There are books of Sacred Scripture that read like history.
Others, like poetry.
And some — like the Books of Samuel — read like an uncomfortable mirror of the human soul.

In them we find ambition and humility, obedience and rebellion, glory and sin, tears and conversion. We witness Israel's decisive transition: from a people led by judges to an established monarchy. But above all, we encounter a truth that echoes through the centuries:

> *"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7).*

This sentence summarizes not only David's election, but the very logic of God.

Today, in a world obsessed with image, power, and immediate success, the Books of Samuel are an indispensable spiritual school.

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1. What Are the Books of Samuel?

The so-called First and Second Books of Samuel form part of the historical books of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew tradition they originally constituted a single work, narrating approximately the period from Samuel's birth to the final years of David's reign (11th century B.C.).

In the Christian tradition they are divided into:

- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel

Their name comes from the prophet Samuel, a key figure who marks the transition between the period of the judges and the establishment of the monarchy.

But it would be a mistake to think these books deal only with politics. In reality, they address

something far deeper:

- God’s sovereignty in history.
- The drama of the human heart.
- Obedience as the path to blessing.
- The mystery of sin and mercy.

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2. The Birth of the Prophet: When Suffering Becomes Mission

The story begins with a barren woman: Hannah.

Her anguished prayer in the temple is one of the most beautiful in the Old Testament. She begs for a son and promises to consecrate him to the Lord. God listens.

Samuel is born as the fruit of prayer and is offered to divine service from childhood. Here we already encounter a fundamental theological lesson:

God acts in history through humble prayer.

In a culture that idolizes self-sufficiency, Samuel’s beginning reminds us that great transformations begin on one’s knees.

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3. Samuel: Prophet, Judge, and Spiritual Guide

Samuel is not merely a historical character. He is a decisive theological figure:

- He is the last judge of Israel.
- He is the first great prophet after Moses.
- He anoints the first kings.

Samuel represents the voice of God in the midst of an unstable people.

His vocation begins with that famous nighttime scene:

> *“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Sam 3:10).*

Is this not the attitude we need today?
In a world saturated with noise, the believer must relearn how to listen.

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4. The Drama of Power: Saul and Disobedience

Israel asks for a king “like all the other nations.” They want visible security, political power, human structure.

God grants them Saul, the first king.

At first he seems promising: strong, charismatic, chosen. But gradually the drama unfolds.

Saul begins to disobey. He justifies his mistakes. He acts without waiting for the prophetic word. Then Samuel pronounces one of the harshest statements in all of Scripture:

> *“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam 15:22).*

Here lies an immense pastoral key.

External religious practices are not enough.
An appearance of piety is not enough.
The true relationship with God passes through concrete obedience.

In times when faith can become cultural or superficial, Saul’s figure confronts us:

- Do I fulfill God’s will only when it coincides with my plans?
- Do I obey partially?
- Do I seek God — or do I seek to preserve my image?

5. David: A Heart According to God

When Saul falls, God chooses a shepherd: David.

He is not the strongest.
He is not the eldest.
He is not the most impressive.

He is the one with a heart disposed.

David's anointing is one of the most theological moments in the entire Old Testament. God breaks human logic about power.

David defeats Goliath not by strength, but by trust in the Lord. Here we find a profoundly relevant message:

Modern "Goliaths" — ideologies, fear, relativism, moral corruption — are not defeated by human strategies alone, but by solid faith.

Yet the story does not idealize David. And this is crucial.

6. The Sin of the Chosen One: Fall and Repentance

David sins gravely with Bathsheba. He commits adultery and murder. The fall is real.

And here appears another decisive theological teaching:

Holiness does not consist in never falling, but in knowing how to repent.

Confronted by the prophet Nathan, David responds:

> *"I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam 12:13).*

From this experience will come Psalm 51 (the Miserere), one of the deepest penitential texts in all of the Bible.

In a world that tends to justify sin or deny guilt, David teaches us something revolutionary:

Sincere repentance opens the door to mercy.

Saul justified himself.
David humbled himself.
That is the spiritual difference.

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7. The Messianic Promise: The Eternal Throne

In 2 Samuel 7 we find one of the most important texts in all biblical theology: the promise made to David.

God promises him a descendant whose kingdom will be eternal.

Here the messianic hope is born.

Centuries later, the New Testament will recognize in Jesus Christ the full fulfillment of this promise.

The Messiah will be “Son of David.”
The true King.
The One who will reign not by force, but by the Cross.

The Books of Samuel are not merely ancient history. They are preparation for the Gospel.

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8. Fundamental Theological Keys

From a rigorous perspective, we can identify several doctrinal lines:

1. Divine Sovereignty Over History

God guides events even when human beings make mistakes.

2. The Primacy of the Heart

The relationship with God is interior before it is exterior.

3. The Drama of Free Will

Saul and David show that divine election does not cancel human freedom.

4. The Pedagogy of Suffering

David is purified through trials, persecutions, and family crises.

5. Messianic Hope

The Davidic monarchy is a figure of the definitive Kingdom.

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9. Practical Applications for Today

How can we apply the Books of Samuel to our lives?

1. Learn to Listen

Like Samuel: “Speak, Lord.”
Daily prayer. Silence. Biblical reading.

2. Examine Our Obedience

Do I fulfill only what suits me?
Concrete obedience in small things shapes spiritual character.

3. Confront Our “Goliaths”

With faith, not merely human strategies.

4. Do Not Despair After a Fall

Sin is not the end if there is sincere repentance.

5. Guard the Heart

God does not look at résumés. He looks at intentions.

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10. An Essential Reading for Our Time

We are living through a crisis of leadership.
A crisis of authority.
A moral crisis.

The Books of Samuel show that the problem is not political structure, but the leader's heart.

A leader without obedience becomes Saul.
A humble sinner can become David.

And this truth is not only for kings.

It is for parents.
For priests.
For business leaders.
For politicians.
For every Christian.

Conclusion: Saul or David?

The Books of Samuel place us before a personal choice.

We can live defending our image and justifying our mistakes.
Or we can allow ourselves to be seen by God and let Him transform our hearts.

Ultimately, these books teach us that history changes when someone answers:

> *“Here I am, Lord.”*

May this reading not be merely another piece of biblical knowledge, but a concrete invitation to:

- Listen.
- Obey.
- Repent.
- Trust.

Because the same God who guided Samuel, sustained David, and fulfilled His messianic promise continues to look at hearts today.

And perhaps, without you realizing it, He is looking for yours.