



Themes and Threads of the Holy Bible: The Historical Books (Joshua – Esther), Judges – Esther

Judges

Author: Samuel

Prologue: Unfinished Business (Judges 1:1-2:5)

Rescue (Judges 2:6-16:31)

Gideon (Judges 6:1-8:35)

Samson (Judges 13:1-16:31)

Epilogue: Individualism (Judges 17:1-21:25)

Key Verses:

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10).

“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 21:25).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

We live in a world that celebrates everyone doing as they see fit. The result is many of us seek to become lord of our own lives, while our impressionable children watch intently. If you have a fully surrendered relationship with God, what are you doing to pass along faith in Him to future generations? If you do not, are you willing to surrender your life to Him today? Pray that God will use you to bring faith in Christ to others, whether it be through leading a Bible study for young people, taking your family to church, volunteering in an outreach ministry, or speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Ruth

Author: Believed to be Samuel

Ruth Remains Loyal to Naomi (Ruth 1:1-22)
Ruth Meets Boaz (Ruth 2:1-23)
Ruth Follows Naomi's Plan (Ruth 3:1-18)
Boaz Marries Ruth (Ruth 4:1-22)
 The Genealogy of David (Ruth 4:13-22)

Key Verse:

“But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God’” (Ruth 1:16).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Who comes to mind when you think of the character trait of loyalty? Do you have a personal experience where someone was loyal to you when you were undeserving? Ask God to help you cultivate a loyal, trustworthy, reliable, dependable, steadfast, and dedicated heart.

1 Samuel

Author: Samuel

Eli and Samuel Judge (1 Samuel 1:1-7:17)
Samuel as Judge and Saul as King (1 Samuel 8:1-15:35)
Saul and David (1 Samuel 16:1-31:13)

Key Verses:

“But when they said, ‘Give us a king to lead us,’ this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. ⁷And the Lord told him: ‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king’” (1 Samuel 8:6-7).

“But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command” (1 Samuel 13:14).

“But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams’” (1 Samuel 15:22).

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things human beings look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (1 Samuel 16:7).

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When God looks at your heart, what does He see? 1 Samuel teaches us that no amount of external sacrifice will cover a heart of disobedience. Is there an area of your life where you are rejecting God as King? Are you withholding love from your spouse, cheating on your taxes, harboring anger and hate, clicking on links outside His design, abusing unhealthy substances, or prioritizing a personal agenda over the development of your children’s faith? If so, confess it to God today. He will renew you and use you to bring His restoration to others.

2 Samuel

Author: Believed to be either the Prophet Nathan or Gad

David’s Triumph (2 Samuel 1:1-10:19)

David’s Sin (2 Samuel 11:1-12:31)

Consequences (2 Samuel 13:1-20:26)

Conclusion (2 Samuel 21:1-24:25)

Key Verses:

“And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel” (2 Samuel 5:12).

“Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him” (2 Samuel 14:14).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Are you characterized and known by devising ways for those outside Christ to find life in Him? When last did you share God’s grace in Christ with someone

who did not believe in Him? Commit to humbly, lovingly, and wisely sharing the extraordinary love of Christ with someone in need by the end of the week.

1 Kings

Author: Believed to be Jeremiah, Ezra, or Ezekiel

Solomon's United Kingdom (1 Kings 1:1-11:43)

Victory

Wisdom

Construction

Palace

Temple

Death

Israel's Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12:1-22:53)

Key Verses:

“As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, ⁵I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.’ ⁶But if you or your descendants turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, ⁷then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples” (1 Kings 9:4-7).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Does God see you as faithful with integrity of heart? When conflict comes, do you serve His interests first and foremost? Are you complete in your commitment to God, or do you compartmentalize your life in an attempt to keep parts of it from Him? Turn to God and worship Him by yielding any area you are withholding from His transformative touch.

2 Kings

Author: Believed to be Jeremiah

Israel (1:1-17:41)

Judah (18:1-25:30)

The Book of the Law Found (2 Kings 22:1-20)

Josiah Renews the Covenant (2 Kings 23:1-35)

Exile to Babylon (2 Kings 23:36-25:30)

Key Verses:

“The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: ‘Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.’¹⁴ But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the Lord their God (2 Kings 17:13-14).

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Is God prompting you to turn from a destructive behavior? Are you listening to His still small voice or rejecting His gentle call? Notice how 2 Kings 17:14 describes the choice to listen as a matter of trust. Will you trust God and listen to His prompting to let go of any vice you are white-knuckling? Take a step of faith today, and He will deliver you.

1 Chronicles

Author: Ezra

Date: 430 BC

Genealogy (1 Chronicles 1-9:44)

David (1 Chronicles 10:1-29:30)

King (1 Chronicles 10:1-12:40)

Ark of the Covenant (1 Chronicles 13:1-17:27)

Wars (1 Chronicles 18:1-20:8)

Census (1 Chronicles 21:1-30)

Temple Arrangements (1 Chronicles 22:1-29:30)

Key verses:

“David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, ‘Praise be to you, Lord, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.¹¹ Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the

majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. ¹²Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. ¹³Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. ¹⁴“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand”” (1 Chronicles 29:10-14).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Do you perceive God as owner of everything in heaven and earth and the Giver of wealth? If not, how would that belief change your priorities? Make a gift of your time, talent, or treasure to a Christ-centered ministry and seek nothing in return. Find someone in need and give anonymously. Take a risk with God to see what He will do with true generosity flowing from your heart.

2 Chronicles

Author: Ezra

Date: 430 BC

Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31)

Kings (2 Chronicles 10:1-36:4)

Judah (2 Chronicles 36:5-21)

Hope (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

Key Verses:

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war” (2 Chronicles 16:9).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Is your heart fully committed to the LORD? If not, humble yourself by getting on your knees, begging God to forgive you for holding back any area of your life from Him. Ask Him to give you His heart. He will make you new, again.

Ezra

Author: Ezra

Date: 450 BC

Zerubbabel Rebuilds the Temple (Ezra 1:1-6:22)

Exiles Return (Ezra 1:1-2:70)

Temple (Ezra 3:1-13)

Discouragement (Ezra 4:1-24)

Joy (Ezra 5:1-6:22)

Ezra Rebuilds the People (Ezra 7:1-10:44)

Exiles' Second Return (Ezra 7:1-8:36)

Sin (Ezra 9:1-15)

Confession (Ezra 10:1-44)

Key Verses:

“So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the Lord, the God of Israel. ²²For seven days they celebrated with joy the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because the Lord had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel” (Ezra 6:21-22).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Are you discouraged from the consequences of choosing life apart from God? Are you willing to confess to God how you have fallen short? Agree with His perspective of your sin, and He will begin to rebuild your life, filling you with joy, a deep internal satisfaction and pleasure in Him.

Nehemiah

Author: Nehemiah

Date: 445-432 BC

Rebuilding the Wall (Nehemiah 1:1-7:73)

Call (Nehemiah 1:1-2:8)

Preparation (Nehemiah 2:9-3:32)

Problems (Nehemiah 4:1-6:14)

Derision Warrants Prayer (Nehemiah 4:1-6)

Discouragement Needs Communication (Nehemiah 4:7-23)
Greed Requires Confrontation (Nehemiah 5:1-19)
Attacks Demand Help from God (Nehemiah 6:1-14)
Perseverance (Nehemiah 6:15-7:73)

Rebuilding Workers (Nehemiah 8:1-12:47)
Revival (Nehemiah 8:1-18)
Confession (Nehemiah 9:1-38)
Response (Nehemiah 9:39-10:39)
Policy (Nehemiah 11:1-12:47)
Rebuilding Worship (Nehemiah 13:1-31)

Key Verse:

“Nehemiah said, ‘Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength’” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Is the joy of the LORD truly your strength? When times are good, do you praise Him? When times are difficult, do you seek Him? Whether we are in want or in need, God is deserving of our praise, and He will give us strength and joy.

Esther

Author: Believed to be Mordecai or Ezra
Date: 483-471 BC

Queen (Esther 1:1-2:23)
Vashti Dethroned (Esther 1:1-22)
Esther Enthroned (Esther 2:1-23)
Threat (Esther 3:1-7:10)
Haman the Enemy (3:1-15)
Mordecai the Leader (Esther 4:1-5:14)
Triumph (Esther 6:1-7:10)
Restoration (Esther 8:1-10:3)
Plan (Esther 8:1-17)
Process (Esther 9:1-32)
Product (Esther 10:1-3)

Key Verse:

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Zerubbabel rebuilt the Temple. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall. Ezra rebuilt the people. How is God leading you? Has He gifted you to restoring your church building, your community structures, or those around you? God brought you on this scene of events for a purpose. Pray for direction on where to join His renewal of our culture in Christ.