

# 1 Samuel 29 - David Spared From Fighting 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)

(c) Philistines dismiss David (29:1-11)

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1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

- One would expect that after such a striking warning from Samuel (28:18-19), Saul would have withdrawn Israel's army and fled south toward Gibeah and safety...but he did not

— He evidently felt he could oppose God's Word and succeed

- "...Aphek" - the first place the Philistines mustered their troops in 1 Sam (4:1); it is also the last place

— This indicates that Israel had not subdued their enemy effectively during Saul's reign because of his failure as their leader

2 And the governors of the Philistines were proceeding on, *leading* hundreds and thousands, and David and his men were proceeding in the back with Achish.

2 And the lords of the Philistines were proceeding on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were proceeding on in the rear with Achish.

2 The Philistine leaders were passing in review among the military units, and David and his men were among them in the rear with Achish.

2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish.

- The lords of the Philistines were the supreme civil authorities, but they were not army commanders. This division of civil and military authority predates the Roman system of government division of power.

3 Then the commanders of the Philistines said, "What *are* these **Hebrews** doing here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or *rather* these years, and I have found nothing at all *suspicious* in him since the day he deserted *to me* to this day?"

3 Then the commanders of the Philistines said, "What *are* these Hebrews *doing* here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or *rather* these years, and I have found no fault in him from the day he deserted *to me* to this day?"

3 The Philistine leaders said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish asked the Philistine leaders, "Isn't this David, the servant of King Saul of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years? I've found no fault in him from the day he deserted until now."

3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?

- "...Hebrews" - a common term used by non-Israelites to describe Israelites

David was playing a dangerous, deadly game by deceiving Achish and dishonoring God. He is now reaping the consequences of his deceptions. He had an opportunity to influence Achish and display God's goodness to the Philistines, but he continued to choose deception. Achish was impressed with David's apparent loyalty and trusted him with his life, but David had no intention of honoring this arrangement. Achish, an unbeliever, trusted David, who represented the Lord.

4 But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man go back, so that he will return to his place where you have assigned him, and do not let him go down to battle with us, or in the battle he may become an **adversary** to us. For how could this *man* find favor with his lord? *Would it* not be with the heads of these men?"

4 But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man go back, that he may return to his place where you have assigned him, and do not let him go down to battle with us, or in the battle he may

become an adversary to us. For with what could this *man* make himself acceptable to his lord? *Would it not be* with the heads of these men?

4 But the Philistine leaders were angry with him, so they pleaded with him, "Send the man back! Let him return to the place you assigned him. He mustn't go into battle with us. Otherwise, he may become our adversary in the battle! How could there be a better way for this fellow to reconcile himself with his lord? Wouldn't it be with the heads of these men?"

4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?

- Achish had been deceived by David, but the other Philistine rulers were suspicious of David and his men

— They thought David's motive was to serve himself and win back Saul's favor by betraying them

- "...adversary" - *satan*, an enlightening term in this context

— It gives important insight into the character and deceitfulness of the adversary of the believer

— In this context, an "adversary" would pretend to be an ally, but at a crucial time would turn against them and bring disaster

— This is precisely Paul's characterization of Satan (2 Cor 11:14; 1 Tim 5:14)

5 Is this not David, of whom they sing in the dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his **ten thousands**'?"

5 Is this not David, of whom they sing in the dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"

5 Isn't this the same David about whom the maidens sang when they were dancing, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, but David his ten thousands'?"

5 Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

- "...ten thousands" - in the maiden's song, the "ten thousands" refer specifically to Philistines!!!

When believers claim allegiance to any person, group, company, business, goal or endeavor, they represent God and the things that please Him.

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you *have indeed been* honest, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army are pleasing in my

sight; for I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, you are not pleasing in the sight of the governors.

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you *have been* upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army are pleasing in my sight; for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, you are not pleasing in the sight of the lords.

6 Then Achish summoned David and told him, "As surely as the LORD lives, you are trustworthy, and it seems good to me for you to campaign with me as part of the army. Indeed, I've not found any evil in you from the time you came to me until now. But the leaders don't approve of you.

6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

7 Now then, return and go in peace, so that you will not do *anything* wrong in the sight of the governors of the Philistines."

7 Now therefore return and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

7 Now return and go in peace, so you do nothing to displease the Philistine leaders."

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

- Achish was forced to send David and his men back to Ziklag to avoid conflict with the other Philistine commanders

— What a gracious gift God gave not only David, but Achish as well

— God cared enough for Achish to preserve his standing among these men for this time and for His eternal purposes

— God protected David from being in a position of leading himself and his men into fighting their own people, including Saul and David's best friend Jonathan

8 However, David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant since the day that I came before you, to this day, that I cannot go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

8 David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant from the day when I came before you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

8 David told Achish, "What have I done, and what have you found in your servant from the time I came before you until this very moment, that I shouldn't go out and fight the enemies

of your majesty?"

**8** And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

- David again asked, "What have I done?" (Cf. 17:29; 20:1; 26:18)

- It is difficult to imagine that David was being truthful to Achish by his statements; he probably wanted Achish to think that he was referring to him as "my lord" but he really meant Saul

— It seems incredible that David would really want to fight for the Philistines against the Israelites

9 But Achish replied to David, "I know that you are pleasing in my sight, like an angel of God; nevertheless the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us into the battle.'

9 But Achish replied to David, "I know that you are pleasing in my sight, like an angel of God; nevertheless the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us to the battle.'

9 Achish answered David, "I know that I'm pleased with you. You're like an angel of God. But the Philistine leaders have said, 'He mustn't go into battle with us.'

**9** And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

- For the third time Achish vindicated David (v3,6,9)

— Note the parallel with Pilate's three-fold vindication of Jesus (John 18:38; 19:4,6; Cf. Luke 23:22)

- David had been as a divine messenger to the Philistine king, a source of much blessing to him (Cf. Gen 12:2-3)

— He may have shared the booty that he had taken in his battles against his southern enemies with Achish (Cf. 27:7-10)

10 Now then, rise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you, and as soon as you have risen early in the morning and have light, leave."

10 Now then arise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you, and as soon as you have arisen early in the morning and have light, depart."

10 Now, get up early in the morning along with your lord's servants who came with you. Get up early in the morning, and go as soon as you have light."

10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11 So David got up early, he and his men, to leave in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

11 So David arose early, he and his men, to depart in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

11 So David and his men got up early in the morning to return to Philistine territory, while the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

**11** So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David's 16 months at Ziklag probably marked a low point in his spiritual walk. He displayed a lack of faith in going there, as though God could not protect him in his own Land. He was not honest with Achish after he arrived there, and it was only because of God's intervening grace that he was spared from having to fight his own people. Significantly, too, it was during this time that his men nearly mutinied against him, not being sure that he was leading them aright. He had been doing so well until this time, but here he definitely slipped.

Chronologically, the events of 28:3-25 now occurred.