**1 SAMUEL**

**The Unification of Israel**

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

God is in the business of restoring His creation to original factory settings. This is the scarlet thread that runs through all the Scriptures. Miss this theme and you miss the unifying storyline of the 66 books of the Bible. 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.

**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.

To the casual reader, the book of Ruth can seem randomly placed in the midst of the broad narratives that surround it. But Ruth is rightly placed within the books of the Bible as it introduces an important change of emphasis. 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. The story of Ruth is a turning point in the Older Testament.

**Think of it this way…**

As we’ve journeyed through Genesis to Judges we saw God’s first actions of redemption.

Ruth is like a small hinge which is firmly affixed to the sturdy doorpost of Genesis-Judges.

The book of 1Samuel is the door that Ruth supports. With the book of 1Samuel, we enter new terrain. 1Samuel introduces God’s next series of actions to restore His good world.

**What you need to KNOW:**

It will be a descendant from Ruth and Boaz’s bi-cultural marriage to whom the Promised Child would trace his human lineage. We will discover that the patriarch of that family was Ruth and Boaz’s great grandson, King David.1Samuel describes the first part of David’s journey to the throne.

This book is filled with characters worthy of a Shakespearian drama or Greek tragedy. Both the magnificence and the corruption of human nature is on full display. It starts with the story of an honorable women named Hannah who struggles 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 serves her well.

God blesses Hannah with a healthy baby boy named Samuel. Samuel was dedicated to the Lord’s service. He is 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 people wanted a tangible flesh and bone king, instead of God. They were warned that if they were given one there will be some consequences that they wouldn’t like. But they wanted to be like the other nations and were convinced that the benefits would outweigh the downside. So, they said, “Bring it on anyway!”

God relented and gave the job to a donkey herder named Saul.

King Saul’s reign starts 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. These included an attitude of prideful self-importance (chapter 13), a series of senseless and foolish orders (chapter 14), and his deliberate disobedience to the Lord (chapter 15). As a result, he was put on notice that he would be replaced as king. What follows is the story 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 Samuel ends with Saul desperately ending his life by falling on his sword.

**GET GOING!**

**Continue your personal Walk Through the Bible by reading or listening to 1Samuel.**