

April 30-May 6

Week 18

The readings for this week take us from the firm establishment of David's kingdom to a major, tragic crack in the bedrock of David's monarchy—the sin involving Bathsheba.

The readings of day 1 have special significance for biblical history and theology as a whole. We will read about God's covenant with King David and the promise that one of David's descendants would have an eternal kingdom.

Psalms are interspersed throughout the week, covering a wide variety of topics that correspond thematically to the events in the biblical story. Hear the profound poetry of these psalms. Take time to meditate on them, using them to prompt your own prayers.

Day 1

Read 2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17; Psalms 1-2; 33; 127; 132

Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 29

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of today's readings in the grand story of biblical history and theology. Keep in mind that God, not David, is the central figure. Here God promised David an enduring kingdom, and the New Testament writers understood several of these passages as being ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. For example, Hebrews 1:5 points to verses from 2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17; and Psalm 2.

As you read the parallel passages from 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, take note of the references to the words "name" and "house," paying attention to the ways they apply to David, David's son, and God. Notice how today's psalms accent various themes in the promises to David. The promise of an eternal kingdom gives us great hope as Christians.

Focus on two key word pictures from these psalms and meditate on the truth communicated by the word pictures.

In whom are you hoping today?

Day 2**Read 2 Samuel 8-9; 1 Chronicles 18****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 30**

A dominant theme in today's readings is God's supporting David against his enemies. As David won victories in war, God's blessing came in the form of stability for the kingdom—secure borders and an administrative structure composed of competent leaders.

In many of the psalms we have read, David cried out for vindication and protection for himself and judgment on his enemies. Yet this cry for justice was not a cry for personal revenge but rather for God to fulfill his covenant promises.

Notice the kindness of David's actions towards Mephibosheth. His loyalty to Jonathan overrode a thirst for revenge on the house of Saul.

How does your life exhibit loyalty to God?

How does your loyalty to God's ways override other, less noble emotions you might experience?

Day 3

Read 2 Samuel 10; 1 Chronicles 19; Psalms 20; 53; 60; 75

Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 31

Today the narrative from 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles recounts David's war with the Ammonites and illustrates David's continued dominance of the surrounding nations. An important aspect of the plot centers on misjudging the motives of another person, an especially dangerous response when dealing with persons who hold great power. David's motives for sending emissaries to Hanun were noble, but the Ammonites did not read them that way, leading them into a world of trouble.

In what ways are you tempted to misjudge the motives of another person?

Today's psalms offer prayers for help in the face of battles or for the celebration of victory. These psalms point to David's dependence on the Lord as his source of true help. Notice the beauty of parallelism, the repetition of thoughts, in the psalms.

You may not be involved in war today, but you face battles. Are you depending on the Lord for victory?

Day 4**Read Psalms 65-67; 69-70****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 32**

Most of today's powerful, beautiful psalms are attributed to David. As you read, breathe parts of these psalms as your personal prayers to God. Reflect deeply on the words here, meditating on what they reveal about God, especially the greatness of God's works.

What kinds of works are celebrated?

Notice the contrasts assumed in the psalms between God's power or position and human limitations, and between God's holiness and our need for forgiveness.

Use Psalms 67 and 70 to pray as you conclude your reading.

Day 5**Read 2 Samuel 11-12; 1 Chronicles 20; Psalm 51****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 33**

One powerful clue to the historical accuracy of the Bible is the honesty with which it reveals the great failures of even Israel's greatest leaders. The story of David's adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, her husband, provides an example of a biblical character who shows us how not to live.

Follow the development of the story: David's callous sin of adultery; his attempt to cover his sin, leading to murder; confrontation of his sin; repentance; and the consequences of his sin.

David's heart had become callous. Why might this have happened? Yet the softness of his heart toward God asserted itself when the prophet confronted him, and he readily repented.

Reflect on the way you process your sin. Do you know how to repent and receive restoration?

Use Psalm 51 to identify essential elements in a prayer of repentance.

Day 6**Read Psalms 32; 86; 102-103; 122****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 34**

In several of the psalms for today, the psalmist cried out to God for forgiveness. Meditate deeply on Psalm 32, noticing that it moves from an introduction (vv. 1-2) to a personal testimony (vv. 3-5) and finally to a general exhortation (vv. 6-11). Also notice the figurative language used in verses 3-4 and the emotions communicated by that language.

Is there any sin for which you need to call out to God in repentance? There is forgiveness in Jesus.

Day 7

Reading Summary for Week 18

We climbed a spiritual mountain with David when we read about the covenant the Lord made with him, promising an everlasting dynasty of kings (of whom Jesus is the final fulfillment). We've also walked with David through the valley of shame, as we've observed his fall into adultery and murder. Of the many psalms we've read, perhaps the most memorable is 51, David's prayer of confession and longing to be restored to fellowship with God after his great sin.

Prayer/Meditation

Heavenly Father, I worship you for your great covenant with David, for in fulfilling your word, you sent your Son—who was also David's son—as the everlasting King. I joyfully bow before King Jesus as my Sovereign Lord. Father, thank you for the promise of restoration when I fall into sin as David did. I need the assurance that you will indeed “restore the joy of your salvation to me” (Psalm 51:12) when I turn from sin in humble confession. Amen.
