

# Under The Fig Tree



## WEEK 19

This week, we come to the end of David's life and the beginning of Solomon's reign as King of Israel. We will also read the remaining Psalms attributed to David.

### Day 1

Psalm 55. When David was a shepherd boy he would not have imagined the hard days ahead of him. In the freedom of the peaceful countryside he discovered a wonderful relationship with God - an experience of Heaven on earth. Reality of the fallen world brought him many troubles once he was anointed as King of Israel. Even some of his close friends betrayed him. Perhaps we sometimes feel the pressures of the world and echo David's sentiment in Verse 6: *So I said, Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.* This was how the Apostle Paul sometimes felt, but he, like David, knew that difficulties on this earth are inevitable, especially for those who serve the Lord. Paul quoted from Psalm 44 when he wrote (Romans 8:35-37): *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* David's conclusion in Psalm 55, was the same as Paul's, saying to the Lord – *I will trust in You.* This must be our response too, whatever the circumstances of our life might be.

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Psalm 61. *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I....I will trust in the shelter of your wings.* These are among the thoughts that David had when he cried to God for help. Did he know that, one day, he will come face to face with Yeshua HaMashiach, who fulfilled all the types and shadows? It will be a wonderful day when we all meet Him face to face. Meanwhile, like David did, we wait for that day and, like Job, stand firm on the truth *I know that my Redeemer lives and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth* (Job 19:25).

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Psalm 62. *Shalom* is a Hebrew word with rich meaning. It means *peace, wellbeing, wholeness, health* – all that we seek in God on this earth and for all eternity. Why does God allow the conflicts and pain on this earth that rob us of a perfect experience of God's *Shalom*? For one thing it is a fallen world. Adam and Eve were sent from the Garden of Eden into this world and, as a consequence, we too were born into it. The world will stay in this fallen state until the return of Yeshua and until the Kingdom of Heaven is fully manifest. Meanwhile, we learn through the contrasts of this present life

that we seek a better place. This is God's will for us, that through our suffering we come to His glorious Kingdom. How much do we sigh, like David, *Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation*. Recalling that the word salvation is *yeshua*, how deeply prophetic this Psalm becomes, pointing not only to salvation as a principle, but to Yeshua HaMashiach, the One who came to save us.

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Psalm 64. The world is divided into two sorts of people. Yeshua made this clear when He said (Matthew 12:30): *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters abroad*. There is no middle ground and there will be no compromise on Judgement Day when all people stand before His Throne. In our human thinking, we might not like the fact that there is a clear division between God's friends and His enemies. We may not like the way David prays for the destruction of his enemies. Neither do we rejoice in the tens of thousands who were killed to establish David's throne in Israel. Nevertheless, we have to face up to the reality of a sinful and wicked world and the eventual fate of the wicked. What is your own prayer in response to David's Psalm? We must not compromise with wickedness, but we must also remember that we are in the time of the Lord's favour, when God is holding out His hand to all people to come to Him in repentance and faith. While we are in the world there will still be wickedness, but we also know that our enemies are spiritual and our battles are against these unseen powers. Let us look upwards and seek victories against God's spiritual enemies, so that all who can be saved will be saved. We must have the uncompromising attitude of David against the unseen enemies who seek to dominate this world and who take men and women to destruction with them.

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## Day 2

Psalm 65. David was aware of God's presence among his people. The Tabernacle that was constructed in the wilderness was brought to Israel, established at Shiloh and then moved to Jerusalem as the place where God received sacrifice and offering. Later the Temple would be built and this was the place where all Israel came to meet with God. The Psalms of David reflect the presence of God among His people both at the centre of worship and in all the land. God was the provider of all the harvest and the sustainer of the people. This is one level of the Psalm. At another level, like all the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, David looked forward to a day when God would come among His people in all His fullness. We now know that David looked forward to the coming of Yeshua. He came once and He is coming again. The opening words of this Psalm are in anticipation of this: *Praise awaits You, O God, in Zion*.

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Psalm 68. This is another Psalm that reflects on what God has done for Israel and also looks forward to what He is yet to do. Israel is a prophetic people – they live out a prophetic calling so all the nations might know about their God. It is interesting that, in the classification of the Hebrew Bible, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are listed as the Former Prophets rather than as historical books.

Psalm 68 is full of meaning for today. God's enemies are spiritual and that they are defeated through the Blood of Yeshua. Paul quoted Verse 18 in Ephesians 4:7-11. He understood that this passage referred to the victory of Yeshua, whereby He also gave Spiritual gifts to His people, in fulfillment of this Psalm.

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Psalm 69. When Yeshua said that God even knew the numbers of hairs on our head (Matthew 10:30), He knew that the symbolism was used in this Psalm (verse 4). Yeshua uses this imagery to tell His disciples how very precious they are to the Father.

God heard David's prayer when he cried out for help in this Psalm. The Psalm also echoes *our* need for God's help. Yeshua brought that help and took all our burdens on Himself, so that the Psalm also speaks about Him going down to Hell for us. When Yeshua took whips and cleansed the Temple of those buying and selling for profit (John 2) the disciples realized that He was fulfilling Verse 9 of this Psalm: *zeal for your house has eaten me up*.

Ultimately the Temple that Yeshua cleansed was to be the living Temple – His people. In Psalm 40:12, we read: *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me*. God knows the number of hairs on our head. This shows how much He knows about us and cares for us. As well as other details of our lives He also knows the extent of our numerous sins, and thereby knows the extent of our need. The zeal of Yeshua was to deliver us from all this evil, which He did by fulfilling this Psalm and going to the pit of Hell for us.

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Psalm 70. Here is another short Psalm on the same theme as the last one. Notice that the word *salvation* is in Verse 4. The word is *Yeshua*, and if we substitute it in the verse, the entire Psalm takes on a higher meaning, as it is intended to do: *let those who love Your Yeshua say continually, "Let God be magnified!"* The salvation for which David hoped became the Saviour: Yeshua HaMashiach!

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## Day 3

Psalms 86, 101, 103, 109. Continue to read the Psalms carefully and prayerfully. These are four more of David's Psalms. You might read them at one sitting, making notes on each one in turn, or find a number of times in your day to stop for a time of study and prayer. It is important not to rush. David had a special gift from God to write these Psalms. Could you write such Psalms? Sometimes it is thought that "New Testament Christianity" made us superior to those who lived in "Old Testament times", but I have never met anyone who can write Psalms like David. On the one hand, therefore, let us realize that the Holy Spirit inspired these Psalms so that, when we read them, He ministers to us. On the other hand, we should be like David and express our heart to God in our own words. Read what David prayed and let it inspire you to your own prayer to God. David wrote the Psalms from the experiences of his life. We can do the same.

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## Day 4

Psalm 110. David was a forerunner of Messiah. We do not know how conscious he was of this. His experiences led to prayers that pointed to Yeshua which we understand in hindsight. This Psalm, however, is very clear. David was precise in His prophecy about someone he knew as his Lord. We know that David had a very close relationship with God and that he had experience of angels, but this Psalm speaks of someone higher than the angels, who is at God's right hand. God spoke these clear words of prophecy to David. This Messianic Psalm was one among many prophecies through Scripture that encouraged an expectation among the Israelites for the coming Messiah. Matthew 22:41-46 records an incident in which Yeshua showed the Pharisees that they had not fully understood the prophecy. It was precisely fulfilled in Him, who was with the Father before even David was born. Yeshua was before all things that we read in the Bible. He inspired the Patriarchs, was with the Israelites in the wilderness and was clearly revealed to David: as it says in Revelation 19:10, the testimony of Yeshua is the spirit of prophecy. This is an amazing Psalm!

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Psalm 131. The Songs of ascents were sung by the worshippers as they walked up to the Temple. This Psalm of David was later used as one of those Psalms. Imagine the multitudes processing to the place of worship. Could this happen in our congregations today? It has been experienced at times of revival over the years. God-willing it will happen again as the day of Yeshua's return draws near.

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Psalm 133. Mount Hermon is to the north of Israel and is snow-covered in the winter and spring of the year. When the snows melt the water flows down to the Galilee. The river Jordan carries water from the Galilee southwards to the Dead Sea. Everyone in Israel knows the blessing of water and the pleasure of drinking the cool clear water that came from Hermon. Oil was poured on the head of the High Priest as a symbol of anointing with the Holy Spirit. Both the oil and the water remind us of refreshment in the Lord and the blessings that come from His Spirit. David knew the importance of unity. He did not mean the sort of unity that is on the surface, where we say pleasant things with our mouths while our hearts are full of compromise. He meant unity in the Spirit of God that He alone can give. It is this unity for which Yeshua died, knowing our need of the Holy Spirit. He asked the Father to bring us to unity in John 17:20-21: *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.* A day is coming when the songs of ascent will be even more significant than when the Israelites processed to the Temple. Yeshua ascended to be with the Father and He is preparing a place for His people so that we will be where He is. That will be a day for rejoicing and now is the time to prepare for the time when we will ascend to be with Him.

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Psalm 138. In Psalm 23 David wrote: *You spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies.* In this Psalm he wrote (Verse 1): *before the gods I will sing praises to you.* David knew what it was to be surrounded by enemies whether physical or spiritual. He learned to praise God in all things, knowing that His strength was in God. He testified openly to his faith in God even when his enemies

surrounded him. We cannot forecast how God will build our testimony and what circumstances we will find ourselves in, but we must prepare ourselves to be like David and be confident in the Lord always. We must never deny Him, always being ready to testify to His goodness in the presence of His enemies, whether physical or spiritual. Read [Hebrews 11:30-40](#) as well as this Psalm, and then turn to God in prayer.

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## Day 5

There are just a few more of David's Psalms left for us to read. How has the Holy Spirit spoken to you as you have read them so far? The foundations are established in the life of David and fulfilled in Yeshua. This is in a way relevant to every disciple of Yeshua. The Psalms bear witness to the battles of this life that rage *within* us due to our sinful nature, and also the battles *against* our spiritual enemies. They also echo the good times of our life. From the valleys of our lives to the mountain top experiences we will discover relevant themes from these Psalms to encourage our prayers and strengthen our faith. These Psalms are the foundation on which the worship of Israel was built, a tradition that was also inherited by the Christian Church. Become familiar with the Psalms and include them in your regular Bible readings throughout your life.

Psalms 140, 141 and 143. See how the Lord speaks to you through these three Psalms today. Review your life since you came to faith. Have you persevered through difficult times? Our struggles are not the same as David's. He fought enemies from surrounding countries and also those who opposed him from his own people. We struggle against enemies "within" and enemies "without" of a different nature. The principles are the same, but the nature of these struggles is different, and our battles are more in the spiritual realm than the physical realm. Nevertheless, we do see manifestations of the struggles in the physical world. The world around us is full of sin and wickedness. Many people are oppressed by famine, disease, disasters and war; our lives contain experiences of many kinds in the reality of this world. Do you make these difficulties into opportunities for prayer? Have you grown stronger in faith and in your walk with the Living God, on account of your varied journey through life on this earth?

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## Day 6

1 Kings Chapter 1 to 1 Kings 2:12. We now conclude the account of David. The account began with him in the shepherd's field and ends with an old and frail man needing help to keep warm. He died in dignity, which is a lesson we learn from many of the men and women of the Bible who walked closely with God. Death is inevitable for all men and women and we can learn how to prepare for death so that we accept it as David did when his time came. He made preparations for the next era of Israel's history and handed on responsibility in faith – *Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways... that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn..."* (1 Kings 2:1-3). The throne was contested by Adonijah, and this prompted David to confirm Solomon as King. He also ensured justice for Joab, the sons of Barzilla and Shimei, in various ways. It may seem strange that his final commands to Solomon were of this nature, but we recall how Saul's compromise lost him the Kingdom. It is the way of God to administer justice completely. We will discover this on Judgement Day.

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1 Chronicles Chapter 22. David was not permitted to build the Temple, but he made preparations for its building before he died. The details are in this Chapter.

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Chapter 23. There is no better example among all of God's people than David's devotion to the Lord. If he could have built the Temple it would have been his most satisfying accomplishment. He would have heard his Psalms sung in the courtyards and seen his people gather in their thousands to do what he enjoyed best – to worship the Lord. He died in faith before all this came to pass, but was allowed to establish the structure of the worshipping community. He commissioned the Levites according to the instructions of Moses.

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Chapter 24. Between the time of David and the time of Yeshua there were about 1000 years. In 586 BC Israel went to exile and the Temple built by Solomon lay in ruins. We do not know, therefore, whether the divisions of the Priests was exactly the same when John the Baptist's father Zacharias was on duty in the Temple (Luke 1:5). It is very likely, however, that when Ezra reappointed the Priests after the exile (the details are given in Nehemiah 12), that this would be according to David's instructions. Therefore, there is a high probability that it was just the same in the time of Zacharias as at the time of David. There were so many Priests and Levites that they shared the ministry of the Temple, each having a 2 week period of responsibility.

Sometimes the details recorded in the Bible seem rather dry, but they offer us the opportunity for interesting research – those who seek will find more than appears on the surface. For example, from the list in 1 Kings 24 and the details of the birth of John and Yeshua in Luke 1, we can get a very reasonable estimate of the time of Yeshua's birth. Zacharias was of the course of Abijah, the eighth course, which would be four months from the beginning of the year at Pesach (Passover). From Luke

we know this was the time of conception of John. Six months later Gabriel visited Mary and the Holy Spirit came upon her to conceive Yeshua. Nine months later Yeshua was born. By adding these months we easily deduce that this would be in the middle of the Seventh Month, the month of Tishrei, around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is a very reasonable conjecture and puts the birth of Yeshua more firmly into the Prophetic calendar of the biblical Feasts than on December 25<sup>th</sup>, which is more linked to the Roman calendar. Remember, however, that the Lord told us to remember His *death* and gave no special command to celebrate His *birth*, so let us not make too much of this. At least this encourages us to read the details in the biblical lists with interest.

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Chapters 25, 26 and 27. Continue to read the details of the Temple responsibilities carefully. During the reign of Solomon, Temple worship would be such a glorious occasion that it would be known among other nations. Just as the Tabernacle had been, the Temple became the place where Israel met with the Living God, the Creator of Heaven and earth. The details in these Chapters convey the order and dignity of the place of worship. Picture it in your mind and ask God to show you something that is relevant for today. Worship of God comes from the heart and the order of the Temple conveys what is in the heart of God and what must be in our hearts. It is also a picture of what will come when all is fulfilled, when we join the worshipping community of Heaven. We have details of Israel's Temple worship in these chapters, and also have a prophetic picture of the eternal Kingdom.

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

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## Day 7

### A Day for Rest and Further Reflection

Let us close the week with the final instructions that David gave to Solomon and also meditate on the remaining two of David's Psalms identified in our Bible.

1 Chronicles 28 and 29. Read how David called the people together and delivered his commands to them, and how Solomon became King. Everything was in order and full of dignity. This was the climax of David's life. He had endured much hardship, had learned to trust in God, been established as King, ordered the Kingdom and prepared the way for the Temple. Now he was to die in dignity, just as others had done who had also fulfilled their covenant responsibility in their earthly life. Verses 10 to 15 of 1 Chronicles 29 is a fitting tribute to the man after God's own heart. How will it be for you when you come to the end of your ministry on this earth? These same words, in the context of our own life, could become our personal prayer.

Psalms 139. Do you know God in the way that David did? Are you conscious of His closeness to you in all things, and are you aware how He knew you before you were born? These are mysteries that are hard to explain and so this Psalm can only be understood through the experience of our lives. See what the Holy Spirit says to you.

Psalms 144. Again, is this a prayer that you can pray out of your experience of God in your life? Come back to these Psalms time and again. Different Psalms will be relevant at different times of your life. Establish routines to ensure that you read them over and over and you will find yourself growing in God as you do so.

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