

# Under The Fig Tree



## WEEK 18

This week, we come to the conclusion of the life of David, the great Psalmist who was a man after God's own heart. The Kingdom passed to Solomon and David made preparations for the building of the Temple. Before that, we have an account of a great error of judgement.

### Day 1

2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21. David was an old man. He was reigning from Jerusalem after a full and eventful life. He knew that he was soon going to die and had it in mind to set all matters in order, so he ordered a census. Verse 1 of 2 Samuel 24 indicates that God was displeased with Israel for some reason. 1 Chronicles 21 indicates that satan was the means by which God moved David to number Israel. The door was open for temptation and David fell into the trap.

God ordered a census twice when the Israelites were in the wilderness at the time of Moses, and He also gave clear rules as to how a census should be taken (Exodus 30:11-12). A census was to be taken at God's command and each person should give half a shekel to the Lord, as a ransom. If this was not done then the nation would suffer plague. The instructions are clear, but David forgot them. Joab tried to give counsel but David's mind was set, and a great plague was the result. David was wise enough to accept a plague as the judgement from God rather than fall into the hands of Israel's enemies.

Once more there were hard lessons for David and we too should consider why God was so firm in His judgements. There will be a census taken one day when all God's people are numbered. They will not be those who served King David, but those who serve King Yeshua. Furthermore, the ransom is no longer a half shekel, but atonement through His shed blood. The half shekel was the same for all the Israelites, indicating that each one is equal before God. It is the same in the family of Yeshua – one price for all. David was not allowed to overstep the mark and distort the types and shadows that pointed to Yeshua. Though David was a type of Yeshua, he was also fallible and another hard lesson was learned at the expense of 70,000 lives. God knew every one of those 70,000 who died in the plague and there must have been many facts about each of these people that are not recorded, known only to God as He administered His righteous judgement on Israel.

If you were to stand on the Mount of Olives in modern-day Jerusalem, you would overlook the place where much of biblical history took place. The ruins of the City of David are being excavated, just to the south of the more recent old city. A wall surrounds the area where Solomon built the Temple. This is on Mount Moriah where, hundreds of years before, Abraham walked with his son Isaac to offer him as a sacrifice to God. This is also the plot of land that David purchased, where the angel of

destruction met him and the plague ceased after David's confession and intercession to God. On this same mountain range, Yeshua became our sacrifice for sin when He suffered on the Cross. All these layers of history are focused on this small area in Jerusalem. Two Temples have stood on Mount Moriah, which is also now known as Temple Mount. Solomon's Temple lasted until the exile to Babylon, and the Romans destroyed the Second Temple. Now we find a mosque there and an Islamic memorial. We can learn from the judgement of God at the time of David that God will carry out every one of His Covenant plans just as He said He would. It may sometimes seem a long time before justice is administered, but one day everything will be accomplished, and all that God has said will come to pass. Jerusalem is in the centre of world news again in our day. David's experience of God's judgement should cause all to search the Scriptures to find what God has said He will accomplish on this earth – past, present and future. As Yeshua said, *Heaven and earth may pass away, but My words will never pass away.*

The rest of the account of David's life concerns his handing over the Kingdom to Solomon. Before reading this, let us read more of David's Psalms while the account of his life is still fresh in our minds. They were all written in response to his journey through life. They echo our own experiences and also point to Yeshua. Many of the Psalms contrast God's blessings on the righteous with His judgement on the wicked. We may find some of this difficult to apply in our circumstances today when the hand of grace and mercy is offered, through Yeshua, to people of all nations. There *will* be judgement on the wicked one day, so we must not forget this. We must also realize that our enemies are now more clearly identified as spiritual enemies. Satan and all his fallen angels are already judged and their wickedness, manifest in the wars, famines and sickness of this world is all around. There may still be enemies of God in the physical world, similar to those whom David considered in his Psalms. Today, we can more easily interpret them as the spiritual enemies of God's people, sometimes manifest in human form.

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Psalm 4. Here is a cry to God from a man who desires to be pure in heart and to do all that is right.

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Psalm 9. Notice the word *Selah* at certain points of the Psalms. It is a signal to stop, pause, read again some of the verses and meditate. Be careful to do this and not just rush through the Psalms. Try to imagine the point of David's life that led to the Psalm and see if you can relate it to experiences in your own life. When God brings victory in our lives it is time to praise Him. Indeed, it is also time to praise Him when times are not so easy! Does praise rise up in your spirit as it did for David?

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Psalm 10. *Blessed are those who are poor in spirit*, said Yeshua, and *Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.* Yeshua was encouraging humble and caring people, often poor and insignificant in this world, that God cared for them. This is like David's conclusion in this Psalm. David had a Hebraic mind-set. This means that sometimes he would seem to be posing a question that he could not answer, but it was simply a way of raising up the issue, before giving the answer himself. He asks why God seems to be distant and the wicked seem to succeed, but he knows that God is

working His purposes out on behalf of the poor and needy. External circumstances sometimes would say the opposite, but God will judge the wicked and care for those who have a right heart towards Him.

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## Day 2

Psalm 11. Consider how insightful David was. He wanted to build a Temple for God on earth, but he knew that both the Tabernacle and a Temple, would simply be earthly shadows of the heavenly reality. He also understood the need for God's Kingdom to be established on earth, whose foundations are set on all of God's Torah (instructions/teaching).

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Psalm 12. In Hebrews 5:13, we are exhorted to be mature, having our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Spiritual maturity is defined as understanding the difference between good and evil and living a godly life. David understood this and mourned for the compromise he observed all around. Oppression of the poor is a symptom of ungodliness. David knew that God cares about the poor and will arise to protect them from wicked and selfish people.

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Psalm 13. David knew what it was like to be oppressed by evil men, plotting to destroy him. He knew times when he needed God's help and when God seemed distant. Yet he also knew that God was near and that he could trust in Him. He learned how to turn to God in faith in all circumstances.

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Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. These two Psalms are almost identical. It is not clear why this is so. The Psalms are divided into 5 sections. We are not sure of the reason for this. One theory is that each of the sections is associated with one of the Five Books of Torah, but this is not certain. If so, then it is possible that this Psalm was considered relevant to two of the sections. The Psalm is of great relevance today. It is amazing how the circumstances of David's day inspired him to a Psalm that is prophetic for these end times. Paul says of those who deny God, *professing to be wise, they became fools* (Romans 8:22). In our day many of the most eminent scientists are thought to be the wisest, but they have become fools by denying the Creation. Starting with a denial of Creation, denial of the God of Creation is inevitable. From there all else of biblical truth is rejected. Christianity is seen as one of the world's religions rather than Christians being seen as the children of God, grafted into God's Covenant purposes. Israel is considered to be at the centre of the world's problems. God centred His Covenant plan on Israel and the continued existence of Israel after all these years is both a miracle and a testimony to the faithfulness of God. Verse 7 of Psalm 14 is a prophetic prayer for our day, understood in the context of David's life and experiences 3000 years ago!

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## Day 3

Psalm 16. Speaking of Yeshua, John wrote: *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made* (John 1:3). Similarly, Paul wrote: *All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist* (Colossians 1:16-17). With the help of the Holy Spirit, we discover that every word of the Bible, in some way, teaches us about Yeshua HaMashiach. The Psalms, in particular, bring prophetic insight concerning the promise of His coming to earth. David may not have fully realized how his experiences, which led to the Psalms, would be perfect statements about Yeshua. As he wrote them, he would have felt the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He would have paused from time to time and realized that he was writing in a very special way, but like all the pioneers of faith listed in Hebrews 11, he *died in faith, not having received the promise, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth* (Hebrews 11:13). With the light that we now have, we look back to what they saw in shadowy form in the distance, as through a telescope. This Psalm is prophetic, pointing to the Messiah. Verses 10 and 11 were fulfilled when Yeshua went down to Hell for us. He then ascended to be with the Father, so that we need not descend to Hell but be with Him forever.

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Psalm 17. In Verse 8, David asks to be kept like the apple of God's eye. The apple of the eye is the most tender and vulnerable part of one of the most important parts of our body. This is a metaphor whereby David asks God to treat him with the utmost care. In the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:10), God's care of Israel is likened to the apple of God's eye. God confirmed this through the Prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 2:8), warning nations who harm Israel: *For thus saith the Lord of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.* David, as King, identified himself with his people. In praying for himself, he also prayed for the nation. He asked God to hide him under the shadow of his wings, and this is what Yeshua said that He longed to do, when He wept over Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion (Luke 13:34). Psalm 17 is a prayer to God for the salvation of Israel and a statement of faith for all who put their trust in Him. It is a prayer that is answered through faith in Yeshua.

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Psalm 20. In the Hebrew, Verse 5 contains the word *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* means salvation and is the Name that God told Mary and Joseph to call their Son. When the Church changed this name to *Jesus*, something was lost from the meaning of His Name. The translation of the first phrase of Verse 5 is: *We will rejoice in your salvation*, which also says, meaningfully, when translated: *We will rejoice in your Yeshua*. Verse 3 mentions God's acceptance of the sacrifice. The theme of this Psalm is assurance of salvation. Hidden in it is the interpretation that this salvation is God's Son *Yeshua*. When Yeshua appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and later when He appeared to His disciples as they were assembled together (Luke 24:13-35, 44,45), He explained to them how He fulfilled the Torah, Prophets and Psalms. He would have talked to them about this Psalm on that occasion. In a similar way, His Holy Spirit will instruct us as to how Yeshua answered David's prayer contained in this Psalm.

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Psalm 21. Here is yet another Psalm where David's prayer of faith is answered fully in Yeshua HaMashiach. Picture David on his knees, praying through the inspiration of the Spirit, a prayer that God answered for him and also for you. What prayer will you pray on account of this?

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## Day 4

Psalm 24. David was the anointed King of Israel, but he knew that there was a greater King – God Himself. David was more insightful than the Israelites who rejected God at the time of Samuel, wanting a king like all the other nations. David desired that his reign as King would be in submission to the King of Kings. For this reason God covenanted with him that his Kingdom would be everlasting, and this Psalm foresees the return of Yeshua HaMashiach to rule on David's throne.

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Psalm 25. When we come to a knowledge of the truth, all of us might echo the words of this Psalm. We might look back to something in our life that was sinful and be thankful for God's patient love, for redeeming us and forgiving us. How many of us, like David, would pray (Verse 7): *Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions?* It is wonderful to have the release that David had in composing this prayer. God knew his sins, and the Bible does not hide some of his greatest errors – He knows ours too, even intimate details that no-one else knows, even thoughts that are sinful. We all must come to know our need of salvation, because not one of us is free from sin. Paul said it clearly in Romans 3:23: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. When we are convicted, our prayer is the same as David's: *Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation (Yeshua)*. Yeshua said (John 14:6): *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*. He fulfilled this Psalm entirely, in answer to David's prayer. Paul, speaking of both Jews and Gentiles, said that God had allowed us all to sin so that He might have mercy on all (Romans 11:32). We are not proud of our sins, but it is comforting to know that God knew we would sin and that we would find His mercy through our desire to turn away from sin. It is wonderful to have found faith in Him and mercy through Yeshua, and to be able to pray in faith, as David did. David's prayer (Verse 22) is for Israel. His prayer is still before the throne of God and many more will be saved through Yeshua, just as we were. This Psalm is living and active today as when David first prayed it to God out of his own heart.

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Psalm 26. When you read the Psalms, ensure that you resist any temptation to rush. We can consider this through the kosher rules God gave to Israel. One of the reasons that Israel was given rules for what they should eat is that they should be aware that some food is clean and some food is unclean. Also, by considering the characteristics of the animals, they should learn what characteristics God wants in us. God does not want us to be like bottom feeding fish that thrive on filth at the bottom of the lakes. He does not want us to be like pigs that grovel about in the mud and eat so quickly that they give no consideration to what passes through their mouth. By contrast, the animals that eat carefully, like cows and sheep, have more dignity and care in what they do. They even chew their food a second time before it is digested. There are lessons to be learned from this and it becomes a metaphor for how we should study the Scriptures. We must only study what is pure and good (consider Philippians 4:8), and we must meditate on what we read. Meditation is similar to an animal chewing the cud. When we come to *Selah* in a Psalm it is time to meditate again on what we have just read. Meditation on the Scriptures is when we read slowly, carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully, giving the Holy Spirit an opportunity to speak to us about what we are reading. He will make it relevant to our own lives if we allow Him to do so. See what He says to you

as you read this Psalm, where David asked God to search his heart and cleanse him. Recall what Yeshua said (Matthew 4:4), when satan tried to misuse the Scriptures, also reminding us of Deuteronomy 8:3: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

There are many people for whom Christianity has become a religion, just as there are many other religions in the world. It is possible for this to be their only experience and, as such, they have a concept of God being distant. Not all people who try to serve God know Him personally. Knowledge of God is an intimate and personal relationship. This is what God wants for us. Indeed, it is necessary for our eternal salvation. Yeshua made it clear that many people will do what they consider to be good works but will never have had a personal relationship with Him. Such people will not inherit eternal life – read Matthew 7:21-23. If God has drawn near to you and shown you His holiness, this experience will encourage you to pray as David did in this Psalm, not asking God to consider your good works but to search you and test your motives. This is the experience of God’s Holy Spirit that He wants us to have, so that we will have a heart desire to be cleansed by Him and to keep away from the influence of the world around.

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Psalm 27. What Psalm would you write to proclaim what God has done in your life? Do you desire to follow God’s leading like David did? Did you ever fall into the traps set up by satan and find that God delivered you? Can you rejoice like David? See if this Psalm helps you. The last verse begins: *wait on the Lord*. These words are also in Isaiah 40:31, proclaiming that all who wait on the Lord will renew their strength and be lifted up as if on eagles’ wings. When an eagle teaches its young to fly they are dropped from a high cliff and the eagle swoops down to catch them on its wings to lift them up again. This is like the ways of God in our lives, leading to praise Him when we realize what He has done for us. The Hebrew word *wait* is *kavah*. It means to *wait for something expectantly*, and it also has a deeper meaning in the context of our relationship with God. To *wait on* God is to *bind ourselves to Him*. This is David’s exhortation in the Psalm. If we are bound to the Lord through His Holy Spirit we are secure and He will take us on the right path in our lives.

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## Day 5

Psalm 28. Has God ever allowed you to be in situations where you need to cry out to Him as David did in this Psalm? When people are in difficulty, it tests their heart. They will either turn away from God, even blaspheming Him, or they will turn towards Him and call out to Him, desiring to draw nearer to Him. God sometimes allows these experiences to strengthen our faith, just as it was for David.

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Psalm 29. Do you perceive the Hand of God in the affairs of the world? Do you look around at the shaking that comes to our nations and realize that God may be speaking? David remembered the Great Flood that He brought at the time of Noah and it helped him to know that God is still enthroned in Heaven and presides over all the affairs of men. How do we read the signs in the world? Sometimes there are terrifying disasters that we cannot fully understand, but we know that the present era of history is also the time of the Lord's favour. God is calling all men and women, boys and girls, to turn to Him in saving faith. Until God judges the wicked in the last days, God's judgements in the earth are both warnings and a call to turn to Him. David was clear in his understanding of how God is calling all people to Himself so that in His Temple they will cry, "Glory!"

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Psalm 30. Solomon wrote in the Book of Ecclesiastes (Chapter 3): *To everything there is a season*. He learned this truth just as his father had learned it. The Psalms reflect the seasons of our lives and bring comfort in all of those seasons. This Psalm was written at a high point of David's life. The seasons of life have light and shade, and the light of life is more easily appreciated in contrast to the shade. If we, like David, knew what it was to hide in a cave, we would know how much he appreciated the time when his Kingdom was established. This Psalm was written when his house was dedicated. A house symbolizes a people as well as being a firm structure in which we can live safely. Do you recognize the seasons of your life and know how God uses them to bring forth praise and worship?

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Psalm 31. None of David's Psalms dwell only on his difficulties. If he cried out to God for help he would always end on a note of faith and trust. Verse 12 is central: *I am forgotten like a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel*. This is why we go through the seasons of life. David was called to be King and was taken through days of preparation. We are also called to God's Kingdom purposes. It is when we can come to death to ourselves and like a broken vessel that God will best perform His purposes through us. This was what the strong man Samson learned – he died physically with his last push of faith when he had lost all the physical strength that God had given him earlier. Recall Gideon's army of 300 men, whose victory was given when they broke their clay pots and shone forth the light in them. How is God dealing with your life? How do you respond when pressures come that are breaking your natural spirit so that God's Spirit will shine more strongly through you?

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## Day 6

Psalm 32. The most wonderful experience we can have is to be forgiven and cleansed by God. Have you been through the waters of baptism? They are God's opportunity to accept your commitment to Him, and just as the waters cover you on the outside, symbolic both of death and cleansing, to transform and cleanse you inwardly. The baptism in His Holy Spirit is the gift that He offers to all men. It is the most wonderful experience, to feel totally forgiven and totally cleansed within. Have you experienced this and are you able to bear witness to the truth of David's Psalm?

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Psalm 33. Oh that the entire world could know the sovereignty of God! He is Creator and sustainer of the entire universe. His power is immense and the possibilities for our lives are wonderful. He *is* sovereign even though we have a measure of free will. He has the ability to make all of our lives perfect and will help those who put their trust in Him. Sometimes we might think that God only deals in the larger matters of the universe, but His ways are revealed in the detail. David expressed this in Verse 15: *He fashions their hearts individually...* Question: how will the world change? Answer: one person at a time. Let us recognize His sovereignty, not only in the bigger things all around, but in the minute detail of our lives. This Psalm is not attributed directly to David, but is of exactly the same nature as the ones he wrote, illustrating how he set the foundations for the worship of Israel through the Psalms and how others carried on the same tradition after him.

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Psalm 36. The Psalms of David are the inspiration for all of our songs of praise and worship. We often find one of the verses at the heart of a modern hymn. Verse 9 is an example: *With you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.* This was the inspiration for a well-known modern hymn. David was inspired to write verses like this that would deepen in meaning in the light of Yeshua. They have everlasting significance and draw us into worship even more so than when they were first written. These verses must, however, also be read in the context they were written. The background for this Psalm is sadness on account of the wickedness that we see in unredeemed men and women. On the one hand is the joy of our salvation. On the other hand is sadness for the lost.

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Psalm 37. *Delight yourself in the Lord ...He shall give you the desires of your heart...commit your way to the Lord...rest in the Lord...* This Psalm is full of memorable phrases that we can come back to time and again. Do you have something on your heart? Where did that desire come from? If it is what God has put there it will come to pass. This is similar to John 15:7: *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.* David learned this lesson, where Saul had failed. David learned to seek the Lord in every circumstance. He won many victories when he did only what the Lord instructed. Once he desired to build a Temple for God, but his desire was brought to conform with God's plan and so David accepted correction. Yeshua, always and only, did and said what the Father was doing (John 5:19), and that is what He wants for us too. This Psalm is about drawing close to God in faith, receiving His desires on your heart, so that they also become your desires, and thereby fulfilling all that God intends for your life in deep fellowship with Him. This

is the heritage of all who know Him intimately. This Psalm has been a source of inspiration for many men and women of great faith through the years.

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## Day 7

### A Day for Rest and Further Reflection

Psalms 38, 39, 41. Here are some more Psalms for you to read as you continue to meditate upon David's life, drawing parallels with your own, and considering how the promised Messiah is the foundational theme behind all of them. These Psalms take us through more of the experiences that God brings into our lives, days of correction from Him, of seeking guidance, learning patience, caring for the poor and mourning for the lost, praising God in all things. Do these overlapping purposes of God remind you of what Peter said in 2 Peter 1:1-21? See how you are led by the Holy Spirit as you meditate upon the Psalms. They are a bridge linking the Tanakh (Old Testament) to the New Testament.

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