

May 7-13

## **Week 19**

You are almost halfway through your reading of the Old Testament. Congratulations! We are still in Act 2, scene 5, the phase of God's story in which God was transforming his people into a kingdom.

This week we will witness the dissolution and then the restoration of David's kingdom. As you read, think about the continuing consequences of David's sin with Bathsheba. Notice how many people's lives were affected. Also observe how the narrative develops in terms of David's responses at various points. God did not abandon David, but life got much more complex and difficult because of David's sin.

Most of the psalms this week are cries to God in the midst of life's difficulties, especially when dealing with enemies. Think of ways these psalms might apply to you or another believer. Allow the beautiful music of the psalms to wash over you as you read.

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**Day 1**

**Read 2 Samuel 13-15**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 36**

In Nathan's rebuke of David after his affair with Bathsheba, the Lord said, "I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family" (2 Samuel 12:11). That prophecy unfolded in these three chapters as David reaped the results of the seeds he had sown in the lives of his sons.

Track the development of the story step-by-step, noticing especially the deception woven through each stage. Perhaps David's sons had learned from his deception. David is one of the greatest figures in the Bible, but we see in this tragic series of events the cost of lapses in integrity.

*Are there areas of your life in which you need to shore up your integrity? Ask God to reveal lapses in your use of words, hidden actions or attitudes, work ethic, and similar matters.*

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**Day 2**

**Read Psalms 3-4; 13; 28; 55**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 37**

David wrote today's psalms in the face of strong pressure from his enemies. Reflect on how David must have felt as his son's forces drove him out of Jerusalem. Notice the potently descriptive language. If you have ever felt that your head was hanging down to the ground, that the light has gone out of your eyes, or that you wished you could escape your situation, you can identify with these psalms.

*If you are not under attack personally, pray these psalms on behalf of persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.*

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**Day 3****Read 2 Samuel 16-18****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 38**

Today we continue to see the consequences of David's sin with Bathsheba. At the end of chapter 16, Absalom slept with his father's concubines on the roof. Occurring in the same place David's sin with Bathsheba started (see 2 Samuel 11:2), this act was a fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy that "another" would "sleep with them in broad daylight" (2 Samuel 12:11-12).

The story had a complex cast of characters at this point, some of whom were helping David and others who were opposing him. Notice their actions and the results of their actions. Read for details. Yet at the center stand David and Absalom, because the story really concerns the results of David's sin. David understood this. When Absalom died, David grieved rather than rejoiced.

*Are you or those around you facing consequences of sin in your life or in the life of another? Repent and seek the Lord's forgiveness or pray for those around you who are suffering because of sin's consequences.*

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**Day 4**

**Read Psalms 26: 40-41; 58; 61-62; 64**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 39**

Among the psalms for today are a cry for vindication, a plea for help against enemies, a call for justice in the face of injustice, an expression of trust in God, and a prayer for protection. Notice that there are three main actors in these psalms: the one praying, his opponents, and God.

*Identify a portion of one of these psalms that seems especially relevant for you today. Meditate on it and pray it to God.*

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**Day 5**

**Read 2 Samuel 19-21; Psalms 5; 38; 42**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 40**

The narrative today describes the restoration of David's kingdom and records the outcomes of Absalom's revolt for a number of the characters who played a part. Notice David's response to each.

In chapter 21 the author began to offer final reflections on King David's reign. Echoing through this section we still see the implications of David's sin with Bathsheba. He tried to reestablish his own authority, but it seemed a shaky authority.

Sin reduces a person, and public sin by a leader reduces that person publicly. Then came Sheba's short-lived revolt, a final chapter in the story of Saul, and fights with Philistine giants, harking back to the beginning of David's career and the victory over Goliath.

*In today's beautiful psalms notice the note of longing. For what are you longing in your relationship with God?*

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**Day 6****Read 2 Samuel 22-23; Psalm 57****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 41**

In offering final reflections on King David's reign, 2 Samuel weaves into the narrative two songs and then two stories. Today's reading covers the two songs, both of which exalt God as the source of David's success in life and deliverance from his enemies, and the first of the two stories.

As you read the songs, focus on God's role. The songs point out that in spite of David's failures, he weathered the failures and lived out an unparalleled reign as king because of God's grace.

The story of 2 Samuel 23:8-39 focuses on David's warriors, a narrative Chronicles places at the beginning of David's reign (see 1Chronicles 11:10-47). This story emphasizes a second reason for David's success: the people surrounding him. Great followers make great leaders.

*What success have you had in life?*

*Do you see your success as a product of God's grace?*

*Whom has God placed around you for support?*

*Thank God for his grace, at times expressed through supportive people. Perhaps write one of those supportive people a note of thanks today.*

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**Day 7**

**Reading Summary for Week 19**

After David's affair with Bathsheba, the rest of his life and reign was often troubled. We've read about one son's violation of a sister, about Absalom's revolt and untimely death, and about Sheba's revolt. Yet the Lord continued to be with David, and the psalms we've read are all attributed to him (except for Psalm 42). These hymns again reflect that true worship includes every kind of emotional outpouring, whether exalted praise or sorrowful plea.

**Prayer/Meditation**

I come to you, Lord, longing to praise you and to know you as David did. I know you will never abandon me, even when I sin against you, for you are merciful and forgiving. I join with David in praying, "Let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them shout for joy forever. May you shelter them, and may those who love your name boast about you. For you, Lord, bless the righteous one; you surround him with favor like a shield" (Psalm 5:11-12). Amen.

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