Nearing the end of his life, Saul dabbled in witchcraft and the occult. Expressly forbidden for any individual, his decision making processes were in shambles. He failed miserably in nearly everything he did. Ironically, even his attempted suicidal death was bungled. Saul is remembered as a disappointment and an example to history of the conclusion to a self-destructive life.

(Continued from Page 1)

**Motel**

All with exclamation points and vitriolic comments decrying the awfulness of their respective stays.

It seemed that the much anticipated motel chain was doomed. It would require a complete rebranding to bring it back from the ashes of defeat. But they did succeed in their efforts, and those involved with the Roach Motel chain bask in the name recognition that is now theirs, even to this day.

Jonathan, his own son, had just led Israel in a small but significant victory over the Philistines. In an attempt to look pious and religious in front of his men, Saul made a hasty, foolish command. Not a person was to eat even one bite until evening. Jonathan was unaware of the oath taken by his father and tasted a bit of honey that the men happened upon when going through the forest. That evening, the truth came to light, and Saul was prepared to kill his own son for this minor infraction. The men of Israel came to the rescue of Jonathan, and refused to allow Saul to accomplish his ill-conceived plan.

The clouds hovering over Saul and his personality continued to darken. God gave Saul a very clear, precise command. He was to totally annihilate the Amalekites. They had proven themselves to be a particularly troublesome people, and God no longer would tolerate their presence on the earth. He failed at this miserably. He brought their king, Agag, back to Jerusalem. Others had also escaped, and God was not pleased. Samuel was incensed at Saul’s behavior and, in righteous anger, took a sword and performed ultimate extreme surgery by hacking Agag into pieces before the Lord. What a sight to behold! God rebuked Saul that day and turned away from him. This failure of Saul was not a trivial matter. Centuries later, a descendant of Agag nearly succeeded in destroying the entire Jewish nation.

Leaving Saul to his personal flaws, God turned His attention upon a young boy named David who would eventually become king. Saul knew in his heart that God had turned from him and was now grooming His own choice as successor to the throne. This idea galled Saul, and in his bitterness and hatred, he tried to kill David on numerous occasions. His homicidal thoughts became actions against his own son Jonathan, and anyone else that stood in his way. Even innocent priests did not have immunity from his raging anger. The Bible portrays a man sitting on the throne who behaved almost as if demonically possessed. Saul had become a dark, brooding, depressed murderer.

**Saul**

Occasionally, strange characters appear in Scripture. Like creatures of the night they move about, appearing in the bright light of inspection for mere moments before darting off into the darkness again. First Samuel Chapter 9 introduces an abstruse individual, whose problematical character leaves more questions than answers. In our visually motivated world, this debonair, tall, dark, and handsome young man, if alive today, would undoubtedly be well received by the general population.

Israel wanted a monarch to rule over them. God, being patient and permissive, allowed a man to be appointed as king of Israel. The individual chosen for this all important position was a young man named Saul. Taller than most and described as an impressive specimen, he seemed an excellent choice for the job. Following an initial period of esteem and admiration by the nation of Israel, a troubled personality arose to the surface. Remarkable moments recorded in Scripture illustrate acute and profound defects in his behavior and temperament.

Chapter 13 of First Samuel recounts a moment when Saul, rationalizing to suit his own ideas, intruded into the arena of the duties of the priests. The dreaded Philistines had gathered for war, and Samuel did not arrive at the specified time. As events unfolded, they were not progressing in the manner Saul had envisioned. His solution involved him personally presenting an offering before God. This encroachment upon the office and role of the priesthood was a serious offense before God. Arrogant disregard and disrespect of the Law was not a small blemish in character. It was a huge stain.

The darkness in the heart of Saul continued to deepen. Chapter 14 records an event that, under the auspices of a true leader, would have been a great time of victory and celebration.

