

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 29:1-30:6

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1 Samuel 29:1-30:6

(David had taken refuge from Saul in Philistine territory. He had moved his men with all their families into the area controlled by Achish. Achish had given David the city of Ziklag. While living among the Philistines, David had secretly been raiding Philistine cities. However, he killed all of the residents of these places so that Achish, though these cities had been attacked, could gather no evidence that incriminated David. David claimed that he was leading raids against Israel (read 1 Samuel 27:1-28:1). But the day came when the Philistines invaded Israel. Achish commanded that David join the Philistines in fighting against Israel. David agreed to do so and Achish made David and his men his personal bodyguard.)

Verses 1-11

¹ The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel. ² As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish. ³ The commanders of the Philistines asked, “What about these Hebrews?”

Achish replied, “Is this not David, who was an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already been with me for over a year, and from the day he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in him.”

⁴ But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish and said, “Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting. How better could he regain his master’s favor than by taking the heads of our own men? ⁵ Isn’t this the David they sang about in their dances:

**“Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands’?”**

⁶ So Achish called David and said to him, “As surely as the LORD lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army.

From the day you came to me until today, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don't approve of you. ⁷ Now turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers."

⁸ "But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

⁹ Achish answered, "I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God; nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.'¹⁰ Now get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you and leave in the morning as soon as it is light."

¹¹ So David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

- The Philistine and Israelite armies were drawn up for battle.
- David and his men were with the Philistine army. They were at the rear of the Philistine army with Achish, the Philistine king, serving as his personal bodyguard. The position of David and his troops at the end of the Philistine line of march put them in a perfect place to attack the Philistines from behind once the battle began. Since David's men surrounded the king, they would be able to capture Achish or even kill him without resistance.
- The commanders of the Philistine army did not trust David and saw the disadvantage that David's presence presented. So they brought the matter to Achish's attention. Achish insisted that he had confidence of David's support. But the commanders of his army strongly insisted that David and his men be sent back to Ziklag. Their arguments prevailed and Achish agreed to send David and his men home.
- While Achish told David that he found no fault in him, and personally wished David to remain with the Philistine army, he informed David that he and his men must go back to Ziklag. Though David protested, Achish insisted that David go home. So David and his men withdrew from the battle and went back to Ziklag

Verses 30:1-5

^{30:1} David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, ² and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

³ When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴ So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵ David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.

- David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day after they left the Philistine camp. They discovered that the Amalekites had attacked and burned it to the ground. (The Amalekites were descendants of Esau, the brother Jacob had cheated of his birthright (see Genesis 36:12). They had never been reconciled to Israel and had fought against Israel at Rephidim (see Exodus 17:8-13). For opposing Israel, they had been placed under God's judgment (see Deuteronomy 25:19). Saul had been ordered to fulfill God's judgment on the Amalekites (see 1 Samuel 15:2-3). However, Saul failed to act in accordance with God's command (see 1 Samuel 15:10-19). For failing to act in accordance with God's instructions, Saul lost the kingdom and David was chosen by God to succeed him as king. The Amalekites' attack on Ziklag was apparently their revenge. Seeing that the city given to David was left defenseless, they moved in and took the city. However, they did not kill the people who lived there. They took them captive.
- David's family and the families of his men had all been taken captive by the Amalekites.
- David and his men mourned until they were exhausted with mourning.

Verse 6

⁶ David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

- David's men were so upset by what had happened that they were ready to execute David. But these hard times caused David to seek God, again. He realized that his help did not come from his own plans (See 1 Samuel 27:1) but from trusting and obeying the Lord.

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