive. In response to his vocation, he remained focused and faithful to the God of the covenant. He constantly visited the religious sites to hear God instruct him on how to handle particular situation. The word of God which was rare before his call became common because he listened to God spoke to him time and again. He did not manipulate or subvert the word of God to please the leaders but corrected and chided them as occasion demanded. He was frank and sincere with the people in the discharge of his duties (1 Sam. 10.17-26). For all these reason, when he gave his farewell speech, he challenged the people to his conduct and behavior among them (1 Sam.12. 23-24).

Therefore, like Samuel of old, those who are responding to God's call must prepare themselves to respond appropriately to the exigencies of their vocation for the continued establishment of the reign of God and the good of the conglomerate called Nigeria. They should not be oblivious of the reality in which they are living in rather they should confront and transform it. They should not be overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenges confronting Nigeria as a nation but study it in the light of revelation and respond appropriately its demands. This can only happen if the formation which is the foundation of the future ministry is solidly laid.

In the opening words of the *New Ratio*, it is noted that "the gift of the priestly vocation placed in the hearts of some men obliges the Church to propose to them a serious journey of formation."⁴⁵ If the *New Ratio* describes the formation of the future priest as journey in discipleship, Samuel then gives a concrete example of this journey in the Old Testament. His type of formation was a novelty and typology in the Old Testament of what will eventually take place in the New Testament

when Jesus will begin to call disciples to form them into a universal instrument of salvation.

Many cynics have profited themselves in various ways in the ensue imbroglio. They continue to take advantage of the confusion, ignorance, the fears, the anxieties and the vulnerability of the individual to despoil them of a qualitative life. Yet in all of these, we seem not to have our feet properly firm and steady on the ground. What can we contribute or rather how do we make impact through our vocation. In a prophetic manner, Karl Rhaner has this to say about the priest of tomorrow:

He will be a man to whom mature people find their way even though the society does not drive children to him. He will be a man who truly endures the grievous darkness of existence together with all his brothers and sisters, knowing that its first source and its blessed fulfillment are found in the mystery of love which conquers by the incomprehensibility of the cross... will not have power drawn from the social power of the church, but will have courage to do without that power...⁴⁶

Challenges and Implication for Formation

The Call of Samuel has offered us a new perspective in responding to the call of God in a trying and transition period. Through the examination of this pericope some salient point that can help in discernment and give focus to minister of God can be underlined. The following are some of the recommendations that may be fruitful for formation of the future priest.

1. National Identity

The problem of identity is a major one for any entity because if one does not know who one is, such cannot respond to its situation appropriately. This is one of the greatest challenges that is facing a country like Nigeria. For a country like Nigeria to move forward and develop, the citizens must cultivate and have the sense of identity that will breed patriotism in them. This is where the work of Samuel as a leader in transition period becomes more appreciable. He rallied the people around the worship of a YHWH who is morally interested in the social affairs of his people and that gave them a sense of unity. Even when the geographical unity was undermined by the division of the kingdom, an identity has been created in the hearts of the citizens. Nigeria needs a leader who will give her a united identity and a moral compass under which all members can rally.

Until this is achieved, development and the social transformation that is craved for will remain elusive.

2. Vocation is a Gift of God

The choice of who leads the people finally falls on God. If this is a correct reading then, it is not only that Yahweh is the guidance of history, but that the call of Samuel shows that it is He that chooses whom he wants and empower such for the task he wants him to accomplish because he will not let any of his words fall without being fulfilled (1 Sam. 3.19). This recalls what Jesus told his disciples, you did not choose me no, I chose you and sent you to bear fruit that will last (John 15.16). Therefore, vocation is a gift that God give for the benefit of others not a prize won for a good act. If it is a gift, it should be preserved jealously and carefully not to be misused or misplaced by carelessness on the part of the recipients.

3. Necessity of Formation and Discernment for Leaders

Although, vocation is a gift of God, yet it needs to be checked and controlled as it may be that it is really from God and for which purpose. Therefore, a period of formation is necessary for the recipients of such gifts so that it may be put to proper use. By his stay with Eli, Samuel has been properly formed and schooled in the religious tradition that will shape the theological future of the people. This is still the work of theology today in a constant changing situation of life. It is appropriate to show that in the unfolding of the daily events of a people, the place of God is not relegated to the background or allow cynics to control the interpretation of such events. Rather, it is right and fitting to show and acknowledge the guiding but unseen hands of God in directing the affairs of the universe both in the case of the individual and that of the nations within the universe. He did it in the case of Samuel through the old priest Eli, he did it even the more in the case of the disciples of Jesus, whom he called and formed for a number of years both in wrds and example of his life before he commissioned them to go and continue the same mission of making disciples f all nations (Matt. 26.1; 28.19-20). In the call of Samuel, we see the need to prepare those that have been chosen for special assignment so that they might be able to give credible and lasting witness to their vocation.

4. A Faithful Minister in the Sanctuary of God

The priest should realize always that he is called by God and not responding to a profession or a job opportunity. Therefore, he should remain faithful to God and his Church to the end in good and bad times. Samuel remained faithful to his vocation, he was visiting the sanctuaries

of God to seek the will of God as he met the challenges of his vocation (1 Sam. 8.6, 21). It was this that made him a model and hero not because he appointed kings or leaders (1 Sam. 3.20-21).

5. Lover of the Word of God.

At the beginning of the call of Samuel, it is said that the word of God was rare in those days. This word of God became common in the time of Samuel because it was the light and guide in his mission, for the book notes time and again, ‘the word of God came to Samuel’ (1 Sam. 15.10). In another summary about his life, the author notes “and, for all Israel, the word of Samuel was as the word of Yahweh” (1 Sam. 4.1). In his recent document *motu proprio*, on invitation to have a special Sunday marking the importance of the Word of God in pope Francis, notes that “those called to be ministers of the word must feel an urgent need to make it accessible to their community” (*Aperuit Illis* No.5). Foremost among these are the priests and especially the priests to be who are in formation, they should love to hear and read the Word of God because in it is their salvation. In his final exhortation to Joshua, Moses exhorts that this word should not depart from his mouth, meditating on it day and night so that he may succeed in all his ways (Jos. 1.8).

6. A Dispassionate Leader/Judge of the Nations

A priest is always the leader of the community not just the Christ faithful but everyone. In Samuel, we found a leader who is dispassionate in dealing with the situation at hand. When the people demanded for a king, a request he did not support, he chided them for their wrong motive (1 Sam. 8. 10-18). When Saul disobeyed the word of God, he scolded him without mincing words (1 Sam. 15. 22-23). When there was the need to change even his own children from being the leader of the people he did not hesitate. He tried to expiate for Saul when God rejected him but when God said he has found a replacement, he worked with the new leader. In the same way, a priest should see himself as the leader of all the people especially in our generation when people are building fences and blockages to keep others away, the priest should build bridges. He can intercede for the people but he should not be seen to be partial or biased in his relationship with the rich and the poor, with the leaders and the led. Far from him to even take side in leadership tussle but should seek the will of God and accept the outcome of God.

7. A Voice of the Voiceless

A priest is the voice of the people within the community. He should not be afraid to call the leaders to account and be responsible for their actions. Samuel gave a lead in this regard when he confronted Saul about

his mission to Amalekites. He spoke and interceded on behalf of the people before God also. It is primary duty of the priest to offer sacrifices for sin and intercede for the people. Samuel was offering sacrifices for the people and available for their spiritual growth. He went round the sanctuaries to offer sacrifices. A priest should be available for the people even when it seems not convenient for him.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of the call of Samuel then shows that God is always interested in the affairs of his people and he does not leave them alone in time of crisis and challenges. He tries to give them necessary guide that will help them find stability only if they listen to him and can discern his voice amidst the many conflicting voices they hear. It is true that the onus of a vocation belongs to God and he calls whom he loves (John 15.16; Heb. 5.4) just as he called Samuel and other people at some crucial moments in the life of the Jewish nation. Yet, the cooperation of those called is always necessary to realize the vision that God has for such people.

Through the dedication of Samuel, he was able to help the people to have a personal encounter with their God because he too kept a personal relationship with the God who called him. Eli helped him to shape this relationship into maturity and guide him to know the will of God and how to respond to it in obedience. Moreover, this knowledge of God helped him to give a national identity to the Chosen people and to navigate through the political, social and religious waters of his time.

This same God is still concerned with the affairs of his people today and will intervene through the vocation he gives to the individual. Nigerian is indeed in need of leaders who can help her create a unified identity where she feels belong, a leader who can help her to navigate through the political, social and religious crises she finds herself. She needs a leader with the prophetic voice and message that will heal the wounds of the past in these challenging times like that of Samuel. Our growth in priestly vocation and formation should help us to read the signs of the time and attend adequately as the prophet of old.

Formators cannot remain silent or unconcerned as charlatans take control of the people and we keep pouring out from the seminary those who cannot make the needed difference. It is the time to discern properly those who rightly hear the voice of God and help them to respond appropriately. Formators should accompany with the right disposition, be more astute and be more involved in the process of discerning and the formation of the priest to be. Like the old priest, Eli, formators should have the proper knowledge of who God is and teach

the same to those who are discerning their vocation that He is God, He does whatever he will and that obedience to him is better than sacrifice. In the words of St Gregory the Great, “a religious leader should be careful in deciding when to remain silent and be sure to say something useful when deciding to speak. In this way he will avoid saying thing that would be better not said, or leaving unsaid things that ought to be said.” It is our duty as future priest to listen attentively to the voice of God and respond appropriately. However, how can you guide when you have not gathered, how can you discern when you have not listened and how can you lead when you have never followed?

Endnotes

¹ Moshe Garsiel, “The Book of Samuel: Its, Composition, Structure and Significance as a Historiographical Source,” in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VII* Ehud Ben Zvi ed. Gorgia Press, 2011, 131-173.

² M. Garsiel; “The Book of Samuel”, p.131.

³ “The book also deals with the transfer of government from old leaders to the new....The transfer was effected smoothly in the case of Eli and Samuel, with difficulty in the case of Samuel and Saul, and with bitter conflict in the case of Saul and David, culminating in Saul’s recurring attempts to kill David.” S. Bar-Efrat. “1 Samuel” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, (JPS), A. Berlin and M.C. Brettler eds, OUP, Oxford, 2004 P.559.

⁴ B. C. Birch, “the First and Second Books of Samuel: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections” in the *NIB: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes; Vol.II*, Abingdon Press, Nashville ,,1998; p.991, 947-1383.

⁵ The book of Judges, which actually precedes the book of Samuel in Jewish Canon; ends with these words, ‘in those days when there was no king in Israel, everyone did whatever seem right in one eyes’ (Jud. 21.25). The children of Eli also did not listen to the counsel of their father. Hence, Samuel was said to have found favour with God and man’, as a sign of his readiness to assume this responsibility according to human reckoning.

⁶ There is no doubt that with the emphasis on the Word of God and the eventual institution of the Prophetic league, Samuel was seen as a prophet, yet the narrative is different from that of the prophetic vocation because the prophets narrate their commission rather than vocation. Samuel and Moses especially narrated their calling which eventually involved their commissioning. Cfr. B. O. Long, “Prophetic Call Tradition and Reports of Visions”, *ZAW* (84), 1972, 494-500; G. Robinson, *A Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel: Let us be like the Nations*, W. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1993,22.

⁷ The birth of Samuel reflects a special literary genre that some scholars classified as a ‘Birth Narrative Genre. This is the 5th of such narrative in both the Old and New Testament (cf. R.H. Jarrell, “The Birth Narrative as Female Counterpart of Covenant”, *JSOT*, Vol. 26 (3); 2002, pp.3-18, 5.

⁸ R.W. Klein, *1 Samuel* WBC, Vol. 10, Texas, Word Books, 1983, 30

⁹ R. Gnuse, "A Reconsideration of the Form-Critical Structure in 1 Samuel 3; A n Ancient Near Eastern Dream Theophany" *ZAW* (94) 1982, 379-390, 388.

¹⁰ For a more comprehensive treatment of this structure see T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, W. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2007, 171-184 and W. Watson, "The Structure of 1 Samuel 3" *BZ* (29), 1985, 90-93

¹¹ "Unusual fire or light frequently announces the presence of God", G. Ashby, *Go Out and Meet God: A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, Eerdmans Pub., Grand Rapids, 1998 p.19

¹² T.E. Freitheim, *Exodus, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, John Knox Press, Louisville, 1991 p.56

¹³

¹⁴ God is not asking those he called to go all alone but they should cooperate with him to carrying out his mission, as contained in the structure of major calls. J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, Bakerbooks, Grand Rapids, 2018, p.41

¹⁵ "In Semitic culture, addressing someone by saying his or her name twice was a way of expressing endearment, that is, affection and friendship." D.K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, E.R Clendenen et al ed. Vol 2, B&H Publishing, 2006 p. 113

¹⁶ W. Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*; Hermeneia, Fortres Press, Philadelphia, 1979. See also, G. Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 23.

¹⁷ T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 184

¹⁸ *The Navare Bible: Joshua-Kings*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2002, 223

¹⁹ M. Leuchter, *Samuel and the Shaping of Tradition*, OUP, Oxford 2013. p. 6

²⁰ R. W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, p.35.

²¹ I. Epstein, *Judaism: A Historical Presentation*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1987, p.35.

²² The narrative of Samuel's vocation look forward to a future that God's transforming initiatives will make possible for Israel in the midst of crisis." B.C. Birch, *First and Second Samuel*, p.970.

²³ "The book also deals with the transfer of government from old leaders to the new....The transfer was effected smoothly in the case of Eli and Samuel, with difficulty in the case of Samuel and Saul, and with bitter conflict in the case of Saul and David, culminating in Saul's recurring attempts to kill David." S. Bar-Efrat. "1 Samuel" in *The Jewish Study Bible*, (JPS), A. Berlin and M.C. Brettler eds, OUP, Oxford, 2004 P.559.

²⁴ S. Bar-Efrat, "1 Samuel" *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 599.

²⁵ P.K. McCarter Jr., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, in *Anchor Bible*, W. F. Albright & D.N. Freedman (eds) Vol. VIII, Double day & Co. New York 1980, p.100.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p.99.

²⁷ According to St. Gregory the great, the boy Samuel was an example in obedience of what a disciple should be.

²⁸ Samuel became "the only source of God's Word during the oncoming period of radical dislocation and transformation in Israel." B.C. Birch, 991.

²⁹ M. Leuchter, *Samuel and the Shaping...*, p.20.

³⁰ M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, OUP, Oxford, 1972, p.179.

³¹ M. Leuchter, *Samuel and the Shaping...*p.21.

³² Although, he is making reference to the rejection of one Yahweh's agent in favour of another who has the right heart of Yahweh, Benjamin Johnson, notes that the book of first "Samuel could be described as a narrative of transitions. It details the transitional phrase from the era of the judges to the era of the monarchy; it transitions from one failed dynasty (saulide) to one successful dynasty (Davidide). "The Heart of YHWH'S Chosen One in 1 Samuel," in *JBL* Vol. 131(3), 455-466, 465.

³³ "The Heart of YHWH'S Chosen One in 1 Samuel," in *JBL* Vol. 131(3), , 2012 p.465.

³⁴ Walter Brueggemann, "Samuel" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol 5, David N Freedman ed., Doubleday New York, 1992, Pp.954-973, 954.

³⁵ All the major prophets after him begin their ministry either with Vision or the Word of God (Is.1.1; Jer.1.1, Ezk. 1.2; Hos. 1.1) and whenever they delivered the message of God to the people, they end with the prophetic formula, "thus says the Lord or Oracle of the Lord" (Amos 1.6).

³⁶ I. Epstein, *Judaism*, p.34-35.

³⁷ L. Grabbe, *Priest: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialist, Diviners in Ancient Israel Sages*, Trinity Press International, Valley Enge, Pennsylvania, 1995, p.44.

³⁸ R.P. GORDON, *1 & 2 SAMUEL*, JSOT Press, 26; R. Gnuse, " A Reconsideration, *ZAW*, (94), 1982

³⁹ According to Blenkinsopp, "the call of Samuel at Shiloh (1 Sam.3-4.1) marked the beginning or at least a new beginning, of prophetic activity." J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy In Israel*, Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster John Knox press P. 47.

⁴⁰ R.P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, p. 27.

⁴¹ After him came other prophets such as Gad (1 Sam. 22.5; Nathan (2 Sam. 7.2), Elijah (1 kgs. 18.; Elisha, who ministered at the palace to the king or independently from the king but very close them in decision and guidance of the course of Israel.

⁴² R.P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, p.40

⁴³ The exact meaning of the word dygln" nagid is not ascertained because it could mean, a leader, a king, a prince, perhaps it means a military leader but the word %l,m, *melek* means a king, Cfr. *La Bibbia TOB: Nuova Traduzione CEI*, p. 507.

⁴⁴ I. Epstein, *Judaism*, p.35.

⁴⁵ The New Ratio Fundamentals, pg. 1

⁴⁶ K. Rahner, *Servant of the Lord* ,Herder & Herder, New York, 1968, 112.