**2 SAMUEL**

**The Unification of Israel**

**Did you KNOW?**

The books of First and Second Samuel were originally one document, called simply, “Samuel.” It is believed that it was initially divided so that the size of the ancient scroll would be more manageable for the reader. Thematically, the dividing point of the book makes sense as the first book ends with the death of Israel’s first king, Saul. The second book speaks of the ascension and rule of Israel’s second king, David.

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

God is in the business of restoring His creation to original factory settings. The Bible tells the story of how God fulfills the pledge he spoke to the serpent in ***Genesis 3:15*** when He said that an offspring of the woman would ***“crush your head, even though you will strike His heal.”***

**The storyline of Genesis through Judges describes** how the Lord fulfilled his promise to form a new nation from the descendants of Abraham. These opening books of the Older Testament provide details regarding the process by which God gave the nation a religious, cultural and legal foundation, as well as, a national homeland. The promised child would be born into this nation.

**Then came the brief, four-chapter story of Ruth.** And, unlike the first books which gave historical overviews of Israel’s development as a nation, the book of Ruth offered a simple, intimate story of faithfulness, compassion and kindness. It would be a descendant from Ruth and Boaz’s bi-cultural marriage to whom the Promised Child would trace his human lineage. That descendant was their great-grandson, King David.

The story of Ruth is a turning point in the Older Testament.

With Ruth, the focus of the Older Testament shifts from the formation of the nation, to the establishment of the specific family within the nation to whom the Promised Child would be born.

**1Samuel described the first part of David’s journey to the throne.** It started with the story of an honorable women named Hannah who struggled with infertility, a teasing rival, a false accusation, and a loving but rather clueless husband. Yet, her moral character and faithful reliance on the Lord served her well.

God blessed Hannah with a healthy baby boy named Samuel. Samuel was dedicated to the Lord’s service and he became one of the noblest and purest characters in the Scriptures. He embodied the roles of “Prophet” (3:20), “Priest” (7:9) and “Judge” (7:15-17). (In that sense, he was a kind of precursor to the coming Christ.) Samuel was a transitional leader in the nation of Israel. As the last of the Judges, God used him to transition the nation from the failed system of rule by Judges into a unified Monarchy.

The task of being Israel’s first king was given to a former donkey herder named Saul. King Saul’s reign started off well. He was tall and handsome – the poster child of a political leader and, at first, he made good decisions. But, over time it became clear that he wasn’t going to finish well.

A series of missteps led to his downfall. As a result, he was put on notice that he would be replaced as king. The story of Saul’s later life is that of a conflicted, tormented man who painfully holds on to a position he is not worthy of possessing. What makes Saul’s anguish worse is the persistent presence of a popular and competent younger man, named David, who *was* worthy of being the king. The book of 1Samuel ended with Saul desperately ending his life by falling on his sword.

**What you need to KNOW:**

**Second Samuel continues the narrative by explaining how the entire nation became unified under King David.** David was Israel’s greatest king and the author of most of the book of Psalms, yet the story of 2 Samuel gives us an unvarnished description of his life. David is revealed as a smart and capable leader but with some major personal flaws. He had an affair with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his most principled and honorable military leaders and then issued an order that ensured her husband was killed in battle.

God confronted him with his despicable sin through the prophet Nathan after which David sincerely repented and sought to reform himself. God forgave him, but didn’t spare him from certain consequences. The baby who was the product of the affair died and David’s family began to fall apart. Ammon, one of David’s sons, raped his half-sister. In revenge, Absalom, the full-brother of the violated girl murdered Ammon. Absalom then led an insurrection attempting to remove David from power. The coup attempt ends when Absalom is killed in the ensuing battle. Yet, in the end, blessing came into David’s life with the birth of his son, Solomon.

In spite of David’s flaws, he became a central figure in the story of God’s redemption of the world. His legacy would persist through his authorship of the Psalms and Solomon’s authorship of the book of Proverbs. And, most importantly, from the family of David would come the Promised Child of Genesis 3:15. It would be a descendant of, David, Israel’s greatest king who would give birth to, Jesus, the King of Kings. This was all predicted when God promised David, *“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever*.” 2 Samuel 7:16.

**GET GOING!**

**Continue your personal Walk Through the Bible by reading or listening to 2 Samuel.**