

Under The Fig Tree



WEEK 16

We are not only studying the history of Israel; we are also laying foundations for our faith. Let us, therefore, with reference to the Scriptures, briefly review some of the most important lessons.

Day 1

1 Corinthians 10:1-12. The Apostle Paul knew how to study the Tanakh and interpret it in the light of the New Covenant. He realized that Israel's experience was so that we would have a foundation from which we might learn about God and our need of Him. We must learn from the Scriptures in the same way as Paul. We have been reading about Saul and David. This week, we will come to the sad climax of the story. Let us pause and reflect before completing our reading of this period of Israel's history. The most important lesson concerns the character of Israel's King. From his outward appearance, Saul seemed an ideal choice. He was head and shoulders taller than any other Israelite. We have seen how deceptive outward appearance can be. He was actually a weak King. David, while he was still a young boy looking after his father's sheep, was chosen to replace him. David is a type of Yeshua.

1 Samuel 13:5-14. Saul lost his Kingdom when he made a wrong sacrifice. This was later confirmed when he disobeyed in the matter of the Amalekites. Israel was not to have a King who would lead them away from obeying God's precise instructions regarding Sacrifice and Offering. The kings of Israel were to lay a foundation which prepared the way clearly and exactly for Yeshua, the only way to the Father. God did not want us to have a blurred image of Yeshua. So Saul could not be King. God sought a man who would set firm foundations through obedience and faith.

1 Samuel 16:14. The Holy Spirit has been given to all disciples of Yeshua by the grace of God, since the first great outpouring on the Day of Shavuot (Pentecost) described in Acts 2. Saul was given God's Holy Spirit when he was anointed by Samuel, but the Holy Spirit departed from him when the Kingdom was taken from him. Note that the experience of the Holy Spirit was known in the days of the Old Covenant, in a limited way. It is often thought that the Holy Spirit was not given until the time of the New Covenant.

Psalm 51. We will read this Psalm again when we study David's sin of adultery. The point of reading it here, is to give an insight into the character of David. He knew that Saul had fallen away from God's favour and so had lost the gift of God's Spirit. Saul's life, from that point on was made miserable by a different spirit that was sent to trouble him. It was a sad day in the life of Saul and of all Israel when their King lost the Spirit of God. David knew how much he needed to have the gift of God's Spirit and this was why he pleaded with God (verse 11 of Psalm 51) – Create in me a clean heart*do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me*. Notice how, when Saul lost the Kingdom, that he sought first the favour of men (1 Samuel 15:24 and 30). By contrast, David sought first the forgiveness of God (Psalm 51:4). David's heart for God is revealed through his Psalms. Saul wrote no such Psalms.

Revelation 1:6, Hebrews 10. The main point of reviewing the account of Saul and David is so that we discover relevance for today. The Scriptures teach us our need of God's Holy Spirit, and show us the dire consequences of losing God's Spirit. In the New Covenant God has raised us all up to the status of kings and priests. Saul needed the gift of God's Spirit, and so do we. We are preparing for the time when we will be with Yeshua the Great King, forever. Saul lost the Kingdom through disobedience and through inappropriate sacrifice. Hebrews 10 reminds us of the only Sacrifice acceptable to God – Yeshua Himself. The Chapter goes on to exhort us to go forward to perfection, because if we were to slip back there is no more sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, the lesson that we learn from Saul and David compels us to take our calling very seriously. Hebrews 10 is a useful review, concerning acceptable Sacrifice, faith and obedience, and the appointment of Yeshua as High Priest and King. Verse 26 relates to what we read about sad King Saul, who lost God's Holy Spirit. Is it possible for someone who made a confession of faith in Yeshua to lose the Spirit of God? This verse in Hebrews suggests that it could be so, but it is best that we do not experiment with the issue. As the story of David teaches us, let us have a heart after God, grow in faith and maintain our walk in the Spirit.

These are some of the personal lessons we are learning through our study of Saul and David.

Day 2

1 Samuel Chapter 29. Recall what Samuel said to Saul, when he told him that he had lost the Kingdom – *the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent* (1 Samuel 15:28). The Kingdom was to be torn from Saul. The Word of God had been spoken and it was not going to be taken back. The Philistines gathered in their battle array by their hundreds and by their thousands. In a strange way, David was preserved from either fighting against Israel or fighting for them. It was God’s will for him to keep him out of the way, neither in coming under the judgement of Israel, nor being an instrument of judgement. He had gained a good reputation, even with Achish. We can sense the unseen Hand of God guiding affairs for him, even during the time he dwelt among Israel’s enemies.

God’s Word was soon to be fulfilled through judgement of Saul. As you read this, also recall what Yeshua said concerning the end-time prophecies, including judgement of the entire earth – *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Words will by no means pass away* (Luke 21:33). All people should read the Bible, as we are, and come to repentance before it is too late. We, who have insight, should be vigilant to discern what is yet to come. It will all be fulfilled, in a dramatic way, just as at the time of Saul. The end point of Yeshua’s warnings was – *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape the things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man* (Luke 21:36).

Chapter 30. It seems strange that, at the time when the Philistines were preparing to bring God’s judgement on Saul (though they would not have understood it this way), David was facing a completely different problem. To his great distress, he found Ziklag burned by the Amalekites. Recall that Saul had failed to obey God’s command to destroy all of the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). This, then, was a consequence. David knew what to do, despite being filled with grief that would have driven others to revenge. He sought the Lord and the Lord led him to victory. Saul was about to be deposed, while David was still being prepared and tested for the Kingdom. God was capable of orchestrating all of this simultaneously. Again, there are many parallels. For example, in our day, the entire world is spiraling away from God, but simultaneously God is preparing His own people for the Kingdom - and also preparing for the return of the King.

Chapter 31. If you visit Israel today you can still travel from Jerusalem eastwards towards Jericho and then northwards towards Galilee. As you turn northwards, you will have the river Jordan in sight to the east, and the mountains of Moab will be visible in the distance. The road will take you through mountainous country; Mount Gilboa will be to your left. Try to picture this. If you were able to take this journey, it is appropriate to read how Joshua led the Israelites over the Jordan in the region of Jericho. The ruined city is still there. Then read 1 Samuel 31 as you near Gilboa. See if you sense, even today, grief for the events of that day when Saul and his sons were slain on Mount Gilboa. Further north is the ancient city of Beit Shean, where recent excavations have unearthed a large Roman City that was there in later days. The ancient City of is also being excavated, where Saul’s body was hung. We can visit all of these sites and pause to remember what happened there all those

years ago. Such a visit helps us to realize that what we read in our Bibles is actual history and not a piece of fiction.

It was a day of mourning for all Israel, and we do well to recall these events today. All had been accomplished that the Lord God said, and the Kingdom was torn, painfully, from Saul.

In this context continue to meditate upon what the Yeshua said about the end times. His prophecies were spoken through tears, but they too will all come to pass. Read [Luke 19:41-44](#). This prophecy over Jerusalem has already come to pass. There are many other Words still to be fulfilled. The judgement on Saul is a stark reminder that God will not compromise His Word - even for the first King of Israel.

1 Chronicles 10. This Chapter is parallel to 1 Samuel 31. It was written by the Scribes who summarized the history of Israel. They drew the conclusion recorded in Verses 13 and 14 – *So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse*. Note, they understood that it was *God* who had killed him. The Philistines were simply the means by which God brought about His judgement, whether they knew it or not. Nothing is outside the Lord's oversight and ability. He also makes it clear when He has done something, however hard we might find it to understand.

Day 3

2 Samuel Chapter 1. We might be like the young man who brought news of Saul's death to David. We may not have lied about killing Saul, but we might have thought that David would be pleased at the news. He tried to take advantage of the situation, thinking that David would be glad that his enemy had been slain. Imagine the situation David was in. It was just three days since he had fought a hard battle against the Amalekites, and now here was another young Amalekite seeking to win favour by lying about the death of Israel's King. He did not realize that this was the same David who had withheld his hand twice from taking the life of Saul. David knew that this was God's anointed King, and God alone was Judge. Even if David were to be King in his place it was not a day to rejoice when Saul was slain. Indeed, his grief was increased to know that his bosom friend Jonathan had also been slain.

Stay on this Chapter today and meditate on the *Song of the Bow*, David's lament over Saul and his sons. Let the Holy Spirit test your own heart concerning God's judgement of Saul and also His judgements throughout history, especially concerning God's people Israel. There are judgements still to take place in all nations. Do we understand the ways of God sufficiently to be ready for the events that will take place on this earth?

Day 4

2 Samuel Chapter 2. A statement about Yeshua comes to mind as we begin the next phase of David's life. When Yeshua was 12 years old He accompanied His parents to Jerusalem at the time of Passover. This was the time when a Jewish boy would be recognized as a young adult. It is the age of a boy's *Bar Mitzvah*, which means *son of the commandment*, the age when a boy would accept responsibility for his own spiritual growth in obedience to the Scriptures. While in Jerusalem, Yeshua took the opportunity to debate with the teachers of the Law in the Temple courts. As He told His parents, when they found Him there, He was *about His Father's business* – His Father in Heaven, that is. He took the principle of the Bar Mitzvah to its highest level. The account, in Luke Chapter 2, says of Him that, from that time on, He *increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.*

Returning to the story of David, all the time that he was being prepared for the Kingdom, God was with Him. Now with Saul dead, he reached the point where he was to become King of all Israel. He too was to gain favour with both God and men, but not to the perfection of Yeshua. The transition from fugitive in Ziklag to King of all Israel was not immediate. He now needed to be acceptable to all Israel. The story is one of further conflict and bloodshed. David is a type of Yeshua, but Yeshua is greater than all who preceded Him, and all who came after. David was approved by God and gradually gained favour with all Israel, but not like the boy Yeshua. David was the best King that Israel had, in the days *before* Yeshua. The pattern of his life lays a foundation for us to understand the ministry of Yeshua, but only Yeshua is perfect in every way.

First we read about the division of loyalties in Israel. Abner tried to establish Saul's family line as King through Ishbosheth, while the men of Judah came to Hebron to proclaim David as King. The ensuing tension led to the death of Joab's brother Asahel. David consulted the Lord on all matters and ruled justly, despite the growing tension across Israel

Chapter 3. A long period of conflict followed and David ruled Judah from Hebron, where children were born to his wives. Take note of the details. The sons of David have a prominent part in the life of David in later years. As time went on, David's army grew stronger and eventually Abner was persuaded to make peace with him and establish him as King. This was not, however, the end of bloodshed. Joab was not as merciful as David and considered his authority as head of the army under threat. For this, and other motives, he murdered Abner. The heart of David was revealed once more. Just as he had mourned for Saul, so he mourned for Abner.

Chapter 4. Next Saul's son Ishbosheth was murdered, his murderers thinking that it would please David, but it was not in David's heart to take the Kingdom in this way and so there was yet more mourning, and justice was administered.

It is instructive to pause and consider the parallels in Israel today. For two thousand years Yeshua has been appointed King of the Jews, but He has not yet taken up His Kingdom fully. David remained in Hebron for seven and a half years before he became King of all Israel, even though Samuel had

anointed him many years previously. Yeshua remains in Heaven until the time appointed for His return to establish His Kingdom. Meanwhile conflicts go on in the Middle East centred on Israel and involve the right of Israel to make Jerusalem their capital city. We cannot fail to see parallels. We learn from David that he would have preferred to take the Kingdom through righteousness and justice, but conflict preceded his establishment as King. The conflict in the Middle East today reminds us of this and points to the return of Yeshua. All people would be wise to study the prophecies concerning the end times, in the light of the account of David the King. If this is not done, we may fall into the trap of considering the physical struggles only from a human standpoint. We are living in an age of fulfillment of biblical Prophecy.

Read [Psalm 2](#) again. This was written as a result of David's experience: it is also a perfect description of God's intent that Yeshua will reign from Jerusalem. Though there will be much conflict on this earth, when many people deny the Loving God and His Son Yeshua, nothing will prevent this Prophecy from coming to pass.

Day 5

Chapter 5. So began the 33 year reign of David in Jerusalem. It was not without further conflict that the City was taken, but finally all Israel accepted that David was God's anointed King. The ruins of the small Jebusite City are being excavated in our day, to the south of the larger modern-day City of Jerusalem. This was where David once reigned as King. No sooner was David established as King than he sought the Lord and was given victory over the Philistines. Read the details for yourself and continue to note down what the Holy Spirit highlights for you.

1 Chronicles 11 to 13. The Books of Chronicles have parallel accounts to the Books of Samuel and Kings. They fill in extra details and, also, while Samuel and Kings emphasize the military and governmental aspects of Israel's history, Chronicles emphasizes the religious aspects of history. In these Chapters we gain insight into the mighty men of David. The outcasts of Israel joined David in the Cave of Adullam and others joined him at Ziklag. They grew to be a well-trained and disciplined army at Hebron. We might gain some inspiration from this army, as it is described in Chapter 12, Verses 23 to 40. Now, we are the ones called into the service of Yeshua. Paul teaches us, however, that our weapons are not physical but spiritual. As we enter the last phase of human history, spiritual strongholds will be torn down, preparing the way for the King of Kings. There are spiritual strongholds to be torn down in the lives of those who are yet to come to faith in Yeshua: that is one level. There are also spiritual powers and principalities, with whom the Lord's people struggle. This struggle will continue until the return of Yeshua. See how the Lord inspires you in light of what we read of David's mighty men.

Day 6

2 Samuel Chapter 6. In the wilderness years, the Tabernacle was at the centre of the camp of Israel. In the Holy of Holies the Ark of the Covenant was central, emphasizing the central place of God among his people. David could not fully establish the Kingdom without bringing the Ark to Jerusalem, which was to become the chief city of Israel. The return of the Ark is symbolic of the return of the Lord. When the Ark had been stolen by the Philistines, many years before, *ichabod (the glory has departed)* had been proclaimed over Israel. Now, finally the glory of Israel was to return, and David was to be King, ruling in God's Name. David had looked forward to this day for many years. Yet, still there was a lesson to learn, when the men were too careless in moving the Ark on a cart. Uzza, seeking to do good by steadying the Ark was not helping God, but showing ill-discipline, for which he died. God was not prepared to compromise. Uzza's death stands as a reminder that, in God's Kingdom, everything must be done in order. When Yeshua returns to this earth, there will be order. We must be careful to follow God's order or suffer the consequences. Just as in David's day we must be vigilant to do only that which God has commissioned each of us to do.

What a wonderful day it will be when we greet the King of Kings. There will be even more rejoicing than that which finally accompanied the Ark to Jerusalem. Let us also learn from David's wife Michal, who was very cynical at the rejoicing. Let us, instead, prepare for the Lord's return, learning from David. As Yeshua said of the days preceding His return, even in the context of great tensions and conflict on this earth that will precede His coming – *when all these things begin to happen look up for our redemption is coming near.* Look up and not down!

1 Chronicles 13. This is the parallel account about the return of the Ark to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel Chapter 7. It was natural that David would want to complete the establishment of the Kingdom. In this Chapter we see how his heart was stirred to build a Temple as a permanent resting place for the Ark, and a place of worship that made the ministry of the Tabernacle permanent. Even Nathan the Prophet first thought that this was a good plan, until He heard from the Lord in the night.

If David could live in a palace how much more important it was for him to build a Temple to honour God. Yet this was not God's way. David had been a man of war, and a man of peace must establish the Temple. With all due acknowledgement of David's faithfulness, it would be one of his sons, not he, who would establish the Temple. We will discover that his son, Solomon, fulfilled this promise: he too was a type and shadow of Yeshua. What David was promised was fulfilled completely, not in his son Solomon, but in His greater Son, Yeshua. When Yeshua came to earth He spoke of Himself as one greater than Solomon and transferred the imagery of the Temple to its fulfillment in Him. God had a long term view of what He intended in His plan to restore, fully, the Kingdom to Himself.

David accepted God's decision and we have the wonderful record of the worship, that came from the one of whom it was said, that God *sought a man after His own heart.*

1 Chronicles 14-15. Read the parallel account of the return of the Ark to Jerusalem.

Day 7

A Day for Rest and Further Reflection

1 Chronicles Chapters 15 and 16. Here are further details of the return of the Ark to Jerusalem. The Tabernacle was set up and David commemorated the occasion with the writing of a Psalm, the first part of which is recorded here.

Psalm 105. This is a modification of the Psalm which David wrote when the Ark was brought to Jerusalem. Verse 8 has a different perspective and Verses 16 to the end of the Psalm are different, but the first part of the Psalm is almost identical. Perhaps David developed the Psalm later to include a reflection on all that God had done for Israel. Other Psalms may have been prompted in part by David's rejoicing when the Ark came to Jerusalem. For example, Psalm 96 is the latter part of 1 Chronicles 16. Psalms 106, 107, 119 and 136 also contain echoes from this time.

1 Chronicles Chapter 17. Here is the record of the Covenant made between God and David concerning the building of the Temple. The physical Temple would be built in Solomon's day, in partial fulfillment of the promises. The words of the Covenant would later reach their greater fulfillment when Yeshua and all His people would become the Temple of the Holy Spirit, of which all of His true disciples are a part.

Psalm 89. This Psalm was written after the time of David by Ethan the Ezrahite in remembrance of God's Covenant with David. It is to be read at two levels. It speaks first of David the King - of his call and commission. It also points to the greater fulfillment of the promises made to David, that are fulfilled in David's greater Son, Yeshua. This Psalm, and the promises therein, has been a great inspiration over many generations for those who stand firm on God's Covenant promises and wait for His Kingdom to come, when Yeshua is proclaimed King of all Israel and all His people are gathered from all nations. This is also central to the Lord's Prayer – *Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.* Such Psalms as this bring comfort in times of tribulation on this earth.

Notice that this Covenant with David is embedded in God's other Covenants. It is within the Covenant made with Abraham, dependent on the one made with Noah, in harmony with the one made through Moses, and fulfilled in Yeshua through the promise given to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31). The Covenant purposes of God have been revealed through time, step by step, and are the foundation on which God is building His family.

1 Peter 2:1-10. This is the Living Temple foreshadowed by the Temple in Jerusalem, which David wanted to build. He did not understand God's ultimate purposes as we do, in hindsight. It is wonderful that he was a man of faith and obedience, so that he cooperated with what God was doing in His day, laying a firm foundation for future fulfillment.
