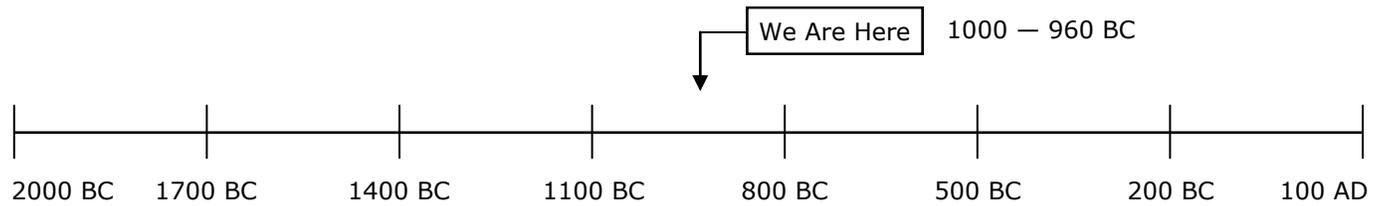


From the Mountain to the Valley

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Week 17: April 23-29 — *2 Samuel 6-19; Various Psalms*

32.3% Complete — 246 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

David established his throne. King Saul and his son Jonathan died in battle, and Ishbosheth, another of Saul's sons and David's temporary opponent, was murdered. All of Israel proclaimed David as king; after taking Jerusalem and setting up headquarters there, David subdued Israel's enemies, forging a kingdom with Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Aram, and others. Everything was going well; God was blessing David. He had the Ark moved to Jerusalem, to a temporary tabernacle, until he completed his plans for the Temple. God promised to establish his kingdom forever, a covenant that stood as evidence of God's love for His servant.

David was enjoying the mountaintop of God's favor; but, all it takes is one wrong move to fall from the mountaintop to the valley. Even though David seemed invincible, he fell prey, as we all do, to the desires of his sin nature. In just a few foolish decisions, David had committed adultery, covered up his sin, and murdered an innocent man, all for the fleeting moments of physical pleasure. The fellowship David had with God was shattered by his self-indulgence; and, just as glowing as the mountaintop had been, David now felt alone in the valley of sin and guilt. David was a man after God's own heart but he was not perfect. The record of his mistakes is an example to us of the process to go from valley back to mountaintop.

Truth About Temptation: Every person is tempted. But, temptation in itself is not a sin; it is when we give in to temptation that it becomes a sin (*James 1:14, 15*). We must also keep in mind that it is not God who tempts; God tests us but will never tempt us (*James 1:13*). Also, our temptations are the same that everyone experiences; and, God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able but provides a way of escape (*1 Cor. 10:13*). "Idle hands are the devil's workshop"; one of the reasons why David fell prey to adultery was because he was not where he should have been. Instead of carrying out the Lord's work, David stayed behind in Jerusalem and sent his men to fight for Israel (*2 Samuel 11:1*). It was the time for kings to go out to war, but this king stayed behind and battled temptation. If we are not about the Lord's business, Satan will surely attempt to get us to buy into his.

Secret of Sin and Guilt: The conviction of sin will produce two reactions; in a believer, guilt for sin (sorrow) will produce a desire to repent and be reconciled, whereas in the godless, guilt overwhelms them and their sorrow pushes them to depression, irrational thinking, even suicidal tendencies (*2 Cor. 7:10*). Compare David and Saul, or even Peter and Judas, and how they handled conviction of their sin.

Call to Confession: Unconfessed sin is unhealthy for one's spiritual, emotional, and even physical well-being (*Psalms 32:3, 4*). Unconfessed sin hinders our intimacy with God; our sin or disobedience causes the Lord's Spirit to be grieved, and it extinguishes His burning fire in our hearts. Thus, confession, taking responsibility for sin, is a necessity in the Christian life.

Freedom of Forgiveness: Though we stumble, we are covered by the blood of Christ; and no matter how badly we mess things up, His sacrifice nullifies any and all times where we have fallen short of God's expectations. How wonderful it is to claim the life of Christ for our own and experience the freedom of forgiveness (*Ps. 32:1, 2; 51; Rom. 4:7, 8; 8:1, 2*).

Cost of the Consequences: Most Christians today claim God's forgiveness for their sins but neglect the truth that there will be consequences for their sins. Notice that God did restore David to intimacy with Him but He did not spare David from His recompense for the awful things he did. He promised future difficulties in David's family because of his sinful decisions; and unfortunately, it came true, as David's family disintegrated into deceit, destruction, and ultimate disaster.

- Prophetic Passages
 1. **Of the Temple** (*1 Chron. 17:11, 12*): Although David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, God told him that his son, Solomon, would be the one to do it.
 2. **Of Trouble in David's Family** (*2 Samuel 12:10-12*): Nathan, after rebuking David for his sin concerning Bathsheba and Uriah, foretold of the rebellion that would arise from David's children. He also predicted that the sword would be a threat to his family.
- Pictures of Christ
 1. **Mediation of Jonathan:** Although we did not read about Jonathan, it is David's relationship with him that caused him to look for Mephibosheth after coming to the throne. David is a picture of God, while Saul is a picture of man; thus, Jonathan is a picture of Christ, who, because of his connection to both, acted as mediator for reconciliation.
 2. **Adoption of Mephibosheth** (*2 Sam. 9:1-13*): David (picture of God) adopted Mephibosheth (sinners, handicapped from fall) into his family, all because of a covenant with Jonathan (Jesus). We are accepted into the family of the King because of Christ.
- Personal Application

From the Mountain to the Valley: It's easier to get to the mountaintop than to stay there. It's a long, hard road back to the top after a fall. No one, not even David, can stay on the mountaintop at all times; but it is not good nor right for anyone, as shown by David, to remain in the valley either. We must employ his guidelines for returning to the top.

The Bottom Line

It only takes *one false step* to veer from God's path; we must be careful to *stay on His way*.

Questions to Consider

1. With what aspects of temptation and/or confession of sin/guilt do you struggle the most?
2. At this point in your life, where are you on the mountain? Why are you there?
3. In what other ways did you find yourself relating to David this week?