

# 1 Samuel 27 Commentary

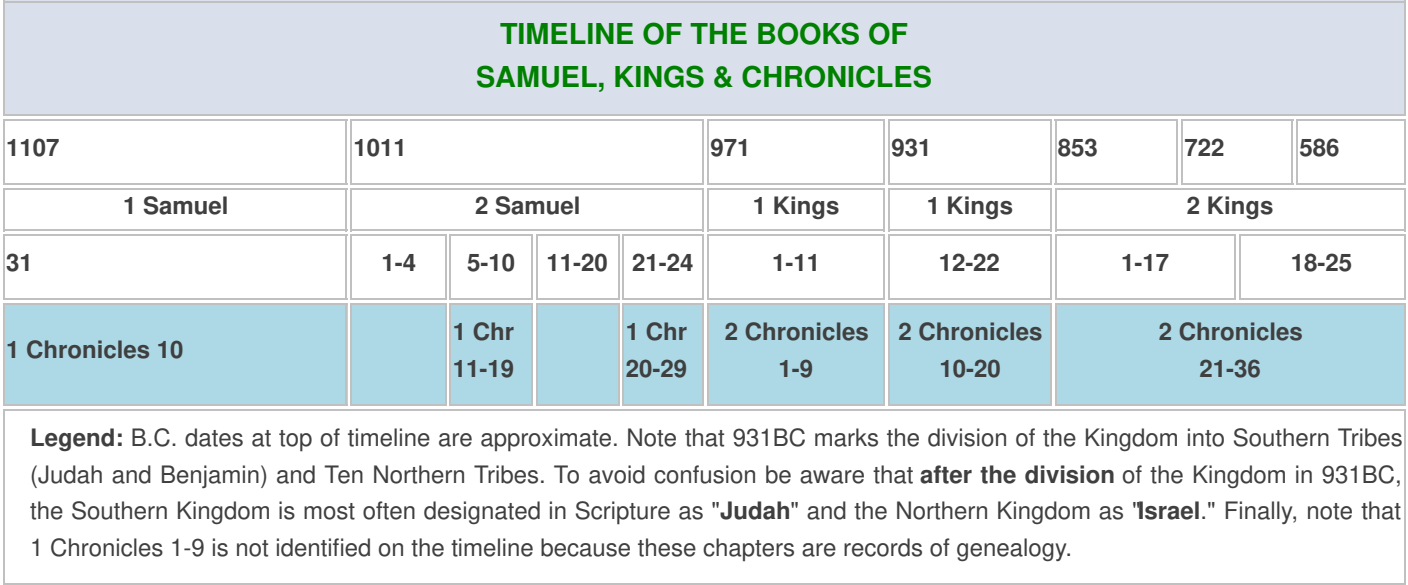
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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[1 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll



[The Ryrie Study Bible](#)

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Map on Left [ESV Global Study Bible](#), on right [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#)  
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Click to enlarge -  
Identify #13 in region of CARMEL/MAON.  
Then follow yellow line to #14 = GATH,  
and then SW to #15 = ZIKLAG.  
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1 Samuel 27:1 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

- **David:** 1Sa 16:1,13 23:17 25:30 Ps 116:11 Pr 13:12 Isa 40:27-31 51:12 Mt 14:31 Mk 4:40 2Co 7:5
- **I will:** This was a rash conclusion: God had caused him to be anointed king of Israel, and promised his accession to the throne, and had so often interposed in his behalf, that he was authorised to believe the very reverse.
- **there is nothing:** 1Sa 22:5 Ex 14:12 Nu 14:3 Pr 3:5,6 Isa 30:15,16 La 3:26,27
- **into the land:** 1Sa 27:10,11 21:10-15 28:1,2 29:2-11 30:1-3
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Dale Ralph Davis** (borrow [Looking on the heart](#)) divides this story as follows...

David's plan, 1Sa 27:1-4

David's town, 1Sa 27:5-7

David's practice, 1Sa 27:8-12

David's dilemma, 1Sa 28:1-2

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 3:5-6+ Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Psalms 31:15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.

Psalms 42:1-11 **± (A POSITIVE EXAMPLE OF TALKING TO YOURSELF)** For the choir director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. **(POSITIVE TALKING TO SELF OR "PREACHING A SERMON TO YOURSELF!")** 5 **Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence. 6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me. 8 The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, A prayer to the God of my life. 9 I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" 10 As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.**

Psalms 56:1-4 **(NOTE - THIS WAS WRITTEN YEARS BEFORE AFTER THE EVENTS OF 1Sa 21:10-15!)** For the choir director; according to Jonath elem rehokim. A Mikhtam of David, **when the Philistines seized him in Gath.** Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. 2 My foes have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. 3 **When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You** (ED: NOTE YOU CAN WRITE INSPIRED PSALMS BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN YOU WILL ALWAYS PRACTICE THEM!). 4 **In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?**

### WHEN VERTICAL VISION BECOMES HORIZONTAL VISION

This is a strange chapter in the life of a man after God's own heart and sadly it was not a momentary lapse of strangeness, but a period that lasted 16 months. It is a strange chapter because David becomes a servant of a pagan king. It is a strange chapter because the name of God is not mentioned once. It is a strange chapter because there is not one suggestion that David sought the LORD during this 16 months. It is a strange (better sad) chapter because most writers agree that David did not pen one psalm during this 16 month period! He went from a physical wilderness to a spiritual wilderness! But why? In a word, he had a faith failure because of his fear focus! He feared man (Saul), not God. How do we know? Because if you fear God, you'll have *nothing* else to fear (Mt 10:28+).

In these next 3 chapters we find that David is "running on empty," emotionally worn out and essentially in a backslidden state spiritually. But God won't let His children remain that way forever, and in David's case He brought an Amalekite raid on Ziklag, burning the town and taking the families of all 600 men (cf the disciplining hand of the LORD - cf Hebrews 12:5-11, Ps 119:67, 71). It was only then that David repented and returned to the LORD summarized in the crucial verse 1Sa 30:6+.

**Alan Redpath** says, "He traded the smile of God for the grin of the devil." "At one moment we find David facing circumstances calculated to tempt him to blazing anger, and immediate retaliation. At the next moment, he is surrounded by such constant and overwhelming attacks from his lifelong enemy that he is discouraged and almost ready to give up. Here is the anvil upon which the character of a man of God is hammered out, the fiery furnace through which he is melted and poured as steel for the glory of his God. Thus the iron gets into a man's soul. The language of David at this point in his life is in the minor key of depression and sadness,

**Then David said to himself** - Note all the personal pronouns in this verse but no mention of Yahweh. Literally "David spoke to his heart," not a bad thing to do if one is speaking truth and/or meditating on Scripture (cf Ps 119:9-10, 11, cf Ps 42:5) Beware of speaking to self! When **horizontal vision** (SELF FOCUSED) replaces or overrides vertical vision (GOD FOCUSED) we are danger of falling prey to unbelief and the consequences thereof. David was walking by sight (horizontal vision), not by faith (vertical vision). David reversed Pr 3:5+ and instead of trusting in God trusted in **himself** and leaned on his own understanding. How did David reason? Like all natural men (even saved men and women at times) David feared man and forgot God. His faith flagged, while his fear "flourished." Pr 29:25 proved true in his life "The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." David was ensnared by despair, defeatist thinking, discouragement. Samuel had told David he would be the next king. Jonathan had assured him he would be king. But when he took his eyes off of God's promise, he began to doubt. He was like Peter who walked on the waves until he took his eyes off of His Lord and began to sink. As an aside what had Saul just said to David (in their last face to face meeting)? "Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David, **for I will not harm you again** because my life was precious in your sight this day. Behold, I have played the fool and have committed a serious error." (1Sa 26:21+) Clearly David did not trust Saul, and we can hardly blame him for Saul was a bitter man and his bitterness could spill over in anger at any moment (**THOUGHT** - Beware if you are harboring bitterness to another human being!)

When we start to look at God through our circumstances  
instead of looking at our circumstances through God's eyes,  
we will lose faith, patience, and courage, and the enemy will triumph!  
-- Warren Wiersbe

**Dale Ralph Davis** on **said to himself** - David has a special niche in salvation history but he shares common dilemmas with all the Lord's people. Covenant kingship is not at stake in our situations, but we still know the subtle danger of leaning on something else and less than the everlasting arms. Our concern is practical: Is there any way I might avoid deceiving myself with a substitute? How can I, how should I, go about leaning on Yahweh? **Answer:** By talking to yourself, by talking truth to yourself, especially by speaking to yourself the truth about your God. I am only suggesting a reversal of David's procedure in verse 1. I had a reason for translating it literally: "**Then David said to his heart, 'Now I am going to be swept away one day by the hand of Saul....'**" David was talking to himself and what he kept saying to himself determined his action. What you say and keep saying to the center of you will direct your way. All of us propagandize our souls, that is, we constantly talk to ourselves. (Not many do this audibly, but we continually do it, and, if you don't believe it, you haven't been listening, and your self is probably angry with you for being so unreceptive!) 5 How crucial it is to feed our souls true propaganda, especially about the adequacy of our God. (borrow [Looking on the Heart](#))

**David Guzik** - What we say in our heart has a tremendous power to shape our thinking, our actions, even our whole destiny. **I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul:** This is what David said in his heart. That was a word of discouragement coming from a heart tired of trusting God for His continued deliverance. In his discouragement David forgot God's past deliverance.

**Spurgeon** - I remember on one occasion, to my shame, being sad and doubtful of heart, and a kind friend took out a paper and read to me a short extract from a discourse upon faith. I very soon detected the author of the extract; my friend was reading to me from one of my own sermons. Without saying a word he just left it to my own conscience, for he had convicted me of committing the very fault against which I had so earnestly declaimed. (See similar illustration [Prone to Wander](#))

**A W Pink** - After Saul's departure (1 Samuel 26:25), David took stock of his situation, but unfortunately he left God out of his calculations. During tedious and trying delays, and especially when outward things seem to be all going against us, there is grave danger of giving way to unbelief. Then it is we are very apt to forget former mercies, and fear the worst. And when faith staggers, obedience wavers, and self-expedients are frequently employed, which later, involve us in great difficulties. So it was now with the one whose varied life we are seeking to trace. As David considered the situation he was still in, remembered the inconstancy and treachery of Saul, things appeared very gloomy to him. Knowing full well the king's jealousy, and perhaps reasoning that he would now regard him with a still more evil eye, since God so favored him, David feared the worst. **"The moment in which faith attains**

**any triumph, is often one of peculiar danger.** Self-confidence may be engendered by success, and pride may spring out of honor that humility has won; or else, if faithfulness, after having achieved its victory, still finds itself left in the midst of danger and sorrow, the hour of triumph may be succeeded by one of undue depression and sorrowful disappointment. And thus it was with David. He had obtained this great moral victory; but his circumstances were still unchanged. Saul yet continued to be king of Israel: himself remained a persecuted outcast. As the period, when he had before spared the life of Saul, had been followed by days of lengthened sorrow, so he probably anticipated an indefinite prolongation of similar sufferings, and his heart quailed at the prospect" (B. W. Newton).

**Reformation Study Bible** - Despite recently learned lessons of faith (1Sa 26:10), David tires of being a fugitive in constant danger and gives in to the human fear that Saul will eventually succeed in destroying him. David's anxiety may be heightened since he and his men have their families with them (1Sa 27:3). For the second time (1Sa 21:10), David seeks refuge among Israel's archenemies, the Philistines.

**J D Greear** - 1 Samuel 27–2 Samuel 1 is called the "Accession Narrative" because it shows the downfall of Saul but the accession of David to the throne (Firth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 283) (Exalting Jesus in 1-2 Samuel)

**"Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul** - What has David just in essence prayed in 1Sa 26:24? "may He deliver me from all distress." So much for trusting in that prayer! Sadly there is not one mention of God in chapter 27. How quickly our fallen flesh can attack our heart and mind, so that we so quickly forget our great God and His great promises now and eternally! Woe is me!

What is David's "prophecy" (not really, but "will" speaks of a future occurrence)? It is a "false prophecy!" Who is he consulting? Himself, not His God. He has been fleeing for so long, he has convinced himself that Saul will catch him and kill him. He is ignoring the truth that God had anointed him to be the next king. As **Spurgeon** says "he certainly had no ground for thinking that God's anointing him by Samuel was intended to be left as an empty unmeaning act." He clearly has forgotten or at least downplayed in his mind the many times God had delivered him from death (three errant spear tosses by Saul, four Spirit induced prophesying events protecting him at Naioth, one very close call at "Slippery Rock," and two close encounters of the Saul kind at a cave and a camp, etc). Memory is a horrible thing to lose, especially if it is the memory of the mighty acts of the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God Who is complete control of everything (no exception clauses!)

**THOUGHT** - America is all about a heart healthy diets which, as a physician, I think is very commendable. Even better though, believers should pursue a heart healthy spiritual diet which includes frequent times of remembering our Father's great and marvelous works in our life, something we will even do in Heaven, so it is good practice now! (cf Rev 15:3-4+).

**There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines** (see [map above](#)) - When you think there is nothing better than to run, you have forgotten your Jesus, Who the book of Hebrews repeatedly says is "BETTER" (angels, Moses, old covenant - Heb 7:22, cf better promises - Heb 8:6, etc.) With eyes off of His God (HORIZONTAL VISION IN CONTROL - See importance of believer's maintaining VERTICAL VISION!) and His promises including even words that he himself had penned years before (see Ps , all he can see is Saul and result is his faith morphs into fear. He uses human reasoning, and logically determines there is one place Saul won't seek him and that is in enemy territory.

**J. Vernon McGee** points out, "This is obviously a departure from the high plane of faith that characterizes the life of David. It is a period of just letting down. We find that the same thing happened to Abraham, it happened to Isaac and it happened to Jacob. In fact, it seems that most of God's men have had this low period in their lives. Perhaps you have been in a dark valley for a long time and you wonder if you will ever come through it. There seems to be no solution to your problems. Well, if it is any comfort to you, there are many others who have been in that same valley. It is a well-worn route."

**Pink** points out, "After Saul's departure, David took stock of his situation, but unfortunately, he left God out of his calculations. During tedious and trying delays and especially when outward things seem to be all going against us, there is grave danger of giving way to unbelief. Then it is we are very apt to forget former mercies and fear the worst. And when faith staggers, obedience wavers, and self-expedience is frequently employed which later involve us in greater difficulties."

**Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand**- David reaches his conclusion and is convinced he will be safe outside of Israel as Saul will give up the chase. His fallen flesh has "reasoned" with him and given him justification for fleeing to Israel's most bitter enemy....and to do it a second time (cf David's short sojourn to Gath in 1Sa 21:10-15+, 1Sa 22:1+)! In effect David was saying something akin to **"The End Justifies the Means!"** What is absent in this section? The statement "and David inquired of the LORD" is sadly not seen for more than 3 chapters (finally 1Sa 30:6-8+), which covers 16 months. There is no record of consulting prophets. There is no record of calling for the ephod. There are no psalms attributed to this time in David's life.

**THOUGHT**- It's hard to have a psalm (song) in your heart when you out of the will of God!

I should add that some like F B Meyer think he did write some psalms during this period “The psalms which with more or less probability may be assigned to this period of David’s life are marked with growing sadness and depression. Among them may be reckoned the 10th, the 13th, the 17th, the 22nd, the 25th, the 44th, and perhaps the 40th and the 69th.”

**Paul Apple** says it this way that there is "No sign of David inquiring after God in this passage; no waiting upon the Lord for guidance; no evidence of faith; no clinging to God’s promises; It is always a problem when one leaves the promised land without explicit divine command."....Let each child of God take solemn warning. When clouds gather around, and faith is beginning to weaken, let us not in sudden panic ‘speedily escape into the land of the Philistines,’ but rigidly and persistently continue to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and wait patiently for Him (cf Isa 40:31+)." ([Commentary](#))

**Ray Pritchard** - In those words you have the x-ray of a discouraged soul. It shows us what discouragement can do to you and me. First, discouragement destroyed his perspective. It all begins when David starts to think about his situation. For nearly ten years he’s been running from Saul. Ten years is a big chunk out of a man’s life. Maybe he was tired on this particular day. No one could blame him for feeling down. We’ve all been in the same place. But this time his mind jumps from one negative thought to another until at last he reaches a hopeless conclusion: “One of these days Saul is going to get me. I don’t know where or when or how but I can’t run like this forever. It may not come for a year or it may happen tomorrow but sure as sunrise, it’s going to happen.” The future looks bleak because he has decided to focus on the negative instead of the positive. As I said, we can excuse and even understand such thinking except for two key facts. First, God had promised that David would be the next king. That wasn’t a prediction the way political pundits predict the next president. No, it was a rock-solid promise and David could take it to the bank. Meaning that Saul would never kill him no matter how bleak the circumstances might appear. Second, David had just emerged from a string of three remarkable spiritual victories. He had spared Saul’s life once in the cave at En Gedi (I Samuel 24). Then he had spared Nabal’s life when Abigail interceded (I Samuel 25). Then he had very recently spared Saul’s life again when he crept into the camp and found Saul sleeping (I Samuel 26). Perhaps it isn’t surprising that discouragement came hard on the heels of such remarkable victories. It is often that way for the children of God. We could almost say that when things are going well, watch out because you are set up to be blindsided by temptation of one kind or another. ([Ziklag is Burning](#))

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**Perish** (destroy, sweep away)([05595](#)) [sāpāh](#) is a verb meaning to scrape or sweep away, to destroy, to perish, to be captured. Patterson says "

The basic image of the root seems to be that of sweeping—both the process of heaping things together and of sweeping them away (cf. Arabic *saā* ‘to raise and carry away dust’). The root may sometimes be confused with *’āsap* or *yāsap*. The root is usually used in a hostile sense, particularly in contexts of judgment. David spent much of his life being swept away before his enemies; later, facing God’s judgment for sin, he avoids the choice of being swept away before his enemies (1Ch 21:12–13). The judgment of God against sin is the subject of several contexts. Lot and his family were warned so that they would not be consumed with Sodom (Gen 19:15ff.). The prophets repeatedly warned apostate Israel that God would heap misfortunes upon them (e.g. Isa 7:20). Jeremiah (Jer 12:4) stated that man’s sin was so serious that even the natural world was affected by it. God’s judgment should occasion prayer and intercession. Abraham pleaded with his heavenly visitors for the life of the righteous in Sodom (Ge 18:23f.). The Psalmist, concerned that God’s will and reputation be evidenced in his life, prayed for his enemies to be swept away (Ps 40:14)]. (see online [Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**Sapah** - 19v - add(2), captured(1), destroy(2), heap(1), perish(2), remove(1), snatched away(1), sweep away(2), swept away(6). Gen. 18:23; Gen. 18:24; Gen. 19:15; Gen. 19:17; Num. 16:26; Num. 32:14; Deut. 29:19; Deut. 32:23; 1 Sam. 12:25; 1 Sam. 26:10; 1 Sam. 27:1; 1 Chr. 21:12; Ps. 40:14; Prov. 13:23; Isa. 7:20; Isa. 13:15; Isa. 30:1; Jer. 12:4

**Note especially these other two uses in First Samuel which give you a sense of how discouraged David is at this point in his life...**

1 Samuel 12:25+ (SAMUEL TO ISRAEL WHO WANTED A KING LIKE ALL THE OTHER NATIONS!) “But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king **will be swept away.**”

1 Samuel 26:10+ David (SPEAKING ABOUT KING SAUL, EVEN GIVING A PROPHECY) also said, “As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and **perish.**”

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Once upon a time the devil decided to have a garage sale. He did it because he wanted to clear out some of his old tools to make room for new ones. After he set up his wares, a fellow dropped by to see what he had. Arrayed on a long table were all the tricks of his infernal trade. Each tool had a price tag. In one corner was a shiny implement labeled “Anger—\$250,” next to it a curved tool labeled “Sloth—\$380.” As the man searched, he found “Criticism—\$500” and “Jealousy—\$630.” Out of the corner



of his eye, the man spotted a beaten-up tool with a price tag of \$12,000. Curious, the man asked the devil why he would offer a worn-out piece of junk for such an exorbitant price. The devil said it was expensive because he used it so much. "What is it?" the man asked. The answer came back, "It is discouragement. It always works when nothing else will." Surely all of us can testify to the truth of that little fable. We all know from hard experience how the devil uses discouragement to keep us from moving ahead. When anger won't stop us, when lust can do us no harm, when envy finds no foothold, discouragement always works. It is the devil's number one tool. The dictionary defines discouragement as "anything that makes us less confident and hopeful." Another way to look at it is to say that encouragement is the act of putting courage into someone. Therefore, discouragement is anything that takes the courage out. That's a dangerous state to be in because a discouraged person makes many mistakes. You won't be surprised to learn that David's life offers an excellent example of what discouragement can do to a man of God. The story is told in I Samuel 27-30, a passage little known to most of us but one which is perfectly relevant today. - ([Ziklag is Burning](#) by Ray Pritchard - his sermons are always worth checking for "pearls!")

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**ILLUSTRATION OF SPEAKING TO YOUR HEART (POSITIVELY)** - Soul talk is quite a familiar idea in the Bible. Remember how Jesus depicted the farmer whose silos and bank account were full; the farmer says, "I will say to my soul, 'Soul [imagine!], you have ample goods laid up for many years ...'" (Luke 12:19RSV+). There is a whole world and life view in that statement. The junk you tell yourself can make a difference. Actually, David himself knew how to talk to himself (Ps. 62:5NIV). Happily, sometimes others will rivet our minds on the right propaganda. It was 1854, Charles Spurgeon's first year of ministry in London. Cholera struck. One family after another called Spurgeon to the bedside of loved ones and almost daily he stood by a grave. At first Spurgeon threw himself into his visitation of the sick with all his youthful vigor. Soon, however, "weary in body, and sick at heart," he began to think he was about to succumb. He was on the Great Dover Road dragging himself home from a funeral when a large broadside posted in a shoemaker's window arrested his attention. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it. In the center of the large sheet, in good bold handwriting stood the words,

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

The words of Psalm 91:9-10 took immediate effect. Spurgeon reported: ["Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secure, refreshed.... I went on with my visitation of the dying, in a calm and peaceful spirit."](#) ([Spurgeon's Treasury of David, Psalm 91](#)) In any case, lean on your true security, be careful what you speak to your heart. That is the exhortation of this God-less text. (borrow Dale Ralph Davis' [Looking on the Heart](#))

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**C H Spurgeon - 1 Samuel 27:1** (Morning and evening)

"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." — 1 Samuel 27:1

The thought of David's heart at this time was a false thought, because he certainly had no ground for thinking that God's anointing him by Samuel was intended to be left as an empty unmeaning act. On no one occasion had the Lord deserted his servant; he had been placed in perilous positions very often, but not one instance had occurred in which divine interposition had not delivered him. The trials to which he had been exposed had been varied; they had not assumed one form only, but many—yet in every case He Who sent the trial (**ED: DON'T MISS THAT STATEMENT "HE WHO SENT..." AS IT MAY HELP YOU CONSIDER IT ALL JOY WHEN YOUR NEXT TRIAL COMES!**) had also graciously ordained a way of escape (**ED: SOUNDS LIKE THE FAITHFUL GOD OF 1Cor 10:13!**). David could not put his finger upon any entry in his diary, and say of it, "Here is evidence that the Lord will forsake me," (**ED: BUT WE CAN BELOVED - JUST READ Heb 13:5-6+ WHICH DAVID SHOULD HAVE KNOWN >> Dt 31:6+ and cf David's own words - see Ps 56 [above](#)**) for the entire tenor of his past life proved the very reverse. He should have argued from what God had done for him, that God would be his Defender still (**ED: Ps 27:1 and Ps 28:8 both by David**). But is it not just in the same way that we doubt God's help? Is it not mistrust without a cause? Have we ever had the shadow of a reason to doubt our Father's goodness? Have not his lovingkindnesses been marvelous (Lam 3:22-23)? Has He once failed to justify our trust? Ah, no! our God has not left us **at any time**. We have had dark nights (**ED: SPURGEON SUFFERED FROM BOUTS OF DEPRESSION**), but the star of love has shone forth amid the blackness; we have been in stern conflicts, but over our head he has held aloft the shield of our defense. We have gone through many trials, but never to our detriment, always to our advantage (**ED: Ps 119:67, 71**); and the conclusion from our past experience is, that He who has been with us in six troubles, will not forsake us in the seventh (Job 5:19). What we have known of our faithful God, proves that He will keep us to the end. Let us not, then, reason contrary to evidence. How can we ever be so ungenerous as to doubt our God? Lord, throw down the Jezebel of our unbelief, and let the dogs devour it. AMEN AND AMEN!

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**F B Meyer - 1 Samuel 27:1 And David said, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.**

What a fit of despondency and unbelief was here! We can hardly believe that this is he who in so many Psalms had boasted of the shepherd care of God, who had so often insisted on the safety of God's pavilion. It was a fainting fit, brought on by the bad air he

had breathed amid the evil associations of Adullam's cave. Had not God promised to take care of him? Was not his future already guaranteed by the promises that he should succeed to the kingdom? But nothing availed to check his precipitate flight into the land of the Philistines.

Bitterly he rued this mistake. The prevarication and deceit to which he was driven; the anguish of having to march with Achish against his own people; the sack and burning of Ziklag these were the price he had to pay for his mistrust. Unbelief always brings many other bitter sorrows in its train, and leads the soul to cry,

"How long, O Lord? Wilt Thou forget me forever?  
How long wilt Thou hide thy face from me?"

Let us beware of losing heart, as David did. Look not at Saul, but at God, who is omnipotent; not at the winds and waves, but at Him who walks across the water; not at what may come, but at that which is— for the glorious Lord is roundabout thee to deliver thee. He shall deliver thy soul from death, thine eyes from tears, and thy feet from falling. He that has helped will help. What He has done, He will do. God always works from less to more, never from more to less. Dost thou not hear— hast thou not heard— his voice saying, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee? What, then, can man do unto thee? Every weapon used against thee shall go blunt on an invisible shield!

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#### **G C Morgan - David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.—1 Sam. 27.1**

Once more we see David possessed by fear, and passing over to dwell for a time among the Philistines. Again we have to say that we can understand his action. Long and weary indeed had been his period of suffering. There came upon him the sense of depression. For the moment he forgot that his soul was bound up in the bundle of life with Jehovah God. It is easy to forget this, "when all around tumultuous seems." Looking at circumstances, there seemed to David no hope. And so he went to live in Gath. It was a sorry period. He made occasional raids upon other ancient enemies of his race, and with success. In order to hide this from those among whom he dwelt, he was driven to telling untruths. When a man is mastered by fear through failure of faith, and consequently occupies a false position, he is always in grave danger; of violating some principle of his loyalty. It is impossible to see David taking refuge in Gath, without recognizing that he had lost for the time being the clear vision of God which made him strong against Goliath. The reading of this story inevitably suggests a contrast between David and his greater Son. David was the anointed king, and he was persecuted by the rejecting kin. All this was repeated in the history of Jesus. The contrast, however, is marked. No fear ever made the Anointed One quail. He never crossed over to the enemy to find personal safety. He often spoke of the fact that men would kill Him, but always ended such foretelling with the prophecy of His ultimate triumph. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

**1 Samuel 27:2 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.**

- **the six hundred men:** 1Sa 25:13 30:8
- **Achish:** 1Sa 21:10 1Ki 2:40
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

1 Samuel 21:10+ (**DAVID'S FIRST SOJOURN TO GATH**) Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. 11 But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?" 12 David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. 13 So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insantly in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? 15 "Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?"

1 Samuel 23:5+ (NOT THAT LONG BEFORE DAVID HAD KILLED MANY PHILISTINES - THEY MUST NOT HAVE BEEN FROM GATH!) So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines; and he led away their livestock and struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.

1 Samuel 23:14+ (WHAT DAVID SEEMS TO HAVE FORGOTTEN AS WE BEGIN CHAPTER 27) David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul

sought him every day, but **God did not deliver him into his hand.** 15 Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. 16 And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged (**STRENGTHENED**- SAME WORD 1Sa 30:6+) him in God. 17 Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."

## **FEAR OF MAN PROMPTS MOVE TO PAGAN-VILLE**

**So** - (means for this reason, therefore - "so that" is slightly different as this phrase usually signifies purpose or result in what follows). Watch this tiny conjunction which like a hinge can open some interesting doors. In this case, David's reasoning within himself comes to a conclusion to move on down the road to Philistia!

**David arose and crossed over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to [Achish](#) the son of Maach, king of Gath** - Crossed over gives the picture of changing sides. In sports we would say something like "David, you are out of bounds!" Bad move David! You should have sat still and waited on the LORD (cf Isa 40:31+! - Easy for me to say! Not so easy to practice!) So first notice that there is no mention of David inquiring of the LORD before making this major move. Ostensibly, this move might not even be safe considering he is Israelite most hated by survivors of a man named Goliath (cf 1Sa 17:23), not to mention other Gathites who had probably participated in his capture on his first southerly sojourn to their fair idol worshiping city (cf 1Sa 21:10-12, Ps 56:1). But David weighed the odds, and concluded there was greater danger with one **paranoid** king than with one **pagan** king.

What starts as a **fleeting thought** becomes a **plan**,  
a **plan** becomes a **commitment**, and eventually  
a **commitment** becomes a **lifestyle**!  
-- Ray Pritchard

**Pink** - David went over to the Lord's enemies. Would you have believed it: he who killed Goliath, sought a refuge in Goliath's land; he who smote the Philistines trusts in the Philistines; nay, more, he who was Israel's champion, becomes the chamberlain to Achish

**Bergen** - The first time he had entered Gath armed and alone from the royal household in Gibeah—a circumstance that appeared threatening to Achish, who knew nothing of the conflict between Saul and David. However, this time David was entering as an infamous outlaw—a would-be usurper of Saul's throne who was so feared by the Israelite monarch that he had repeatedly sent thousands of men into the desert to track David down. The Philistines' awareness of this conflict is evidenced by their timing a raid on Israel to coincide with one of Saul's forays against David (cf. 1Sa 23:27–28). Acting in accordance with the timeless dictum "My enemy's enemy is my friend," the Philistine ruler welcomed David, his men, and their families into his territory and probably considered them to be mercenaries (cf. 1Sa 28:1). (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**TSK** - This measure of David's, in uniting himself to the enemies of his God and people, was highly blameable; was calculated to alienate the affections of the Israelites; and led to equivocation, if not downright falsehood.

Paul Apple asks "What type of defeatist thinking enters our mind – despite all that God has done for us in His grace and His providence in providing for us and protecting us?" Do we ever get tired of trying to follow the Lord and just lay aside any efforts at seeking Him and take matters into our own hands? What has been our experience in those times?

**Spurgeon** - Worn out by the persecution of Saul, in an evil moment his heart failed him, and he said, "I shall surely fall one day by the hand of Saul." This was a dangerous mood. Always be afraid of being afraid. Failing faith means failing strength. Do not regard despondency as merely a loss of joy, view it as draining away your spiritual life. Struggle against it, for it often happens that when faith ebbs sin comes to the flood. He who does not comfortably trust God will soon seek after comfort somewhere else, and David did so: without asking divine direction he fled to the court of the Philistine chieftain Achish, hoping to be quiet there (from [Ziklag or David Encouraging Himself in God](#))

**Ray Pritchard** observes that David's "negative" thinking "led him to an impulsive decision. You can certainly say the decision to go live with the Philistines was impulsive. You can also say it was just plain dumb. Again, David has his reasons. The big one is that by going to the Philistines he will make Saul quit chasing him. The other one is a bit more subtle. You may recall this isn't the first time David has lived with Goliath's people. He did it before, back in chapter 21, when he lied to Ahimelech to get bread for his men. That episode ended in humiliation with David slobbering on his beard to make Achish think he had gone nuts. So now David turns around and makes the same mistake all over again. There is a great warning for all of us in this. One act of spiritual compromise—no matter how small—makes it easier to compromise the next time. Even a tiny step in the wrong direction sets us up to take the next step sooner or later. Third, it forced him into a position of compromise. God's word was crystal clear: The children of Israel were not to mix with the surrounding nations. Over and over the warning was given and every time somebody tried it, disaster resulted. David



knew all that and he did it anyway. I'm sure if you had asked David as he led his band toward Gath, "Are you deserting God?" he would have said no. He probably would have been insulted by the very question. "Me, desert God? Are you kidding? I believe everything I always believed." "But David, these are not God's people." "It makes no difference. I'm going to go live there for a while until the pressure is off. It's not a big deal. I can have my quiet time in Gath just as easily as I can in Israel." We always have an excuse when we compromise. It seems logical enough to us. Some of us are doing it right now. We are involved in shady deals, compromising relationships, and business arrangements that we know aren't quite right. We're going along with some things that would embarrass us if anyone else knew. We're still in church this morning, still singing the songs of Zion, but in our hearts, we know we've taken the low road. Discouragement does that. It leads us slowly downward until we end up doing things we would never dreamed we would do. What starts as a fleeting thought becomes a plan, a plan becomes a commitment, and eventually a commitment becomes a lifestyle. As we read on, we find things rapidly getting worse. His compromise involved innocent people in his wrong decision. First Samuel 27:2 says that "David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maoch king of Gath." Each man brought his family with him. That means there were at least 600 men, 600 women, and who knows how many children involved. All now living with the enemy because of David's choice. The same thing happens to us. Whenever we begin to compromise, we take other people with us. Naturally, we don't think about it at the time, but soon enough we discover that our impulsiveness has hurt a lot of innocent people. If you keep on reading, you find one fact that may surprise you. David's compromise ushered in a period of temporary peace and prosperity. ([Ziklag is Burning](#))

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**Easton's Bible Dictionary - Achish** (angry), perhaps only a general title of royalty applicable to the Philistine kings. (1.) The king with whom David sought refuge when he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 21:10-15). He is called Abimelech in the superscription of Ps. 34. It was probably this same king to whom David a second time repaired at the head of a band of 600 warriors, and who assigned him Ziklag, whence he carried on war against the surrounding tribes (1 Sam. 27:5-12). Achish had great confidence in the valour and fidelity of David (1 Sam. 28:1,2), but at the instigation of his courtiers did not permit him to go up to battle along with the Philistine hosts (1 Sam. 29:2-11). David remained with Achish a year and four months. (2.) Another king of Gath, probably grandson of the foregoing, to whom the two servants of Shimei fled. This led Shimei to go to Gath in pursuit of them, and the consequence was that Solomon put him to death (1 Kings 2:39-46).

**ISBE - ACHISH** - a'-kish ('akhish): King of the city of Gath in the days of David. His father's name is given as Maoch (1 Sam 27:2), and Maacah (1 Ki 2:39). David sought the protection of Achish when he first fled from Saul, and just after his visit to Nob (1 Sam 21:10-15). Fearing rough treatment or betrayal by Achish, he feigned madness. But this made him unwelcome, whereupon he fled to the Cave of Adullam (1 Sam 22:1). Later in his fugitive period David returned to Gath to be hospitably received by Achish (1 Sam 27:1 ff), who gave him the town of Ziklag for his home. A year later, when the Philistines invaded the land of Israel, in the campaign which ended so disastrously for Saul (1 Sam 31), Achish wished David to participate (1 Sam 28:1-2), but the lords of the Philistines objected so strenuously, when they found him and his men with the forces of Achish, that Achish was compelled to send them back. Achish must have been a young man at this time, for he was still ruling forty years later at the beginning of Solomon's reign (1 Ki 2:39). He is mentioned as Abimelech in the title of Ps 34.

Irving Jensen: a. This is the fourth type of "refuge" David has sought. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel : a self-study guide](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the significance of Gath in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Gath, along with [Ashdod](#), [Ashkelon](#), [Gaza](#), and Ekron, is one of five major cities belonging to the [Philistines](#) before Israel conquered them (Joshua 13:3, 1 Samuel 5:7-10; 6:17). The word *Gath* means "winepress." Although scholars are not certain of its exact location, Gath was situated somewhere on the border between Judah and Philistia (1 Samuel 21:10; 1 Chronicles 18:1).

The [Anakim](#), a race of giants left over from the earlier Canaanite population, settled in Gath after [Joshua](#) drove them out of the Promised Land (Joshua 11:22). Gath is known primarily as the home of the [giant Goliath](#) who was killed by an unlikely hero named David (1 Samuel 17:4). Later in his life, [David](#) led a series of battles against the Philistines; in those skirmishes, four giants who lived in Gath were killed (2 Samuel 27:22), including one described as "a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number, and he also was descended from the giants" (2 Samuel 27:20, ESV).

When the Philistines defeated the Israelites in the time of Eli, they captured the ark of the covenant and took it back to Ashdod and placed it in their pagan temple, next to their image of Dagon. After God broke the image of Dagon and afflicted the people of Ashdod with tumors, they sent the ark of the covenant to Gath, but trouble soon followed: "After they had moved it, the Lord's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors" (2 Samuel 5:9). The people of Gath demanded the ark be moved yet again. Eventually, the people of Philistia sent the ark back home to Israel.

Years later, Gath became a refuge for David when he fled from King Saul, who was trying to kill him (1 Samuel 21:10-15; cf. Psalm

56). King Achish of Gath was wary of David, having heard about his accomplishments in battle. Fearing for his life, David pretended to be insane so that the Philistine king would send him away (1 Samuel 21:12–13).

Later, after more confrontations with [King Saul](#), David once again fled to Gath, saying, “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” (1 Samuel 27:1). David and six hundred men and their families went to Gath and settled there, and Saul stopped his pursuit. David then asked the king to assign him a country town rather than live in the royal city of Gath. The king gave David the town of Ziklag, which became his home base for almost a year and a half as he raided other Canaanite territories. David led the king to believe he was attacking Israelites, and so fostered the king’s trust (1 Samuel 27:8–12). Gath is also noteworthy for being the home of a band of Gittites loyal to David in later life (2 Samuel 15:18).

David’s connection with Gath is reflected in his words in 2 Samuel 1:20. After learning that King Saul and his son Jonathan had been killed in battle, David cried, “Tell it not in Gath,” because he did not want the Philistines celebrating this tragedy. Despite Saul’s venom against David, David still respected him as the one God had appointed king over Israel (1 Samuel 24:5–7; 26:8–11). He cried, “Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold” (2 Samuel 1:24). David mourned for Saul’s son, too: “I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me” (2 Samuel 1:26). The deaths of Saul and Jonathan were not a moment for celebration, but for grief. This was not news to be spread, “lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice” (2 Samuel 1:20).

David’s words to “tell it not in Gath” (2 Samuel 1:20) reflect his desire to bring honor, not dishonor, to the Lord and His people. Christians should take this to heart and make sure they are always seeking to glorify the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:31).

While Gath proved to be a safe haven of sorts for David in times of need, it was ultimately enemy territory. Gath and its idolatry represented all that was antithetical to the nation of Israel, just as the Bible presents this world’s system as all that is opposite to God’s will for His people (1 John 2:15–17). The earth is our home for now, but we are called to live in this world as sojourners and ambassadors, not participating in the world’s evil but understanding that our true citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). All the while, we invite others to join us in heaven through faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19–20; 2 Corinthians 5:16–21; 1 Peter 3:14–17; John 3:16–18). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **David O'brien - Why did David work for the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:1–7)?**

One of the major question marks about David and his checkered career is his willingness to serve as a mercenary soldier for Achish, the king of Gath. In today’s world, where nations maintain large standing armies, the work of mercenaries is considered dishonorable. What David did, however, was ordinary in his day. Service in the army of a powerful king was a profession many able men chose. Being a mercenary soldier was a dirty job, but in a day when there were few standing armies, somebody had to do it. And it paid. Soldiers in the ancient world were given a small wage, and if they survived they were free to take anything they could carry away. So although soldiering was a high risk profession, it was lucrative for those who were good at it. So David, like many others, probably did it because it paid well. While David was in the wilderness hiding from Saul a force of men made up of economic and political outcasts gathered around him. He had a sizable following, 600 men and their families, and had to support them or lose them. He could either become a robber king or take employment as a commander of mercenary soldiers. The second reason is even more basic. Service with the Philistines was necessary for his survival. “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is 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” (1 Samuel 27:1). From the time Saul chased David from his court (1 Samuel 19:10) until Saul’s death (1Sa 31:4), Saul’s obsession was to catch and kill David.

#### **Principle 4 The more we know about the world in which the Bible was written, the better we understand the Bible itself.**

During those years the military pressure of the war with the Philistines kept Saul so occupied with his own survival that he was never able to eliminate his rival (1 Samuel 24:16–19). But from David’s point of view, the military pressure had a negative side. Engaged in warfare with the Philistines, Saul’s militia developed into a formidable fighting force. When Saul mounted his first military strike against Nahash, the Ammonite, he led a loosely connected bunch of farmers who had to be threatened with the destruction of their oxen to get them away from their plowing (1 Samuel 11:1–8). When he made his first military move against the Philistines at the outpost of Geba (1 Samuel 13:3–4), he led an army that apparently fought with the farm implements they had at hand (1 Samuel 13:19–22). By the time David took up with Achish, Saul had built an effective unity between the tribes. Their early success against the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:23–14:23) gave them control of a military post and, presumably, its armory. Although Saul was unable to stand against the Philistines and their chariots in a pitched battle, his organization was more than a match for David and his small force. With the Israelites watching him from one side and the Philistines from the other, David had to walk a tightrope to avoid alienating either. If he didn’t perform as a mercenary, he faced the wrath of the Philistines. If he once fought against the Israelites he would never be accepted as king by Israel. To achieve this balancing act, he raided Israelite enemies and told Achish he was plundering Israelite cities (1 Samuel 27:6–12). While keeping his boss happy, he was also winning the allegiance of the Israelite

people by defeating their enemies. When the Philistines gathered for an all-out battle against Saul, David was in a situation where he could conceivably be killed by either side. He was saved by the Philistines' mistrust. Ancient Israelite readers must have laughed at how the wily David had so completely duped his Philistine master. When the other lords of the Philistines insisted that David not be allowed to march into battle with them, Achish returned to David apologetically. He comforted him with the knowledge that the other lords didn't know David the way he did. David acted the loyal retainer, angered at the mistrust of his master's allies. Was David right to lie in that way? No, he wasn't, and the Bible doesn't applaud David's deceit. It merely records it.

Principle 5 **The Bible may accurately record sinful acts without wholeheartedly applauding them.** David's lies, wars, and adulteries are recorded with as much accuracy as his piety and his triumphs. He was a man after God's own heart, not because he never sinned, but because, having sinned, he repented. ([Today's Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties](#))

**1 Samuel 27:3 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.**

- **with his two:** 1Sa 25:3,18-35,42,43 30:5
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DAVID MOVES FAMILIES TO A PAGAN LAND**

**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** - When David made his detour, he took other lives with him. **Lived with Achish** is the antithesis of how God had commanded Israel to interact, for they were to be separated from ("be holy" Lev 11:44, et al) the idolatrous nations lest they fall prey to the sensual, seductive practices associated with their idol worship. **Each with his household** would swell the population of Gath by at least 1000 people, probably more, which would stress the city services and food supply.

**With his two wives** does not get David any bonus points with God, Whose preference is clearly monogamous marriage. As as aside David would continue to add wives and concubines and set up his son Solomon to fall prey to the same sin, a sin which affected Solomon's heart and resulted in breakup of the united nation of Israel!

**Warren Wiersbe** - David was still a deceiver, and "faith is living without scheming." He deceived Achish concerning three matters: the request for a city, the raids his men conducted, and the desire to fight the king's battles.

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### **James Smith - DAVID AMONG THE PHILISTINES 1 Samuel 27–29**

"In the natural desert of rocks and sands, or in the populous moral desert of selfishness and baseness, to such temptation are we all called."—CARLYLE.

Of all the moral deserts or quagmires into which a Christian may be driven by the force of temptation none is more horrible than that of selfishness. Such self-centred lives are scandals on earth and heart-griefs in Heaven. But let him that is without sin cast the first stone. Have we not all at times, in our own hearts' affections, played the prodigal in taking a journey into the far country? Or have we never, like David, while in a fit of cowardliness, sought the comfort and help of the uncircumcised? David finding rest among the Philistines is a greater marvel to us than Saul among the prophets. It is a melancholy spectacle to see the Lord's anointed one depending on a heathen king for protection, or a child of God turning aside to the pleasures of this world for refreshing. Let us note—

#### **I. Why He Went. He was tempted to take this false step because—**

**1. HE FEARED MAN.** "He said in his heart, I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul" (1Sa 27:1). "The fear of man bringeth a snare." When David said this in his heart he was denying the holy anointing (1 John 2:24). This is dangerous ground. It was here where Saul was when he fell from the favour of God (1 Sam. 15:24).

**2. HE FORGOT GOD.** If this had not been so, how could he ever have said, "There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." Is there nothing better for a child of God in the day of distress than to seek the help of the ungodly? Hath not he said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5, 6). Is that not much better? In Psalm 109:4 we see David on his better behaviour.

## II. How He Succeeds. He—

**1. ESCAPED PERSECUTION.** "Saul sought no more again for him" (1Sa 27:4). This is not always an unmixed blessing (1 Peter 4:13). There are always two ways by which we may escape persecution. The one is by the interposition of God on our behalf (Acts 5:19; 12:7), the other is by our backsliding into the ways of the world. The world loves its own.

**2. GOT YOKED WITH AN UNBELIEVER.** How this came about is very clear, and was very natural. He first of all "found grace in the eyes" of the king of Gath (1Sa 27:5). Then he acknowledged himself as "thy servant," and so was promoted as "the keeper of the king's head" (1Sa 28:2). In this way, by denying his true character as the servant of God, and submitting himself to another master, did David become unequally yoked with an unbeliever. It was when the prodigal had forsaken his father, and sought relief in the "far country," that he was constrained to "join himself" to a citizen of that country. The backsliding in heart will soon be found backsliding in conduct. It is an infallible evidence that we are "living after the flesh" when we are more ready to consider what would be "better for me" (1Sa 27:1) than what would be better for Christ and His kingdom.

**III. WAS COMPELLED TO ACT IN A DECEITFUL MANNER.** He and his men had invaded some of the nomadic tribes up about the borders of Egypt; and when Achish asked him, "Whither have ye made a road to-day?" David said, "Against the south of Judah." This was a deliberate falsehood (1Sa 27:8–12). Was he not again playing the deceiver when he pretended to the king of Gath that he desired to go and fight with the Philistines against the Israelites? (1Sa 29:8). Was he not, in his heart, glad of this providential way of escape out of the desperate dilemma into which he had brought himself through fear and faithlessness? This is the wretched, double-dealing kind of life that a man is compelled to live who has experienced the saving grace of God, and been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, when he backslides into the ways of the world and seeks to avoid all suffering for Christ. If he would please men he must act the hypocrite, for down in the deeper depths of his being the true light hath shined, although he is inwardly conscious that he is not walking in the light. No man, after receiving the holy anointing, as David did, can ever be the same as he was before the anointing, no matter how far he may fall from the enjoyment and power of it. Even salt without its savour is still savourless salt. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye be able to withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13).

**1 Samuel 27:4 Now it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him.**

- **searched for him:** 1Sa 26:21
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL CEASES SEARCH

**Now it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him-** David's sojourn to Philistine country marked the end of Saul's manhunt for David. The text does not say that David was aware that all his "wanted posters" in Israel had been taken down (so to speak)! Given Saul's cessation of seeking David's life, one might look at David's trip to Gath as a good move, for finally he did not need to keep "[looking over his shoulder](#)" as he did as long as he remained on Saul's "soil." This time King Achish accepts David but we must question why? Achish surely has gotten word that Saul is after David to kill him and has recently slaughtered the priests at Nob, so Achish realizes that Saul is David's enemy (David never called Saul his enemy though). And the enemy (David) of my (Achish's) enemy (Saul/Israel) is my friend (David) (See [Wikipedia note](#)) What is sad is that in going to Israel's enemy, David invoked an other saying that the "the friend (David) of my (Israel's) enemy (Philistines) is my (Israel's) enemy! David in effect made himself an enemy of Israel. "Accomplishing His Short-sighted Objective Provides David with a False Sense of Security" (Paul Apple)

**THOUGHT** - Does a temporary peace always confirm you are in the middle of God's will? That's a rhetorical question. Sometimes it may but clearly not always as proven in the case with David's sojourn to the pagan lands! In the Christian life, when we are actively involved in offensive warfare (teaching, preaching, praying, discipling, etc), we can expect significant opposition, but when we take the foot off of the gas pedal (spiritually speaking), we often begin to experience a sense of calm and peace. The attacks tend to dissipate and even disappear. The adversary has us where he wants us, in a sense of false peace, off the front lines of the ongoing spiritual battles. We need to remember Paul's wise warning to Timothy " Indeed, all who desire to live godly (HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE GODLY? ONLY ONE WAY) in (LOCATIVE OF SPHERE) Christ Jesus (HERE'S THE PROMISE YOU WON'T FIND IN THE LITTLE BOOKS ON "GOD'S PROMISES!") will be persecuted." (2Ti 3:12+).

**Ray Pritchard** elaborates on this principle of **peace experienced with disobedience** - On the surface, it looks like David made a wise decision. You could argue that God is blessing David for going to the Philistines. For a period of weeks or maybe months I'm sure he felt vindicated. Things were going well. He gets up in the morning about nine, reads the Ziklag Gazette, goes down to the aerobics center to work out with the boys, in the afternoon he raids a nearby village, and in the evening maybe there's a feast. Not a bad life. There is a clear biblical principle at work here. Disobedience often results in a temporary lessening of pressure. We remember that Hebrews 11 speaks of "the pleasures of sin for a season." (Hebrews 11:25+) Sure, David felt better for a while. **Don't ever let anyone tell you that sin isn't fun. The exact opposite is true. Sin is lots of fun and compromise is exciting. That's why so many Christians do it!** ([Ziklag is Burning](#))

**Alan Redpath** points out, "Notice a very interesting thing. At first sight, it seems that it pays to give in to the devil. 'And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, and he sought no more again for him.' The battle was off; the pressure is released; the enemy withdraws, and for the moment what might seem to be peace but in fact is only stupor descends upon the soul. The peace which is the outcome of taking drugs is one thing; the peace which is the outcome of overcoming in the battle is another. Give in to the devil and I promise you without any possible doubt the enjoyment of peace immediately. If you want that kind of stupifying drug, you can have it. Only move as David moved into enemy-occupied territory, and Satan will get off your back. There will be three cheers in hell, and you'll have a lovely sense of freedom for a time."

**1 Samuel 27:5 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?"**

- **a place in one of the cities:** Ge 46:34 2Co 6:17
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Corinthians 6:14-18+ **Do not be** bound together ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. (WHAT SHOULD THESE INCREDIBLE TRUTHS MOTIVATE AND ENERGIZE US TO PURSUE - See 2Cor 7:1).

Living with the Heathen Contradicts God's Design of Holiness.

-- Paul Apple

1 Chronicles 12:1-7 Now these are the ones who came to David at Ziklag, while he was still restricted because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men who helped him in war. 2 They were equipped with bows, using both the right hand and the left to sling stones and to shoot arrows from the bow; they were Saul's kinsmen from Benjamin. 3 The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Beracah and Jehu the Anathothite, 4 and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty. Then Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite, 5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, Jashobeam, the Korahites, 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

**DAVID FOUND FAVOR  
WITH A PAGAN KING**



Then David said to Achish, "If now I have found favor ([chen](#); Lxx = [charis](#)) in your sight, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may live there - David clearly had found favor in the eyes of the Philistine king, which is fascinating

for why should your servant ([ebed](#); Lxx - [doulos](#)) live in the royal city with you? - What did David just say? Your [charis](#)! Amazing, not amazing grace but amazing abandonment of grace! **Servant** of a pagan king! David had referred to himself as "His (God's) servant" in 1Sa 25:39! David has suffered a major faith failure, forgetting he is servant of the Most High King, not a lowly pagan king! Achish is also deceived for later he says "he will be my servant forever" (1Sa 27:12)!

**Woodhouse on found favor** - The assumption of these words, of course, was that he had "found favor" in the eyes of Achish. There is irony in the fact that once David had "found favor in the eyes of" Saul (1 Samuel 16:22)!<sup>12</sup> There is at least an apparent scandal in the idea that David had found "favor in the eyes of" the Philistine king. On the assumption that the friend of my enemy is my enemy, this would make David Israel's enemy! ([1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader](#))

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**Favor** (grace) ([02580](#)) [chen/hen](#) from verb **chanan** = to favor) means favor (acts which display one's fondness or compassion for another), grace (acts of kindness displaying one's pleasure with an object, which benefit the object of pleasure), acceptance. The idea is that a person finds favor in the sight of another person or acceptance by the person. This word plays a major role in helping us understand God's relationship with sinful men as shown in the first use in Genesis 6:8 with those wonderful words "And Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord." The result of this favor was that he was delivered by God from His judgment of the world through the Flood. In a similar vein, the nation of Israel was granted by God to receive "favor in the sight of the Egyptians." (Ex 3:21, 11:3, 12:36). Meanings include - Favor, grace, charm, graciousness, kindness, beauty, pleasantness, attractiveness, loveliness, affectionate regard. Chen is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word charis which is usually translated grace in the NT.

**Chen in 1 Samuel -2 Chronicles**- 1 Sam. 1:18; 1 Sam. 16:22; 1 Sam. 20:3; 1 Sam. 20:29; 1 Sam. 25:8; 1 Sam. 27:5; 2 Sam. 14:22; 2 Sam. 15:25; 2 Sam. 16:4; 1 Ki. 11:19

**Uses of chen in 1 Samuel** - note every use in the Septuagint is translated with the great NT word [charis](#) usually rendere "grace."

1 Samuel 1:18 She said, "Let your maidservant find **favor** in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

1 Samuel 16:22 Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me, for he has found **favor** in my sight."

1 Samuel 20:3 Yet David vowed again, saying, "Your father knows well that I have found **favor** in your sight, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.' But truly as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death."

1 Samuel 25:8 'Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find **favor** in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David."

**Servant** ([05650](#)) '[ebed](#) from 'abad = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant. Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2).

**Ebed in First Samuel** - 1 Sam. 3:9; 1 Sam. 3:10; 1 Sam. 8:14; 1 Sam. 8:15; 1 Sam. 8:16; 1 Sam. 8:17; 1 Sam. 12:19; 1 Sam. 16:15; 1 Sam. 16:16; 1 Sam. 16:17; 1 Sam. 17:8; 1 Sam. 17:9; 1 Sam. 17:32; 1 Sam. 17:34; 1 Sam. 17:36; 1 Sam. 17:58; 1 Sam. 18:5; 1 Sam. 18:22; 1 Sam. 18:23; 1 Sam. 18:24; 1 Sam. 18:26; 1 Sam. 18:30; 1 Sam. 19:1; 1 Sam. 19:4; 1 Sam. 20:7; 1 Sam. 20:8; 1 Sam. 21:7; 1 Sam. 21:11; 1 Sam. 21:14; 1 Sam. 22:6; 1 Sam. 22:7; 1 Sam. 22:8; 1 Sam. 22:9; 1 Sam. 22:14; 1 Sam. 22:15; 1 Sam. 22:17; 1 Sam. 23:10; 1 Sam. 23:11; 1 Sam. 25:8; 1 Sam. 25:10; 1 Sam. 25:39; 1 Sam. 25:40; 1 Sam. 25:41; 1 Sam. 26:18; 1 Sam. 26:19; 1 Sam. 27:5; 1 Sam. 27:12; 1 Sam. 28:2; 1 Sam. 28:7; 1 Sam. 28:23; 1 Sam. 28:25; 1 Sam. 29:3; 1 Sam. 29:8; 1 Sam. 29:10; 1 Sam. 30:13

1 Samuel 27:6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

- **Ziklag:** 1Sa 30:1,14 19:5 2Sa 1:1 1Ch 4:30 1Ch 12:1,20 Ne 11:28
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 12:1 Now these are the ones who came to David at Ziklag, while he was still restricted because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men who helped him in war.

1 Chronicles 12:20 As he went to Ziklag there defected to him from Manasseh: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediahel, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu and Zillethai, captains of thousands who belonged to Manasseh.

Ziklag

## ACHISH'S GIFT OF A CITY TO DAVID

**So Achish gave him Ziklag that day therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day-** Ziklag was in territory God promised to Israel, but territory from which they failed to drive out the idol worshipping pagans. In a somewhat bizarre twist of events, David now receives the city and it would remain in Israel's hands (**to this day** means the time of the writing of First Samuel).

1 Chronicles 12:1,20 informs us that during this period a great many of Saul's soldiers defected to David in Ziklag.

**QUESTION** - Ziklag, a town on the southernmost boundary of Judea, is first mentioned in the Bible as part of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:31). Ziklag was assigned to the tribe of Simeon (**ED**: See land allocated to Simeon in map above) within Judah (Joshua 19:5) but appears not to have been conquered by the Israelites before the time of David. Ziklag was still under Philistine control when Saul reigned as king.

For many years [King Saul](#) sought to harm [David](#). After the death of Samuel, David fled for his life with six hundred men and their households to Philistine territory. While there, Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, gave Ziklag to David at his request: "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?' So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since" (1 Samuel 27:5–6). Achish awarded Ziklag to David most likely to ensure David's continued neutrality.

David ruled over Ziklag for 16 months, during which he made the town his base of operations for military exploits against the Amalekites. Many of Israel's disillusioned warriors flocked to join forces with David's private army there (1 Chronicles 12:1–22).

While David and his men were away attempting to join the Philistine army to fight against Saul, Amalekite raiders attacked Ziklag. When the Philistines refused to let David and his men fight with them, David returned to Ziklag and found his city had been burned down and all its inhabitants taken hostage: "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, 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. When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive" (1 Samuel 30:1–3). In a daring rescue, David and his men pursued and defeated the raiders, recovering all that had been taken, including David's two wives, Ahinoam and [Abigail](#) (verses 16–31).

David was living in Ziklag when he received the news of Saul's death (2 Samuel 4:10). After that, David moved to Hebron to become the king of Judah.

The exact location of Ziklag is debated. Some scholars associate it with Tell esh-Sharia, about 15 miles southeast of Gaza. Others pinpoint it at Tell el-Khuweilfeh, about 10 miles northeast of [Beersheba](#).

Ziklag remained in Israelite possession until the end of the monarchy and is last mentioned in the Bible as one of the cities inhabited by Jews after returning from exile in Babylon (Nehemiah 11:28). [What is the significance of Ziklag in the Bible?](#) ANSWER - [GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Samuel 27:7 The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.**

- year 1Sa 29:3
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S SOJOURN IN ZIKLAG

**The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months-** Sojourn is defined as a temporary stay, and while it was temporary, 16 months is a relatively long time for a man after God's own heart to be away from the land of God and from the God of the land. As noted this chapter has not mention of God, no mention of prayer and there is no evidence that David wrote any psalms during this 16 month sojourn! It is a sad chapter in his life, but praise God it did not [preclude](#) him for becoming a man after God's own heart.

**THOUGHT** - Dear brother or sister in Christ, you may reading this commentary and thinking "I can identify with David's lengthy sojourn. My quiet times have been very quiet. My Bible has more dust than my floors. My prayers have been few and far between. Etc." As we will see the story unfold, David does return to His LORD after this dry time in a distant land. And God would say to you words like he uttered in Joel 2:12-13 "Yet even now, return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil."

**Laney** points out, "The 16 months he spent in Philistine territory prepared David for later Philistine wars by giving him the opportunity to become familiar with the geography of Philistia." (Borrow [First and Second Samuel](#))

**1 Samuel 27:8 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.**

- **Geshurites:** Jos 13:2,13 2Sa 13:37,38 2Sa 14:23,32 15:8 1Ch 2:23
- **Amalekites:** Jos 16:10 Jdg 1:29 1Ki 9:15-17
- **as you come:** 1Sa 15:7,8 30:1 Ex 17:14-16
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Exodus 17:14-16+ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that **I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven**" 15 Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

Joshua 13:13+ But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day.

## DAVID'S RAIDS ON THE RAIDERS

**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** - While we cannot be dogmatic regarding the Geshurites and the Girzites, we can be dogmatic regarding the Amalekites. David is fully justified in carrying out raids against the Amalekites for Moses wrote "The LORD has sworn; **the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation.**" (Ex 17:16+) Thus David's raids on the Amalekites are carrying out the LORD'S war against Amalek. Furthermore, lest one think that David is being cruel in wiping out the Amalekite men, women and children, he is doing the LORD'S will for He Himself had clearly stated "that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." (Ex 17:14+). Regarding the **Geshurites** we can draw a similar conclusion, for in Joshua 13:13+ the implication is that Israel had been commanded to **dispossess** the Geshurites. You may be saying that you agree with that statement, but that it is one thing to **dispossess** and another to utterly destroy the people. Here is where the Septuagint translation of Joshua 13:13+ helps resolve this issue (to my satisfaction because I consider the Septuagint to be a reliable source of Biblical truth), because it translates the Hebrew verb for **dispossess** ([yarash](#)) with the strong Greek verb [exolothreuo](#) which means (you guessed it!) to utterly destroy. Peter uses this same verb in Acts 3:23+ declaring "And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet (MESSIAH - Acts 3:22+ > Dt 18:15, 18-

19+) shall be utterly destroyed ([exolothreuo](#)) from among the people." In context of course Peter is talking about eternal destruction. In sum, David is biblically justified in utterly destroying the Amalekites and the Geshurites. I can only extrapolate that the Girzites are [guilty by association!](#)

**THOUGHT** - The godless "-ites" which God condemned clearly indicate that while pretending to be a mercenary for the Philistines, David was still loyal to Yahweh.

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**Raided** ([06584](#)) (pashat) means to strip off and has two basic meanings (1) To "strip off" (clothing, armor of a fallen warrior) and (2) To invade. Of the fifty-two occurrences of pāshaṭ, twenty-three times the meaning is "to strip, remove, make naked." It can mean to "skin" in the sense of "to flay, dismember" (Leviticus 1:6; 2 Chron. 29:34; 2 Chron. 35:11; Micah 3:3).

**Gilbrant - Pāshat** is both transitive and intransitive in its use (for example, the Philistines stripped the dead, 1 Sam. 31:8; they "invaded," 1 Sam. 23:27). The verb is found in the Qal stem twenty-four times where it has two common meanings, "to strip or remove clothing" and "to invade." This verb is identified in Akkadian pasatu, "to expunge," "to obliterate." An Aramaic cognate means "to stretch out," "to make straight." The Arabic basata means "to spread out," "to extend," "to make level." Often when an attack is in view, pāshat is followed by the prepositions 'el, "toward"; be, "in"; and 'al, "upon," "against." These focus upon or delineate the objective. 'el is used with reference to the raids by David directed against the Geshurites, Girzites and Amalekites, while in the service of Achish (1 Sam. 27:8). Shortly after David's ascendancy to the throne, the Philistines "raided the valley" (1 Chr. 14:13, NIV). Abimelech "set upon the city" (Jdg. 9:33). The Philistines "invaded the land" (1Sa 23:27). On the first day of Job's trouble, the Chaldeans "fell upon the camels" and killed his servants (Job 1:17). After his troops failed on three occasions to capture David at Naioth at Ramah, Saul went there himself. When the Spirit came upon him, he removed his clothes and prophesied with the prophets (1 Sam. 19:24).

In an oracle against Trye, Ezekiel predicts that rulers will step down from their thrones and lay aside their garments. Overwhelmed by the city's fall, nations would mourn the event (Ezek. 26:16). In an allegory of unfaithful Jerusalem, Judah, which has prostrated itself spiritually, would be stripped of its finery. The prophetic perfect presents this event as certain, a completed action (Ezek. 16:39).

In a somber moment, Moses was commanded by Yahweh to "strip Aaron of his garments" for the high priest was to die (Num. 20:26). After the battle at Gibeah in which Saul and Jonathan were killed, the Philistines returned to strip the dead, removing their clothing/armor (1 Sam. 31:8; 1 Chr. 10:8). Having removed her robe, the beloved wonders if she should put it back on (S.S. 5:3).

In the Hiphil (causative) stem, pāshat is sometimes used with reference to the skinning or flaying of animals for sacrifice. The bull intended for the burnt offering was first skinned and cut up, prior to being placed on the altar (Lev. 1:6). At Hezekiah's Passover celebration, so many animals were offered that the priests had to enlist the Levites for assistance (2 Chr. 29:34). They also assisted in this way at Josiah's great Passover (2 Chr. 35:11). Micah uses pāshat figuratively of Israelites who abused or mistreated their fellowmen, "and flay their skin from off them" (Mic. 3:3).

**Pashat - dashed(2), invaded(1), made a raid(5), made...raid(1), put off(1), raid(2), raided(2), removed(1), rush(1), rushed(1), skin(2), skinned(1), strip(8), strip the off(1), strip off(2), stripped(6), stripped off(2), strips(1), take off(2), taken off(1).** Gen. 37:23; Lev. 1:6; Lev. 6:11; Lev. 16:23; Num. 20:26; Num. 20:28; Jdg. 9:33; Jdg. 9:44; Jdg. 20:37; 1 Sam. 18:4; 1 Sam. 19:24; 1 Sam. 23:27; 1 Sam. 27:8; 1 Sam. 27:10; 1 Sam. 30:1; 1 Sam. 30:14; 1 Sam. 31:8; 1 Sam. 31:9; 2 Sam. 23:10; 1 Chr. 10:8; 1 Chr. 10:9; 1 Chr. 14:9; 1 Chr. 14:13; 2 Chr. 25:13; 2 Chr. 28:18; 2 Chr. 29:34; 2 Chr. 35:11; Neh. 4:23; Job 1:17; Job 19:9; Job 22:6; Cant. 5:3; Isa. 32:11; Ezek. 16:39; Ezek. 23:26; Ezek. 26:16; Ezek. 44:19; Hos. 2:3; Hos. 7:1; Mic. 2:8; Mic. 3:3; Nah. 3:16

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## Amalakites

Genesis 36:12; Timna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz and she bore **Amalek** to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Esau's wife Adah.

Numbers 13:28-29; "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 **Amalek** is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

Numbers 24:20 And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end shall be destruction."

Deuteronomy 25:17-19 "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, 18

how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

1 Samuel 15:2-3, 5-9, 32-33 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'.... 5 Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. 6 Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.....32-33 Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

**1 Samuel 27:9 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.**

- **did not leave a man or a woman alive** 1Sa 15:3,7 Ge 16:7 25:18 Ex 15:22
- **and the camels:** 1Sa 15:3 De 25:17-19 Jos 6:21
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 15:3+ (CONTRAST DAVID SAVING THE LIVESTOCK, ETC IN HIS RAIDS) 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

### DAVID'S UTTER DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

**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** - Compare to God's word through Moses to utterly destroy the Canaanites, et al (Nu 33:50-56; Dt 7:1-5; Dt 20:16-18). David's utter obliteration of the Amalekite he raided is what Yahweh had called King Saul do carry out. It was King Saul's failure to carry this out that God interpreted as rejection of His Word and for which He rejected him as king of Israel. So certainly total destruction of the Amalekites was within the scope of God's will. Presumably the same would apply to the other "--ites" mentioned.

**Then he returned and came to Achish** - He would give Achish a "cut" of the plunder further ingratiating himself to the pagan king. As we shall see later, David's success would soon get him in quite "[a pretty pickle](#)"

**Ray Pritchard** - There's a third result of David's compromise. It led him into further sin. Here's the other side of the coin. First there was discouragement, then there was desperation, then defection, and now further disobedience that leads to deceit and needless death. Verses 8-11 describe raiding parties David would undertake while he was living at Ziklag. You need to know a little geography to get the picture. Ziklag was a tiny village off in the wilderness between Gaza and Beersheba. David would take his men and raid the villages to the south and southwest of Ziklag. But when Achish asked, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would answer, "I've been to the Negev of Judah," which was south and east. The implication of David's answer was that he had been raiding his own people Israel. Actually he had been going the opposite direction. But the deception served the purpose of convincing Achish that he was truly loyal to him. That doesn't seem like such a big deal until you read verse 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.'" So what started as a plundering party ended in a bloody slaughter. **After all, dead men tell no tales.** But are you surprised? That's what happens to all of us when discouragement leads us to compromise. When David attacked those villages, he did it without God's permission, without



provocation, under false pretenses, and with unnecessary cruelty. David is caught in a terrible downward spiral and the worst is still to come. ([Ziklag is Burning](#))

**Woodhouse** - The first thing to notice about this behavior of David is that he did not attack Philistines. He attacked people who would have been hostile to the Philistines. In doing so he could be seen as a true servant of Achish! In other words, the conduct of David in itself offered no reassurances to those who may have had concerns about his collaboration with the Philistines. The narrator, however, points us in another direction: "... for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt" (v. 8b). The implication is that the peoples David attacked were, when all is said and done, "the inhabitants of the land"20 whom the Israelites were told by God, through Moses, to "devote to complete destruction" (see Numbers 33:50–56; Deuteronomy 7:1–5; 20:16–18). The astonishing thing is that here is a possible explanation, perhaps even exoneration, of David's behavior. Was he, after all, fighting the battles of the Lord (cf. 1 Samuel 18:17; 25:28)? Under the guise of serving Achish, was he in reality fighting Israel's battles (cf. 1 Samuel 8:20)? What is astonishing is that the writer drops the hint of this possible explanation but does not elaborate. ([1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader](#))

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([See multiple notes on this difficult topic](#) in Deuteronomy 7:2) **The NIV Study Bible** has an excellent article related to David's annihilation of the peoples they raided...

### **The Conquest, War, and Genocide Jos 6:24**

Many readers of Joshua (and other OT books) are deeply troubled by the role that warfare plays in Joshua's account of God's dealings with his people. Not a few relieve their ethical scruples by ascribing the author's perspective to a pre-Christian (and sub-Christian) stage of moral development that the Christian, in the light of Christ's teaching, must repudiate and transcend. Hence the main thread of the narrative line of Joshua is an offense to them.

It must be remembered, however, that the book of Joshua does not address itself to the abstract ethical question of war as a means for gaining human ends. It can only be understood in the context of the history of redemption unfolding in the Pentateuch, with its interplay of divine grace and judgment. Of that story it is the direct continuation.

Joshua is not an epic account of Israel's heroic generation or the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan with the aid of their national deity. It is rather the story of how God, to whom the whole world belongs, at one stage in the history of redemption reconquered a portion of the earth from the powers of this world that had claimed it for themselves, defending their claims by force of arms and reliance on their false gods. It tells how God commissioned his people to serve as his army under the leadership of his servant Joshua, to take Canaan in his name out of the hands of the idolatrous and dissolute Canaanites (whose measure of sin was now full; see Ge 15:16 and note). It further tells how he aided them in the enterprise and gave them conditional tenancy in his land in fulfillment of the ancient pledge he had made to Israel's ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Joshua is the story of the kingdom of God breaking into the world of nations at a time when national and political entities were viewed as the creation of the gods and living proofs of their power. Thus the Lord's triumph over the Canaanites testified to the world that the God of Israel is the one true and living God, whose claim on the world is absolute. It was also a warning to the nations that the irresistible advance of the kingdom of God would ultimately disinherit all those who opposed it, giving place in the earth only to those who acknowledge and serve the Lord. At once an act of redemption and judgment, it gave notice of the outcome of history and anticipated the final destiny of humankind and the creation.

The battles for Canaan were therefore the Lord's war, undertaken at a particular time in the program of redemption. God gave his people under Joshua no commission or license to conquer the world with the sword but a particular, limited mission. The conquered land itself would not become Israel's national possession by right of conquest. Instead, it belonged to the Lord. So the land had to be cleansed of all remnants of paganism. Its people and their wealth were not for Israel to seize as the spoils of war from which to enrich themselves (as Achan tried to do, ch. 7) but were placed under God's ban (were to be devoted to God to dispense with as he pleased). On that land Israel was to establish a commonwealth faithful to the righteous rule of God and thus be a witness (and a blessing) to the nations. If Israel became unfaithful and conformed to Canaanite culture and practice, it would in turn lose its place in the Lord's land—as Israel almost did in the days of the judges, and as it eventually did in the exile.

No less than twelve factors make it unlikely that the battles in Joshua were part of genocide (the destruction of an entire race or nation of people) or even attempted genocide.

- (1) Israel did not actually kill a large percentage of the Canaanites. (Jos 13 and all of Judges depict how many were left.)
- (2) The language of total conquest in Jos 10–12 must therefore be that of hyperbole. Language of total destruction, including men, women and children, and of leaving no survivors was similar to exaggerated claims of other ancient Near Eastern people and should probably not be taken any more literally.

- (3) Archaeology suggests that several of the cities Joshua attacked were more like armed encampments of soldiers, their families and support personnel, much like military bases today, rather than entire cities (cf. especially Jericho and Ai).
- (4) The immorality of these cultures, complete with child sacrifice, was arguably as sordid as any in world history.
- (5) God had already given them over 400 years to repent (Ge 15:13–16).
- (6) The Gibeonites' ruse (Jos 9) was presumably available to anyone who wanted to save their lives.
- (7) The whole land had already heard of Israel's exploits and were cowering in fear (Jos 2:9), so that an even better option for them was to turn to the God of Israel, as Rahab did.
- (8) Another option always available to the Canaanites was to flee the land that God had originally promised to Israel; in fact, 3:10 suggests that the Israelites' primary task was to "drive out" the people of the land, not exterminate them (cf. 13:6; 14:12; 17:18; 23:5).
- (9) This makes sense, because their ancestors had likewise covenanted to allow the Israelites to live in the land that they were now denying them (e.g., Ge 20:15; 26:26–31).
- (10) This is the only war in the Bible that God ever commanded. Later individual battles in Judges and Samuel that Israel initiates are a continuation of "unfinished business" here (**ED: THIS THOUGHT WOULD CERTAINLY APPLY IN DAVID'S ATTACKS AGAINST THE AMALEKITES**). All other combat involving Israel was defensive rather than offensive.
- (11) Progressive revelation suggests that Christ's full atonement for the world's sin means that he would never again command his people to initiate a war like Joshua's. Christians may debate pacifism vs. just war, but they have no right to claim they know God instituted any war they may fight.
- (12) If, after all these qualifications, we still struggle with the conquest narratives, it is probably because God in his mercy withholds the reality that death is the just punishment for sin the vast majority of the time (Ro 6:23).

War is a terrible curse that the human race brings on itself as it seeks to possess the earth by its own unrighteous ways. But it pales before the curse that awaits all those who do not heed God's testimony to himself or his warnings—those who oppose the rule of God and reject his offer of grace. The God of the second Joshua (Jesus) is the God of the first Joshua also. Although now for a time he reaches out to the whole world with the gospel (and commissions his people urgently to carry his offer of peace to all nations), the sword of his judgment waits in the wings—and his second Joshua will wield it (Rev 19:11–16; see notes there).

**1 Samuel 27:10 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."**

- **And David:** 1Sa 21:2 Ge 27:19,20,24 Jos 2:4-6 2Sa 17:20 Ps 119:29,163 Pr 29:25 Ga 2:11-13 Eph 4:25
- **Jerahmeelites:** 1Ch 2:9,25
- **Kenites:** 1Sa 15:6 Nu 24:21 Jdg 1:16 4:11 5:24
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S DECEPTION OF KING ACHISH

**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."** - The Negev of Judah would be the southern portion of the territory allotted to the tribe of Judah. The Jerahmeelites were descendants of Judah through Hezron (1 Ch 2:9, 25).

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary on the Negev** - The Negev. Literally, the dry country. It was the name of the waterless district to the south of Jerusalem, between the hills of Judah and the actual desert. The various regions of the south were known as: the **Negev of Judah**, including the cities mentioned in Josh 15:21-32; the Negev of the Jerahmeelites; the Negev of the Kenites; the Negev of the Cherethites; the Negev of Caleb; and the Negev of Arad. ([Borrow](#))

[David Guzik](#) has an interesting point about the David's sin of lying to cover up the truth - Much later in his life, David will have a far more notorious season of sin with Bathsheba and end up killing her husband Uriah to cover his sin. Though that later event is far more famous, the root of sin that nourished it began way back in 1 Samuel 27. Here, many years before David killed Uriah to cover

his sin, David killed these men and women in his raids to cover his sin. The roots of sin must be dealt with or they come back with greater strength. (**ED:** Sin's have a way of giving birth to similar sins and which tend to gravitate to greater severity!)

**John MacArthur - Judah... Jerahmeelites... Kenites.** The regions S of the hill country centering around Beersheba. This region was far enough away from Gath so that Achish would be ignorant of David's movements. David implied to Achish that the hostility of Judah toward David was increasing, while in fact he was gaining the appreciation and loyalty of Judah toward himself by raiding their wilderness neighbors. Achish thought David was more securely his servant as his own people turned against him (vv. 2-4), but just the opposite was true. (Borrow the [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**TSK Note** - David here meant the Geshurites, and Gezrites, and Amalekites, which people occupied that part of the country which lies to the south of Judah. But Achish, as was intended, understood him in a different sense, and believed that he had attacked his own countrymen. David's answer, therefore, though not an absolute falsehood, was certainly an equivocation intended to deceive, and therefore incompatible with that sense of truth and honour which became him as a prince, and a professor of true religion. From these, and similar passages, we may observe the strict impartiality of the Sacred Scriptures. They present us with the most faithful delineation of human nature; they exhibit the frailties of kings, priests, and prophets, with equal truth; and examples of vice and frailty, as well as of piety and virtue, are held up, that we may guard against the errors to which the best men are exposed.

**Deffinbaugh** - About this time, David must be mentally patting himself on the back: "It can't get any better than this." David does not have to hide out in the desolate "God forsaken" wilderness areas of Israel; he can freely go anywhere he wants, with respect. He can even drop in on the king. He does not have to "beg" for a handout for his men, but rather can live high on the spoils of his raids. He does not have to fear that the Israelites will betray him; he frequents Israelite villages and towns, bringing their leaders presents from the spoils of war. And if Saul will not deal with the enemies of Israel who surround this nation, David will. David seems to have the best of both (Israelite and Philistine) worlds. And so it appears, but not for long. The chickens, as we say, are about to come home to roost. ([One Step Forward and Two Backward 1 Samuel 27:1-28:2](#))

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**Alan Redpath** (in his online book [The Making of a Man of God Life of David](#)) writes "**David, that is a lie!** You haven't been doing anything of the kind! But Achish became thoroughly convinced, he "believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever" (1 Samuel 27:12).

No wonder the music of this man's life was in the minor key. It is like listening one moment to the magnificence of the "Messiah," and the next moment going to a joint where they play juke-box jazz. A blight descended on his soul and the song in his heart was silenced when he descended to expediency and gave in to depression.

It is a tragedy in the life of a child of God when he yields to the pressure of Satan, and God leaves him on his own. He is reduced to scheming and planning, and when he is driven into a tight corner he can only escape by deceit. Suddenly the man who has given in to depression realizes that he has purchased his deliverance from the pressure of the devil at too great a price. He has obtained release from tension for a moment, but he has exchanged the smile of God for the grin of the enemy.

He has exchanged the protection of Jesus Christ for flimsy walls of defeat, as David exchanged trust in the promises of God for the walls of Ziklag, which soon were going to be burned by fire and over which David would weep scalding, bitter tears of repentance. Oh, the harm that is done by a man who gives in to the enemy!

There is, however, a remedy for this. It need not happen to any of us, by the grace of God, if we just listen and pray. What is the answer for such a situation?

Go back a moment to the Scripture for the discovery of what, I believe, lies at the root of David's future. "David said in his heart" (1 Samuel 27:1). There you have it. As we have seen, in other times of emergency he inquired of the Lord. And we will find that when he learned his bitter lesson in these desperate circumstances, once again David inquired of the Lord and the Lord met him immediately (1 Samuel 30:8).

David had failed to seek God in the matter of Nabal, being overcome by passion and temper. At Ziklag he was overcome by panic, and he "said in his heart", with no reference at all to the Lord.

Never act in a panic. Never act when your emotions are aroused and your blood is at the boiling point. Wait until your pulse begins to beat steadily again. If at any moment of tremendous pressure you feel that you must do something, that moment is the time when you will be apt to make the most tragic mistake in judgment. At that moment – and may I use the word! – force yourself into the presence of God, and I mean "force yourself." When you feel like flying off the handle, when you are a victim of depression, when you are in a mood of despair, when you are on the point of giving in, the last thing you want to do is to seek the Lord. You are too ashamed, and you feel that the only thing you can do is to act.

Whatever you do, stand still! Wait until you have a word from the Lord; cast yourself on your knees and cry out to Jesus for mercy and for help. Wait upon God until He makes His way plain. As long as that way is hidden, if He keeps it closed, quite clearly there is no need to do anything. If only you and I applied that principle always in our walk with God, think what damage might be avoided!

While you wait upon the Lord, I would ask you to remember three simple but basic truths which David remembered at another time in his life.

**First**, remember that God's promises are sure. "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate (Psalm 34:22). God has provided that we should be acceptable to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ. He has provided for our renewing into the likeness of our Saviour, and for our perseverance in a life of faith because of the perseverance of Jesus, and no one shall ever pluck us out of His Father's hand.

**Secondly**, remember that His promises are conditional. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (Psalm 34:15-16). Not one promise in the Bible can be yours until you repent and believe the gospel. Therefore examine the cause of your depression and fears.

Are you depressed in case God should forget all about you, denying His word and leaving you to perish notwithstanding the fact that you have trusted Him? Then that is criminal. Or are you doubting that you have ever really come to Jesus at all in His appointed way?

Then these circumstances that are flying at you from all sides may not be from the devil, it may be that the Lord is driving you to repent and believe. Have you fled to Jesus for refuge? If not, then to trust God for help is sheer presumption.

**Thirdly**, remember that His promises are corrective. David said, "There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines" (1 Samuel 27:1). In other words, he allowed the pressure to drive him away from God. But to wait upon the Lord is to prove that all things work together for good to them that love God and that nothing in the whole universe can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. The promise of the Lord is that He will draw us near: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18). Never let anything drive you from the wounded side of Jesus Christ. ( [The Making of a Man of God Life of David](#))

**1 Samuel 27:11 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.'"**

- Lest: 1Sa 22:22 Pr 12:19 29:25
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S DEMOLITION OF ALL THE INHABITANTS

**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** - The writer explains why David utterly destroyed all the inhabitants, men, women and surely children (but they are not specifically mentioned). Why? So there would be no survivors to tell Achish that David was raiding non-Israelite cities which would insure David's deception of Achish was successful. As alluded to elsewhere, one might see David's actions as a fulfillment of the LORD'S command to utterly destroy all of the pagans in the promised land (this instruction clearly applied to the Amalekites).

**1 Samuel 27:12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever."**

- **made odious** 1Sa 13:4 Ge 34:30
- [1 Samuel 27 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 13:4 All Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines (ACTUALLY IT WAS JONATHAN NOT HIS FATHER! - 1Sa 13:3 - SAUL TOOK THE CREDIT!!!), and also that Israel had

become odious to the Philistines. The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal.

## DAVID'S DECEPTION FOOLS ACHISH

**So** - Term of conclusion. So means "for this reason," begging the question "For what reason?" The answer is clear from the immediately preceding context describing David's destruction of any witnesses that might not corroborate his deception of Achish.

**Achish believed** ([aman](#)) **David** - Recall that David had a reputation of being "very cunning." (1Sa 23:22+)! He was living up to his reputation. As we say Achish bought into David's deception "[hook, line and sinker!](#)" And not just for a few weeks, for David was able to cover up the truth for 16 months! Did God approve of David's deception? Clearly He did not, but nevertheless He allowed David to carry out his ruse, lest David be discovered and destroyed, which could not happen because God had already told David he would be the next king. **Believed** ([aman](#)) is exact word used of Israel in Ex 14:31+ when "they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses."

**Saying, "He has surely made himself odious** ([baash](#)) **among his people Israel** - The Septuagint renders odious ([baash](#)) with the verb [aischunomai](#) (verb is actually repeated in Lxx to emphasize the shame) which means put to shame or become disgraced and in the perfect tense signifies completed past action with enduring or lasting effects. Thus Achish believed that David had permanently made himself odious to his own people!

**Therefore** (Term of conclusion) **he will become my servant** (['ebed](#); Lxx = [doulos](#)) **forever** - Achish bought into the lie so completely he came to the conclusion that he had hooked a "big Hebrew fish" whose allegiance and service to him was assured forever! And in the continuing section in chapter 28, Achish is so convinced of David's loyalty that he is willing to make him his bodyguard (Hebrew - "guardian of his head"!!)

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**Odious** ([0887](#)) [baash](#) means to have a bad smell or stench, to stink. To be repulsive. It denotes a bad physical smell (blood in the Nile - Ex 7:21) or odor of spoiled manna (Ex 16:20). In a figurative sense, it speaks of a person who becomes strongly revolting to another, a metaphorical "stench in the nostrils."

**Baash - 16v - acts disgustingly(1), became foul(3), become foul(2), become odious(2), grow foul(1), made(1), made themselves odious(1), made yourself odious(1), making me odious(1), odious\*(1), stink(2), surely made(1), surely made himself odious(1).** Gen. 34:30; Exod. 5:21; Exod. 7:18; Exod. 7:21; Exod. 8:14; Exod. 16:20; Exod. 16:24; 1 Sam. 13:4; 1 Sam. 27:12; 2 Sam. 10:6; 2 Sam. 16:21; 1 Chr. 19:6; Ps. 38:5; Prov. 13:5; Eccl. 10:1; Isa. 50:2