

1 Samuel 27 - David Shelters in Philistine Territory; David Raids Canaanite Tribes in Israel

IV. Transition from the house of Saul to the house of David (1 Samuel 16:1—31:13)

(3) David in exile from the pursuing Saul (21:1—29:11)

(K) David in Philistia (27:1—29:11)

(a) David serves under Achish in Gath (27:1—28:2)

1 Samuel 27

(K) David in Philistia (27:1—29:11)

(a) David serves under Achish in Gath (27:1—28:2)

1 Then **David said to himself**, "Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to safely escape into the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand."

1 Then David said to himself, "Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand."

1 David told himself, "One of these days I'll perish by Saul's hand. There is nothing better for me to do than to escape to Philistine territory. Saul will give up searching for me anymore within the borders of Israel, so I'll escape from him."

1 And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

- Saul had promised not to harm David, but David knew Saul too well to trust him

— Living among Goliath's people seemed safer than living where Saul might destroy him

— David was also now a leader, a husband and a father. The safety of 600 men and their families rested on his decision. All of David's options seemed bad.

- "...David said to himself" - should David have left Israel for Philistia? The text doesn't say definitively, but hints show he probably should not have:

- David "said in his heart"; previously, he had asked God for guidance in prayer (Cf. 23:2,4)

- David believed he would die if he remained in Israel; however, Samuel had anointed him as Israel's next king (16:13), Jonathan said twice that David would be king (18:4; 23:17), so did Saul (24:20; 26:25), and Abigail (25:30)
- The name of God does not appear in this chapter, suggesting David did not get his guidance from the Lord. His faith in God's ability to keep him safe seems to have weakened temporarily. The hide-and-seek existence, with no end in sight, seemed to have worn on David.
- He now had a second wife (Abigail) to take care of (25:42)

David's flight to Philistia was a weakness in trust, not disobedience to the revealed will of God. Weary and weighed down by troubles, David seems to have listened to his fears rather than to His faithful God. However, he continued to be God's instrument of blessing to the Israelites and an instrument of judgment to Israel's enemies, in spite of his failure to seek guidance from the Lord before moving back into Philistine territory

This move accomplished two important objectives:

- (1) It delivered him from any possible danger from Saul
- (2) It ingratiated him with the Philistines so he had no further need to fear them

No less important, this 16-month (v7) respite (from the time of his Philistine sojourn until the death of Saul) gave him opportunity to develop even further his combat and leadership skills. He needed this time to stabilize himself in view of what he knew must be the soon end of Saul's dynasty and the beginning of his own.

He had gotten into trouble there before (21:10-15), but now he was the leader of a strong band of 600 men and his reception was much better. However, David's sojourn in enemy territory forced him to lie to the king (27:10-12), and when the Philistines did gather (29:1), David was almost forced to fight against his own people! It was only the grace of God that kept David from having to slay his own people.

2 So David set out and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath.

2 So David arose and crossed over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath.

2 So David got up, and he and the 600 men who were with him went to Maach's son Achish, the king of Gath.

2 And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.

3 And David lived with Achish in Gath, he and his men, each with his *own* household—David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's

widow.

3 And David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow.

3 David stayed with Achish in Gath along with his men, each of whom was with his household. David had his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, who had been the wife of Nabal of Carmel.

3 And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

- So after many years of running from Saul, David finally led his immediate family and 600 followers (27:2; Cf. 23:13; 30:9; 2 Sam 15:18) to Gath and threw himself on the mercy of Achish, a Philistine ruler

— David had tried this before (21:10-15), but that was early in the period of his estrangement from Saul

— At that time David was feared by Achish and barely escaped with his life. But now it was clear to all that David was Saul's mortal enemy and that David could even be useful to the Philistines in their ongoing struggle with Israel.

— This time, the king welcomed David as a useful enemy of his enemy Saul

4 Now it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him.

4 Now it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him.

4 Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, and he did not continue to search for him.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

5 Then David said to Achish, "If now I have found favor in your sight, have them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, so that I may live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"

5 Then David said to Achish, "If now I have found favor in your sight, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"

5 David told Achish, "If it pleases you, give me a place in one of the outlying towns, so I may live there. Why should your servant live with you in the royal city?"

5 And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?

- David wisely asked Achish to assign him a town away from the royal city

— In a district of his own, David could observe his own religious rites as a worshiper of Jehovah and not be under the constant surveillance of the king

6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

6 So that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and therefore, Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah until the present time.

6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

- Achish treated David as a vassal ruler and gave him Ziklag as a fiefdom; Ziklag was a remote town in the Negev

— When Israel first entered Canaan, God had given Ziklag first to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:21-31), then to the tribe of Simeon (Joshua 19:1-9). By giving Ziklag to David, the Philistine king unwittingly fulfilled God's promise.

7 The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

7 The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

7 David lived in Philistine territory for a year and four months.

7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

- David planned to stay in Philistia until Saul's death

-- Since David now had Philistine protection, Saul would have had to take on the Philistines to get to David, something he didn't want to do

- Ziklag's location is unknown today, but likely on the southwestern edge of Philistia

— It continued under Israelite control from the time David moved there until David incorporated it into his kingdom. It became his headquarters for 16 months until he moved to Hebron (2 Sam 1:1)

While not mentioned in 1 Sam, 1 Chr 12:1-22 lists the thousands of fighting men who went over to David before Saul's death.

8 Now David and his men went up and attacked the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as far as the land of Egypt.

8 Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as far as the land of Egypt.

8 David and his men went up and raided the descendants of Geshur, the descendants of Girzi, and the Amalekites, for they had been living in the land since ancient times, from the entrance of Shur all the way to the land of Egypt.

8 And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gerzites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

- David fulfilled his obligation to Achish by raiding desert tribes such as the Amalekites; he annihilated the common enemies of Israel and the Philistines, who lived to Israel's southwest

— His men never raided Judah (contrary to his lie in v10), but Achish believed David had become his servant and Israel's enemy

9 David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and came to Achish.

9 David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took away the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and came to Achish.

9 David struck the land and did not leave a man or woman alive. He took sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and clothing, and then came back and went to Achish.

9 And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.

- He did not leave any survivors, as the Lord commanded (Deut 3:18-20; Joshua 1:13)

— He was clearing the Promised Land of foreign enemies so the Israelites could occupy it

10 Now Achish said, "Where did you carry out an attack today?" And David said, "Against the **Negev** of Judah, against the **Negev** of the Jerahmeelites, and against the **Negev** of the Kenites."

10 Now Achish said, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David said, "Against the Negev of Judah and against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites and against the Negev of the Kenites."

10 Achish said, "Where did you raid today?"

David answered, "Against the Negev of Judah, against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites, and against the Negev of the Kenites."

10 And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

- "...Negev" [3x] - literally, the dry country

- David walked a thin line, but was able to convince Achish that his victories were for the welfare of the Philistines

— Really, he was conquering Israel's surrounding enemies, but he gave Achish the impression that his raids were against the southern parts of Judah

11 And David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, "Otherwise they will tell about us, saying, 'This is what David has done, and this *has been* his practice all the time that he has lived in the country of the Philistines.'"

11 David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, "Otherwise they will tell about us, saying, 'So has David done and so *has been* his practice all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines.'"

11 David did not leave a man or woman alive to bring to Gath. He told himself, "Otherwise, they'll say, 'This is what David is doing, and this has been his practice all the time he has lived in Philistine territory.'"

11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

- Total annihilation also prohibited any witness to testify against David's lie to Achish (v10)

12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has undoubtedly made himself repulsive among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever."

12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever."

12 Achish believed David, telling himself, "He has certainly made himself repulsive to his people in Israel. He will be my servant forever."

12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

- Achish believed these raids were alienating David from the rest of Israel, and that David would then be loyal to him from then on

Application (1 Sam 25-27)

- David learned that God does not treat His children as our sins deserve (Ps 103; 130). God treats all who believe like His beloved Son (Rom 8:29; Col 3:3-4; Heb 2:10-18).

- God credits Jesus' sinless life and death for sin to all who believe (Rom 3:21-26; 10:8-9; Eph 2:8-9), giving us new desires and ability to fight sin (2 Cor 5:21)
- A mark of belonging to God is returning to Him for grace to repent (Luke 22:31-32; Heb 4:15-16; 1 John 1:5-10)
- David's missteps (sins) could not shake God's loving hold on his life. God was as near to David in Gath as He was when David was in Israel.
- Believers and unbelievers' sins merit God's wrath equally
- God keeps us from sin we cannot resist (1 Cor 10:13), and tests us with others (Deut 8:2-5; Ps 66:10-12; Luke 4:1-12; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7). His firm grip assures even the weakest believer eternal safety and joy (John 6:39-40; 10:27-30).
- Wounded pride often allows anger to take root and grow. We easily magnify the wrongs we suffer so our words become weapons of revenge.
- Failure to forgive shows that we do not trust God's justice