

April 9-15

## **Week 15**

This week's readings might be called "The Rise and Fall of Two Kings." We find a study in contrasts between David, who is the real focus of the story, and several other characters. Watch for these contrasts and notice the picture they paint of David as a superior king. We are at an important turning point in the story of Scripture, where we see Israel's greatest king come into his kingdom. In many ways King David anticipated the coming of King Jesus, one of his descendants, who would establish a very different kind of kingdom.

This week we will also read a number of psalms, many of which are associated with David. Music and worship thrived under David's reign. We will read psalms of lament, which express anguish, cries for help, and hope in God. We will also see imprecatory psalms, which call for God's justice and the fulfillment of his promises.

---

**Day 1****Read Psalm 7; 27; 31; 34; 52****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 8**

We tend to read the psalms as a collection of detached songs that have little to do with the story of Scripture. Yet because they arose from real-life situations, they can speak powerfully to our real-life experiences as we use them to express our own prayers to God.

First read these psalms in light of King David's story we have been reading in 1 Samuel (notice the headings in your Bible translation that point to specific moments in that story).

Next, enter the emotion of each psalm and notice how it often moves from a cry for help to confident hope in God. Allow yourself to be carried along that same path as you pray the psalms.

*If you are not distressed at present, praise God for your current situation and pray for someone you know is struggling under oppression.*

---

**Day 2**

**Read Psalm 56; 120; 140-142**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 9**

The psalms we are reading today continue to express cries to God for help. They also add another element—a cry for judgment on the psalmist’s enemies. Such psalms are called imprecatory psalms. How are we to relate to them?

Both Old and New Testaments speak of the need to love our enemies. Yet the imprecatory psalms express that God will bring justice and vindication for the one who truly follows him and judgment for the evil person. Such psalms express confidence that God will fulfill his promises.

*Where is great oppression occurring in the world? Think of places where fellow believers are being harshly persecuted for their faith. Cry out to God to judge the evil oppression and to deliver his people.*

---

**Day 3****Read 1 Samuel 25-27; Psalm 17; 73****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 10**

As you read the stories of 1 Samuel 25–27, notice the contrasts between Abigail and Nabal, and between David and Saul.

*What do these stories tell us about how to handle conflict?*

*How do you handle conflict?*

In these two psalms notice the emotions expressed through word pictures. Also watch for contrasts between godly and wicked persons. The psalmist was struggling with the fact that the wicked seem to be doing very well in the world. Yet as he concluded each psalm, he realized that God's presence was the only important value in the world. Think of this truth in light of the emphasis—in Israel's history and in David's personal history—on the presence of the Lord.

*List the top five things you value in life at this point.*

*Did God's presence make the list?*

---

**Day 4**

**Read Psalm 35; 54; 63; 18**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 11**

Today's psalms cry out to God for deliverance and call for celebrate when God brings the deliverance about. Focus on reading these psalms as songs. Meditate on the word pictures used.

*What are the word pictures communicating?*

Pay attention to parallelism, the repetition of a thought to emphasize a truth or to express nuances of a thought.

*From what do you need deliverance today?*

*Use these psalms as prayers to God.*

---

**Day 5****Read 1 Samuel 28-31; 1 Chronicles 10****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 12**

The contrasts between Saul and David continue to heighten in today's passage, and the conclusion of Saul's story is at hand. Saul's consulting of a necromancer (one who calls up the dead) shows how far Saul had fallen, because the practice of consulting the dead or consulting a necromancer was punishable by death (see Leviticus 20:6,27), and Saul himself had outlawed the practice. The story also echoes the earlier foolishness of Saul when, facing an impending battle, he panicked and offered a sacrifice himself instead of waiting for Samuel (see 1 Samuel 13).

Evidently, the Lord allowed Samuel to return to pronounce judgment on Saul, and that judgment fell at the end of 1 Samuel, when Saul and his sons were killed. David, on the other hand, was protected by the Lord and continued to make wise decisions.

*Panic and fear can cause us to do foolish things. Pray for God's wisdom in your decision-making, especially in areas that involve great stress.*

---

**Day 6**

**Read Psalm 121; 123-125; 128-130**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 13**

Today's reading is brief, so take your time and carefully pray through these psalms. Notice their Godward bent, focusing your heart on the Lord.

*As you pray these psalms, reflect on God as the great center of all life and the provider of all you need. Commit yourself in a fresh way to seeking, trusting, hoping in, and loving him.*

---

**Day 7****Reading Summary for Week 15**

This week, we have mainly hit the pause button in the narrative, moving ahead only a bit to Saul's death. Yet we read many psalms, some by David. These have expressed a kaleidoscope of emotions in worship.

Here are some of the themes we've experienced:

- Prayer for justice (Psalm 7)
- Plea for protection (Psalms 17; 34; 56)
- Praise (Psalms 18; 63)
- The Lord as a stronghold (Psalm 27)
- Prayer for victory (Psalm 35)
- Prayer for rescue (Psalms 54; 140–142)
- A cry for truth and peace (Psalm 120)

**Prayer/Meditation**

Heavenly Father, I long to worship you as exuberantly as David did in the psalms. Let me declare with him, "I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock where I seek refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Psalm 18:1-2). Help me freely to cry out, as David did when he was in trouble, "God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might! God, hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 54:1-2). Amen.

---