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## 7. Conclusion

Examination of these key themes – monarchy, the authentic prophetic word, the fall of the house of Eli, YHWH's independent reign and prefiguring allusions to Saul – suggests that 1 Samuel 1–7 is a carefully composed unit of text in which the various elements of the narrative work together to prepare the reader for the events that will unfold in chapters 8–12 and beyond. Repetition and the partial fulfilment of the themes that are introduced prove to be central techniques that are designed to initiate the conflicts that will develop once the request for a king will finally be made. Repetition is a crucial device because it enables the narrator to refine our understanding of the various themes, even as it also opens up new possibilities. Although the text may well contain a number of identifiable sources, the resultant narrative is considerably more than their sum. Thus, a unified narrative is presented, one with a number of thematic and plot elements, but one which nevertheless anticipates the conflicts that follow precisely because of those areas that remain unresolved within it. By the end of 1 Samuel 1–7, the reader knows that monarchy is coming, but the social and theological issues that it will raise have already been subtly flagged. As with any good introduction, the reader is left waiting to see how it will all pan out.