

## **From Reckoning to Rescue**

This week we will read about the closing of an important era in Israel's history: the rule and reign of King David, the boy shepherd who grew to be king. Before the ruling baton is passed on to David's son, Solomon, David has to do some serious reckoning with his past sins; sins that have risen up and threatened his legacy and the peace and security of an entire country.

Last week, we read about the infamous event in David's life when he committed adultery and indirect murder. Because of this egregious sin, God, through the prophet Nathan, warns David, "The sword shall never depart from your house ... I will raise up evil against you out of your own house." (2 Sam. 12:10-11) And now, in this week's reading, "the chickens have finally come home to roost" for David as he has to deal with a rebellion led by his third-born son, Absalom.

One of the responsibilities that the Old Testament Israelite kings had as a human representative of God was to uphold the law and mete out righteous justice. David sidestepped this duty with his children, even when they did reprehensible things like familial rape (Amnon) and murder (Absalom). It is likely that David's guilt and reminder of his own carnal sin all those years ago with Bathsheba and Uriah adversely affected his ability to judge his two oldest sons' sins -- not only as a king, but as a father as well.

Instead of demanding repentance and justice, David's past sin and guilt prevents him from punishing Absalom's murder of Amnon. Because of this, Absalom is free to

quietly create an rebellion and sets Israel against his father. David's life as a king now comes full circle. He is once again on the run. However, this time, instead of a jealous king, the danger is from his own son.

The revolt escalates into a bloody civil war between David's soldiers and Absalom's supporters and results in 20,000 men dying in a single battle (2 Sam. 18:7). The war finally ends when Absalom is brutally killed by David's men. No doubt were the words of Nathan on his mind as David heard the news and, in his grief and regret, cried, "Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18:33)

I've long believed that life is cumulative, meaning that you can't isolate one event from another and that everything from the past -- good or bad -- always informs the present, which will then inform the future. The Bible constantly reiterates this point over and over, especially when it comes to sin. Sin does not like to stay where you left it. It can -- and will -- turn on you and those around you in a bid to consume you and your household.

As you follow David this week as he cleans up from his messes and gets his house and Israel, God's house, in order before he passes on the crown, soberly reflect on how you, too, can do the same. While you do this, also rejoice that we serve a God who will hear our repentant cries for help and rescue us. We know that David fully understood this, as he wrote:

***"[God] sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me."  
(Ps. 18:16,19)***

***~ Matt Aggen***

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**April 29th Readings**

2 SAMUEL 17:15-29

PSALM 3

PSALM 63

2 SAMUEL 18:1-19:30

**April 30th Readings**

2 SAMUEL 19:31-20:26

PSALM 7

2 SAMUEL 21:1-22

1 CHRONICLES 20:4-8

**May 1st Readings**

2 SAMUEL 22:1-51

PSALM 18

**May 2nd Readings**

2 SAMUEL 24:1-9

1 CHRONICLES 21:1-6

2 SAMUEL 24:10-17

1 CHRONICLES 21:7-17

2 SAMUEL 24:18-25

1 CHRONICLES 21:18-22:19

**May 3rd Readings**

1 CHRONICLES 23:1-25:31

**May 4th Readings**

1 CHRONICLES 26:1-28:21

**May 5th Readings**

1 CHRONICLES 29:1-22

1 KINGS 1:1-53