

Under The Fig Tree



WEEK 17

Day 1

2 Samuel 8. David established his Kingdom firmly and subdued his enemies. This Chapter describes how he assembled an enormous army. David did not compromise as Saul had done, but peace was at the expense of much bloodshed. Consider the details of this Chapter carefully. Over all history, peace for Israel has only come after much warfare. This is relevant today, when wars still rage and where pressure continues to mount in the Middle East. Hard questions arise, which we must bring to the Lord in prayer.

In Verses 15 to 19 we have a record of the officials whom David appointed to maintain order and peace in Israel.

2 Samuel 9. One by one, David attended to all the priorities of the Kingdom. His first priority had been to consider building a Temple in Jerusalem. After this, he went to war to subdue Israel's enemies. Now, in this Chapter, we read about his care for the descendants of Saul. It must have given him great encouragement to discover that one of Jonathan's sons had survived, so that he could show him kindness.

Revelation 19 and 20. As we read the details of David's Kingdom and how it was established, we can draw comparisons with Yeshua's return to earth. Do we have, in the life of David, pointers to the coming millennial reign? This must be a focus of our prayers as the day draws near. We may not have answers to all our questions, but we can begin to *ask* our questions. Be careful, however: when Yeshua came to earth, the first time, many Jews were expecting a conquering king rather than a Saviour on the Cross. Many would have expected a King to do exploits against the Romans as David did against his enemies. They were disappointed but it was not the time to fulfill this expectation. Yeshua has revealed His end-time purposes through the Book of Revelation, and spoken of the signs of His return to earth. This gives the picture of the conquering King returning to Jerusalem. It seems that the days of fulfillment of types and shadows in 2 Samuel lie ahead. Let us approach this subject carefully and prayerfully, not having a false expectation for the second time of His coming.

1 Chronicles 18. Here are the parallel readings from Chronicles. Read them carefully to complement the readings from 2 Samuel.

Day 2

2 Samuel 10 and 1 Chronicles 19. David thought that his battles were over and wanted to live in peace with the neighbouring kingdoms, sending messengers across the Jordan as a gesture of friendship. The messengers were ridiculed and so peace was once more at the cost of bloodshed. There are parallels in Israel today, where concession after concession is made to obtain peace with Israel's neighbours. Suspicions are never fully satisfied and so war is ever close.

Psalms 60. This prayer of David gives a wonderful insight into the meditations of his heart after his battle with the neighbouring countries. Hundreds of chariots and tens of thousands of horses were involved in the battle. Many thousands of men were killed. It was a battle as fierce as any in history. David knew that with God there would be victory, as was promised in Deuteronomy 28. David knew that faith in, and obedience to, the God of Israel would be rewarded by the blessings of the Covenant, and this was the foundation of his prayer. Consider the imagery in the Psalm. For example, in Verse 8, there is the picture of God casting His sandal over Philistia. Recall that this was a custom in Israel relating to the kinsman redeemer. This was described in the Book of Ruth.

2 Samuel 11. The parallel account of David's reign in 1 Chronicles does not contain the details of the sad incident with Bathsheba, so we will return to Chronicles later. In 2 Samuel Chapter 11 a most unexpected incident takes place. Was David weary of battle? Why did he remain in Jerusalem when Joab led the army back over the Jordan to besiege the cities of Ammon? Why was David caught in a moment of indiscretion when he was left alone in his palace? We can only guess. One thing that we do know is that David was susceptible to sin just like every other human being, and the Bible does not cover this up - nor its consequences. In the Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua taught that lust is at the root of the sin of adultery, and this is what David experienced. He committed adultery with Uriah's wife. Uriah not only proved himself more worthy than David when he met him on his return to Jerusalem, but then lost his life in battle as a cover-up for David. This must be one of the saddest incidents in Israel's history. There was no king like David, but he sinned greatly and in a way that eventually led to the dividing of the nation. Should we have expected better? Yes, of course, but we also learn that no-one, not Moses, not David, not anyone, is free from sin. We all need a perfect Saviour. Only one was perfect, and He is Yeshua HaMashiach.

2 Samuel 12. Read this Chapter carefully and note all the details. David could not hide his sin from God. Nathan the Prophet came and told him that not only would the sin have consequences for David's family, but also for all Israel. Nevertheless, David's sin was forgiven. The justice of Torah is eye for eye and tooth for tooth. David was under a death sentence but he was reprieved by God – mercy triumphed over judgement. There is a lot to learn from this incident concerning the Laws of God. Nothing must be taken lightly, but there is always hope for those who seek to follow God with all their heart. The death of Bathsheba's child was an act of both mercy and justice. Deep issues are at work here. Notice David's ability to repent, to mourn and to accept God's verdict. When God

forgives He does so completely, so Solomon was born, whom the Lord also named Jedidah, meaning *beloved of the Lord*.

Meanwhile Joab was victorious on David's behalf. Read the parallel account of the battle in Ammon and against the Philistines in 1 Chronicles 20.

Psalm 51. Read this Psalm again in the context of David's sin with Bathsheba. It is a Psalm that finds echoes for many of us who have sinned, and who truly and deeply repent. David knew God's mercy and so can we. Spend time meditating upon this.

Day 3

2 Samuel 13. Whatever God decrees, is certain to happen. David knew this. On the one hand his sins of adultery and murder were forgiven, in that his life was spared. Nevertheless, God did not let him go completely unpunished. Verses 10 to 12 of the Chapter 12 give precise details about what God would do. Notice that God said that *He Himself* would bring it about – Verse 11. This is an important principle to bear in mind when we consider all of God’s judgements. What He said in Deuteronomy 27-29 concerning blessings and cursing on Israel, dependent on their walk of faith and obedience, were fulfilled throughout all of the generations of Israel. Similarly, God has spoken words that will come to pass concerning all nations. Yeshua spoke very clearly concerning the end times and there are prophecies yet to be fulfilled in the Book of Revelation. Note this principle well. We need to have it in mind as we continue to read the Scriptures, especially the Prophets.

Absalom was the means through which God’s judgement on David came to pass. This does not mean that Absalom was righteous in God’s eyes. Absalom would be accountable for his sins, just as, on a larger scale, all the nations will be judged whom God uses to outwork His judgement of Israel. These included the powerful nations of Babylon and Rome. Both these nations were the agent by which Israel was sent to exile. The nations who plan to turn against Israel in the last days should take heed of this.

Absalom was a handsome young man and full of potential from a human point of view. He desired to inherit the Kingdom, but he was not God’s choice, as we shall see. He was headstrong and sinful. The sins began when he Amnon seduced Tamar, and increased when Absalom murdered Amnon. It was sin that paralleled David’s adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah. Eye for eye and tooth for tooth comes to mind in regard to God’s judgement of David, when it happened to him just as he had done to Uriah. Absalom’s exhortation to his servants (Verse 28) – to be courageous and valiant – reminds us of Joshua’s exhortation from the Lord (Joshua 1:9), but it is a counterfeit. God’s protection had gone from David and Absalom’s sin was allowed, but Absalom also acted out of his own selfish desire and not for the greater purposes of the God for Israel.

David’s sorrow for Absalom was felt deeply even after he had grieved for Amnon.

2 Samuel 14. David’s heart was merciful rather than compromising. Perhaps he realized that both Amnon’s death and Absalom’s rebellion were a consequence of his own sin. We might consider Yeshua’s sacrifice for us as we meditate upon this. Yeshua’s heart cry from the Cross was, *Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing*. He took the penalty for our sins upon Himself. We learn from the account of David that he was not perfect, just as no other man or woman is perfect – except Yeshua. Therefore, there is a sinful human side to the account of David, but David is also a type of Yeshua. David had a heart after God’s own heart and we find mercy in his heart and admission of his own sins. Yeshua committed no sins but He showed mercy to all who have sinned and who turn to him through faith. Perhaps, then, there is a hint of this in the mourning of David for Absalom.

Tekoa is the town from which the Prophet Amos later came. This was the town where a wise woman was found to bring counsel to David. She came to him in the same way that Nathan the Prophet had

come at the time of the sin with Bathsheba. She spoke through a parable, which revealed what was in David's heart. She spoke words that might cause response in our hearts too, when we consider our ministry of evangelism to a sinful world – *we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises a means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him.* God desires to show mercy to lost sinners.

Absalom was sought out and he returned to Jerusalem, even though it was a further two years before he was brought to his father. While David was mourning, Absalom was still scheming, which is a sad reflection on his character. As far as Absalom was concerned more sin would take place. As far as David was concerned, he forgave his son and welcomed him home.

2 Samuel 15. The Prophecies concerning the end times reveal that an antichrist figure will arise in the world, who will draw all nations to obey him, even setting up his headquarters in Jerusalem. He will be beguiling and promise good things, but will be the servant of satan. In some ways, Absalom's continuing quest for power reminds us of this. Because of David's sin, Absalom was allowed by God to plot and scheme, for a time, while David was exiled from Jerusalem. David departed from Jerusalem, walking up the Mount of Olives, the same road that Yeshua also walked. It is where the Garden of Gethsemane is found, and it is likely to be the route of His departure from the City when He ascended to be with the Father. David's exile from Jerusalem reminds us of this. Yeshua, one day, will return to Jerusalem and set His feet on the Mount of Olives. Elements of the exile and return of David are paralleled in Yeshua's return to Jerusalem to claim the Kingdom. Yeshua is perfect, while David is imperfect, but still David's life gives a prophetic picture of Yeshua.

David ensured that some of his people remained in Jerusalem so that, when the time was right, they could send word to David that he could return. Meanwhile, the sad King accepted what God was doing in his life and left the City in peace.

Psalm 3. This Psalm was written when David fled from Absalom. It reveals David's heart and is also a prophetic Psalm pointing to Yeshua's rejection by His own people, especially when He suffered on the Cross. Meditate on this. The last verse begins *salvation belongs to the Lord.* In Hebrew this is *la'yahweh ha'yeshua.* It means *for Yahweh is the Yeshua* – a strong hint that David's life points to God's eternal purposes in Yeshua, the greater King of Israel.

Day 4

2 Samuel 16. The hearts of all the Israelites were tested when they heard that David had retreated from Jerusalem. Saul's servant Ziba was loyal, and greeted David with provisions for the journey. He also brought news that Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, whom David had brought under his care, was hoping to retake the throne of Israel for himself. In this Chapter we read how David reacted to these incidents. Even when an angry man named Shimei came out to curse David, the King realized that God was stirring this up against him and accepted it. He also understood that God was just and that, despite this judgement upon him, God would also be faithful to him. In the City of Jerusalem God's judgement was indeed being carried out just as He had said. Absalom, in the sight of all around, pitched a tent on the roof and took David's concubines for himself.

Psalms 5. David's Psalms were the result of his life's experiences. He knew how to turn to God in every circumstance. This is a prayer that resulted from the times when he was surrounded by evil men. He sought refuge in God alone.

Chapter 17. God's judgement on David was carried out without compromise, but Absalom was not intended to be King in his place. Therefore, the time came when judgement would begin on Absalom too. He had not been righteous in devising a plot against his father. David was known to be a great warrior, so Absalom was worried about how best to secure the Kingdom. David's friend Hushai was in the City and was far wiser than Absalom's counselor Ahithophel, so he was able to draw Absalom into acting unwisely by giving him what seemed like good advice. The result was that all Israel was roused to follow Absalom in pursuit of David. David, however, had others who were loyal to him and so they gathered together to help him.

Chapter 18. Once more we read about an extremely sad incident in Israel's history. David was hiding in the countryside again. This time it was not Saul, but his own son, pursuing him. This was a familiar circumstance for David and he knew how to organize his men to fight the battle. 20,000 men of Israel were killed that day.

Remember, that all this began with David's sin of adultery. The consequences of God's judgement were vast. How important it is that a nation has a leader who does not fall into such sins! How important that Yeshua returns to rule and reign on this earth, because if David, a man after God's own heart, could bring such devastation on his people, how much more so the weaker leaders of this world - of which there are many today! Despite the great apostasy and all that Absalom had done, David's love for Absalom was still strong. He had mourned over Saul and now he mourned over the death of his own son – *Oh my son Absalom – my son, my son Absalom – if only I had died in your place!. Oh Absalom, my son, my son.*

Joab, and all of David's army, had been told to be careful not to take Absalom's life, and even though 20,000 other Israelites died in the battle, the death of Absalom tore David's heart more than anything else. It is hard to understand this, and certainly Joab could not understand it. David was to

be restored to the throne after it had been taken by his sinful son. Surely, it was better for Israel that Absalom was now dead. That is what Joab thought.

David knew the justice of God but still knew how to grieve at the loss of his son. He knew that he himself was responsible for the uprising in Israel, and this may be why he would have exchanged his life for that of his son.

Pause for a moment and read again the lament of David when he heard of Absalom's death (verse 33). David's heart, at best, reflected the heart of God. God mourns for the lost. God's own Son came into the world to die for the sins of those without hope. Yeshua's sacrifice on the Cross was beyond ritual. It was full of God's deep mourning for a world that is under His judgement, in which satan seeks to usurp the Kingdom from the Father and His Son, and deceive all people. All who come to Yeshua by faith find that He did indeed die in their place!

Psalm 7. In contrast to David's mourning for Absalom, here is a Psalm about the righteousness and justice of God. It was written in response to the news of Absalom's death. Verse 16 was literally fulfilled when Absalom's head was caught in a tree prior to his death by the hand of Joab.

Day 5

Chapter 19. David was a human being like all human beings. We have read about his sin with Bathsheba and its consequences for all Israel. Therefore, when we consider this sad incident in the life of Israel, when thousands were slain, and David mourned for Absalom, we know that it is the consequence of human sin. We also know that God's ways are not our ways. Despite all, David was a man after God's own heart, so it may not be easy for us to fully understand all that happened. Just because David mourned openly for Absalom it does not mean that he had no sorrow for all the other Israelites killed in battle. There were many times in David's life when he was not understood and when he depended entirely on God. He was not ashamed to stand alone, knowing that the ways of God are not always fully understood. We understand this from the Psalms he wrote.

David returned to Jerusalem and won the support of the Israelites again. He showed compassion where he could, even against those who had betrayed him.

Joab, though he had led David's army to victory and crushed the rebellion, did not have the same heart as David.

Read the account and pause to consider the present day expectation of the return of Yeshua to Jerusalem, as foretold by the Prophets. Will His return be in the manner that you expect? Do we know the heart of Yeshua for this fallen world? There are going to be days of warfare preceding Yeshua's return. What is in the heart of God for the people who will suffer and die in this conflict? Already six million Jews have been killed when the tyrant Hitler was stirred by satan to destroy them, and the Second World War also led to the death of millions of other people, as this mad tyrant sought to usurp the Kingdoms of the world for himself. That was one sad era leading up to the return of Yeshua and we know that troubles on this earth will intensify as the time of His return draws nearer. What will our heart be for those exiled from God in these days? Will our heart be stirred as David's was for Absalom by the wise woman from Tekoa? The command of Yeshua was that His disciples should *watch and pray so that they would not fall into temptation*, and that they should be like wise virgins who had their lamps filled to welcome the Lord back to Jerusalem. It seems to me that we can learn, from the response of David, sinful though he was, that we must be very careful in our preparations for the return of Yeshua. The contrasts we find in key characters in the story – David, Absalom, Joab, the woman from Tekoa, Nathan the Prophet, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, Mephibosheth, Shimei and so on – will help us to understand the circumstances of this world, the heart of God, and how to prepare for the return of Yeshua the King.

Psalm 5. When David needed guidance he prayed to God, in faith that He would answer. He knew that there was no other way. Here is one of the Psalms that David wrote as a result of the experiences of his life.

Psalm 6. When David was in distress, he turned to God alone. Consider the hard life that David had. Such Psalms as this do not come from an easy life. When he was a boy, looking after his father's sheep, God saw the potential in David, but still there was much preparation to be done in his life through years of exile, persecution, and danger. The Apostle Paul, in a similar way, spoke of the trials of his own life (read 2 Corinthians 11). Elsewhere in the Bible we are taught that God uses the

pressures of life to refine us, and to break our human will, so that we can be strong in the Spirit (read, for example, [1 Peter 4](#), [2 Corinthians 4](#), [James 1:2-4](#) and [Romans 8](#)). David cried out to God when he was in need. The cry, *Create in me a clean heart, O God* (Psalm 51:10), came when David was under a death sentence for his adultery with Bathsheba and for murder of Uriah the Hittite. David's sinful humanity was broken through the experiences of his life. It is not that God wants us to sin, but He knows that all of us will sin. He can use our sinful experiences to bring us to repentance. Also, the world around us is largely in the hands of satan, who would destroy us if he was allowed. It is not that God wants us to be destroyed or to fall into the hands of satan, but He will use the circumstances of the world to break our sinful human will so that we will draw closer to Him and depend on Him alone. Be careful to consider the balance of this. You are in God's hands just as David was. David's Psalms should echo your response to the work of God in your life. Don't let the opportunity pass by to consider this prayerfully while you are reading about the life of David.

Day 6

2 Samuel Chapter 20. The Bible records about ancient Israel are timeless. They are as clear as stories in today's newspapers. It is as if they happened recently rather than 3000 years ago. God has arranged for the incidents to be recorded in this way so that they are still alive for us, and as relevant today as when they took place. This is the history of Israel, a history which belongs to all of God's people. The incidents in David's life will not be repeated so we must study them as God intended us to do.

David had difficulty resettling his Kingdom. This was similar to the time when he first moved from Hebron to Jerusalem after the death of Saul. Sheba now threatened the Kingdom, and drew allegiance from most of the Israelites. Here is the account of how he was subdued – and there were yet more deaths among the Israelites before peace was restored in the Nation.

Chapter 21. When all the people who have ever lived stand before the Great White Throne of Yeshua on Judgement Day, we will find that all injustice will be remembered. During his days on earth, Yeshua said that God knows even the number of hairs on our head. He also said that we would have to give account for every idle word. When we confess our sins to God through faith in the atoning blood of Yeshua, He remembers our sins no more. We who fight the good fight of faith, standing firm to the end will find that our sins are covered and will be able to stand at the Judgement: everything else will be remembered, and all sin that is not under His Blood will receive righteous judgement.

Chapter 21 contains a shadow of this. Among the foolish things that Saul did was that he sought to kill the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites had persuaded Joshua to make a covenant with them (Joshua 9:7) and protect them. Saul did not seek God in his actions as David had done. He was headstrong and foolish. The covenant with the Gibeonites was made many years before. Saul had forgotten, but God had not. Nor had God forgotten the sin that Saul committed against them.

Deuteronomy 27 to 29 is a clear statement of how Israel would prosper or suffer depending on how they lived before Him. In the Books of the Prophets we read, time after time, how God sent signs in the weather, in the harvests and in many other ways that were to call the Israelites back to Him according to the terms of the Covenant delivered through Moses. If we could understand the signs in the entire world, even in our day, we would understand that God is calling all people to repentance, just as David understood the signs in his day. David knew how to interpret the sign of the famine and enquired of God. Up until then no-one had understood that God took the covenant with the Gibeonites so seriously. The result was that the Gibeonites were allowed to decide how justice would be administered. Seven of Saul's descendants were executed. David was faithful to his own oath to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, as justice was, nevertheless, administered to the House of Saul.

This Chapter contains these and other details that should cause us to realize that full justice will be administered on this earth for all things that have ever been done. Sometimes God withholds His hand for a season, but in the end we will realize that nothing, outside of that covered by the atoning blood of Yeshua, will be forgotten. Fear you, all you people of the earth. What oaths have you rulers

made to God that have been broken? God is the same today as He was at the time of Saul and David. He will remain the same forever.

David was now an old man. He was no longer the young boy who hurled a stone to kill Goliath, but now there were other mighty men in Israel who could deal with the four giant sons of Goliath. The time of David's departure was getting near.

Read 1 Chronicles 20. This is a short chapter that misses out much of the details of 2 Samuel but ends with the same incident - the killing of Goliath's four sons.

Chapter 22 and Psalm 18. Psalm 18 is almost identical with Chapter 22, which gives us the context of when it was written. What will we say to the Lord at the end of our life? Will we be resentful of all the difficulties? Will we see how God has used the experiences of life to draw us close to Himself? Will we have learned how to honour the Lord in all things and turn to Him in times of need? Will we be closer to Him, or further from Him when, we look back and consider our life? This Psalm contains some of David's last written words.

Chapter 23. Here is another summary and meditation on the life of David. Read verses 1 to 7. Let the Holy Spirit bring to mind incidents from David's life as you read what is written. Also consider your own life before God and how you might praise Him for His faithfulness to you.

Verses 8 to 39 are in honour of the mighty men who served with David: what an army! David fought physical battles and these were the men who performed great exploits for him. The first men who gathered with him at the cave in Adullam were outcasts. David formed them into a mighty army. We ourselves live with great challenges, but we have also learned that our battles are in the spiritual realm. As the Apostle Paul said (2 Corinthians 10:3-4), *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*, and (Ephesians 6:12) *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*. Yeshua is ruling from the heavenly Jerusalem and has called us, from all areas of life, to be His mighty men and women. See what His Spirit says to you as you consider David and his mighty men. How is He training you?

Day 7

A Day for Rest and Further Reflection

We are nearing the end of the account of David's life. How has God spoken to you as you have studied 2 Samuel? Has he spoken to you about your own life as well as David's? You may have found the Holy Spirit convicting you of sin, leading you to repentance, strengthening you for your ministry or encouraging you in prayer – you may even have written a Psalm or a song of worship. Have you also meditated on Yeshua and understood more about Him? Spend some time, today, prayerfully considering what God has said to you.
