

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 27:1-28:2

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1 Samuel 27:1-28:2

Verses 27:1-4

¹ *But David thought to himself, “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.”*

² *So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maak king of Gath. ³ David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. ⁴ When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.*

- “David thought to himself....” Without consulting the spiritual advisor God had sent him. Without asking God. David reasoned correctly that Saul’s pledge to him (see 26:21, 25) could not be trusted. His conclusion was that he should go to Philistia and settle among Israel’s enemies. He had tried this once before without success (see 21:10-15), and it had not worked.
- So David packed up with his troops and their families and moved to Gath.
- When Saul learned that David had gone to Gath, he stopped pursuing David in Israel as David had assumed he would.

Verses 5-7

⁵ *Then David said to Achish, “If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?”*

⁶ *So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. ⁷ David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.*

- David humbly asked Achish, king of Gath, for a town in which he and his men could live. Achish gave him the town of Ziklag where David lived for over a year.

Verses 8-12

⁸ *Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.)* ⁹ *Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish.*

¹⁰ *When Achish asked, “Where did you go raiding today?” David would say, “Against the Negev of Judah” or “Against the Negev of Jerahmeel” or “Against the Negev of the Kenites.”* ¹¹ *He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, “They might inform on us and say, ‘This is what David did.’” And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory.* ¹² *Achish trusted David and said to himself, “He has become so obnoxious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life.”*

- While David lived in Gath, he deceived Achish. He raided Philistine territory killing all the people in the cities he raided so that there was no one to report back to Achish what he had done and took their belongings for himself and his men.
- He told Achish that he was raiding Israeli cities. Achish believed that by raiding cities in Israel, David was making himself “obnoxious” to Israel.
- During his entire time in Gath, David was living a lie.

Verses 28:1-2

^{28:1} *In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, “You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army.”*

² *David said, “Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do.” Achish replied, “Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life.”*

- The day came when Achish decided to invade Israel. He made it clear to David that he expected David and his men to join him in battle against Israel.
- David agreed to fight with Achish against Israel. Achish trusted David completely. So much so that he made David and his men his personal bodyguards. Achish placed his life in David’s hands, but David was entirely deceitful. He was living a lie.

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