

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 27

- Vv. 1-7 *David again in Gath.* David's return to Philistia has been called a lapse of faith. He had been told by the prophet Gad not to flee outside the borders of Israel. David must have given up hope of living safely in Israel. He disobeyed God's commandment and returned to Achish, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 8-12 *David's pretended campaign against Judah.* The king of Gath gave the city of Ziklag to David for his residence. David and his men dwelt there for sixteen months. On a number of occasions he invaded the Geshurites and other foreigners to the south of Judah. He reported to Achish the king of Gath that he had been making attacks against Judah itself. He was trying to curry favor with Achish by pretending to attack his own people.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The weakness of the flesh.* David had demonstrated many times that he was a man of great faith. He finally weakened and went against the instructions of God. We look to David as a hero but we realize that he was human. He reached the end of his endurance and gave in to the wisdom of the world which was not the wisdom of God.
2. *A lie is never justifiable.* David lied to Achish when he said that he had attacked the south of Judah (v. 10). He was forced to slay all the inhabitants of the cities which he attacked lest some would report that he was not actually fighting against Judah. One sin led to another. When he lied about where he was fighting, he also had to kill any who might tell the truth. God

cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18) and He does not expect His servants to lie, even to save their own lives.

David's Second Flight to Gath, 27:1-12.

David Again in Gath. 27:1-7

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. *Why was David safer among the Philistines? 27:1*

David felt that Saul would not pursue him into the Philistine territory. His belief was justified from what is recorded in verse four. When Saul heard that David was in Philistia, he did not seek for him anymore. At the same time David was going against the commandments of God. God the prophet had told David not to flee outside the territory of Israel (22:5). At this point in his career

David was despairing of his life. He gave up and did what seemed best to him, but he was turning against the directions of God.

2. *What was David's position in Gath? 27:3*

David was still considered the leader of his 600 men. They evidently asked for political asylum with the king of Gath. This same king had not received David well when David came to him at the beginning of his flight. At that time his servants had reminded him that David was a very popular hero in Israel. David felt it to his advantage at that time to act as if he were a maniac. In this way he escaped any interrogation or imprisonment. As David returned at a later time Achish must have been convinced that Saul was definitely trying to kill David. This must have convinced him that it was all right for David to stay in Gath. The situation of David and his men was such that they could now enjoy a more normal life. Mention is made that each of David's 600 men went over with their households. David had his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail.

3. *Why did David ask for a town? 27:5*

The families of the 600 men would be large enough to settle a town. If they had a place of their own they would have more freedom. David was able to direct the affairs of a group of people. His abilities to lead were evident as he rose to prominence in Israel. If Achish trusted him and gave him a town, David could serve him well as one of the fortified cities giving protection to Gath. David also felt that he was not worthy of living in the royal city with the king. His presence there might have caused him some embarrassment among the other Philistine lords. All of these reasons seemed sufficient for David's having a separate town.

4. *Where was Ziklag? 27:1*

This town was given to the Simeonites in the time of Joshua (Joshua 19:5); but was afterwards taken by the

Philistines, probably not long before the time of David, and appears to have been left without inhabitants in consequence of this conquest. The exact situation has not been clearly ascertained; but it was evidently close to the southwestern border of Judah because David was able to represent his expeditions against the Geshurites, Gezrites and Amalekites as having been against the men of Judah. The statement that David remained there a year and four months is a proof of the historical character of the whole narrative.

David's Pretended Campaign Against Judah. 27:8-12

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

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

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

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

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

5. Who were the people whom David attacked? 27:8

The Geshurites, the Gezrites and the Amalekites were nomadic people who lived on the southwest border of Palestine. Their territory is described as being that land

along the route to Shur. This was the wilderness where Hagar lived after she was driven out from Abraham's household (Genesis 16:7). Geshurites are noted in Joshua 13:2 as south of Palestine. Gesenius connects the Gezrites with Mt. Gerizim, but this is very doubtful. They, too, must have been south of Palestine proper.

6. *What was David's purpose in his campaigns? 27:9*

David attacked the non-Israelitish people and utterly destroyed them so that there would be no living witnesses of his attacks. He did this and then told Achish that he had been fighting his own people. In this way he hoped to convince Achish that he was completely divorced from his former allegiance to Saul. If Achish believed that David was fighting against the people of Judah, he would believe that David would support the Philistines in their wars against the Israelites.

7. *Against whom did David say he was fighting? 27:9*

David said he had been fighting against the south of Judah, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites. The Jerahmeelites were the inhabitants of Jerahmeel. This was a city in Judah southwest of Hebron. The Kenites were the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law (Numbers 10:29). These people were ordered to get out of the area when Saul was told to wipe out the Amalekites (I Samuel 15:6).

8. *Why did David use this deception? 27:12*

David was beginning to weaken in his honest purposes. He had left Israel against the commandments of God. He found himself in a position where he had to convince Achish that he was loyal to him. He saw no other way to insure his safety. Some of his own people had betrayed him and he was not safe to live among the people of his own tribe, the tribe of Judah. Had he only trusted in the Lord he would not have been forced to come to the place where he lived by deception.

FIRST SAMUEL
CHAPTER 27 IN REVIEW

1. To what foreign country did David finally flee? _____
2. How many men did David have with him? _____
3. To what city did he flee? _____
4. What wives of David were with him? _____
5. Who was king of the country? _____
6. What city was given to David and his men? _____
7. How long did David stay in the city? _____
8. To whom did the city later belong? _____
9. Against what people did David make raids? _____
10. Against whom did David say he made raids? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 28

- Vv. 1- 2 *David with Achish in battle.* The Philistines began a campaign against Israel; and David was forced to go along with his benefactor, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 3- 6 *Saul forsaken by God.* Samuel was dead. Those that had familiar spirits had been put away out of the land. Saul had no one to give him guidance. The Lord did not answer him because Saul had disobeyed the Lord. The priests were not able to get an answer by Urim or Thummim. Since Saul had slain most of the priests there were none of these to help him. The only other prophet of whom we have knowledge was Gad, and he was with David. Saul was utterly abandoned.
- Vv. 7-14 *Saul seeks the witch of En-dor.* The law of Moses had commanded the people of Israel not to allow a witch to live in their midst. Saul

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

had put out of his country most of those necromancers, wizards, and witches. Some of his soldiers knew of the home of the witch in En-dor, and he disguised himself and went to her.

Vv. 15-25 *Samuel's appearance.* The Lord raised Samuel and allowed him to make a posthumous appearance to Saul. This appearance frightened the witch and greatly distressed Saul.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A man forsaken of God is really all alone.* Saul makes a pitiable picture as there was no prophet, priest, or any other servant of God to advise him. We should learn from this occurrence that it is a terrible thing to turn one's back on God. We should remember that God is near to those who draw near to Him.
2. *There is life after death.* The witch of En-dor was not able to raise Samuel. She was frightened and cried out when Samuel was raised by the Lord. Samuel's appearance gives us evidence of life after death. We should all look forward when we will be raised to live a life everlasting.

Preparations for Saul's Last Battle, 28:1—29:11.

David With Achish in Battle. 28:1, 2

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

1. *What was the demand of Achish on David? 28:1*

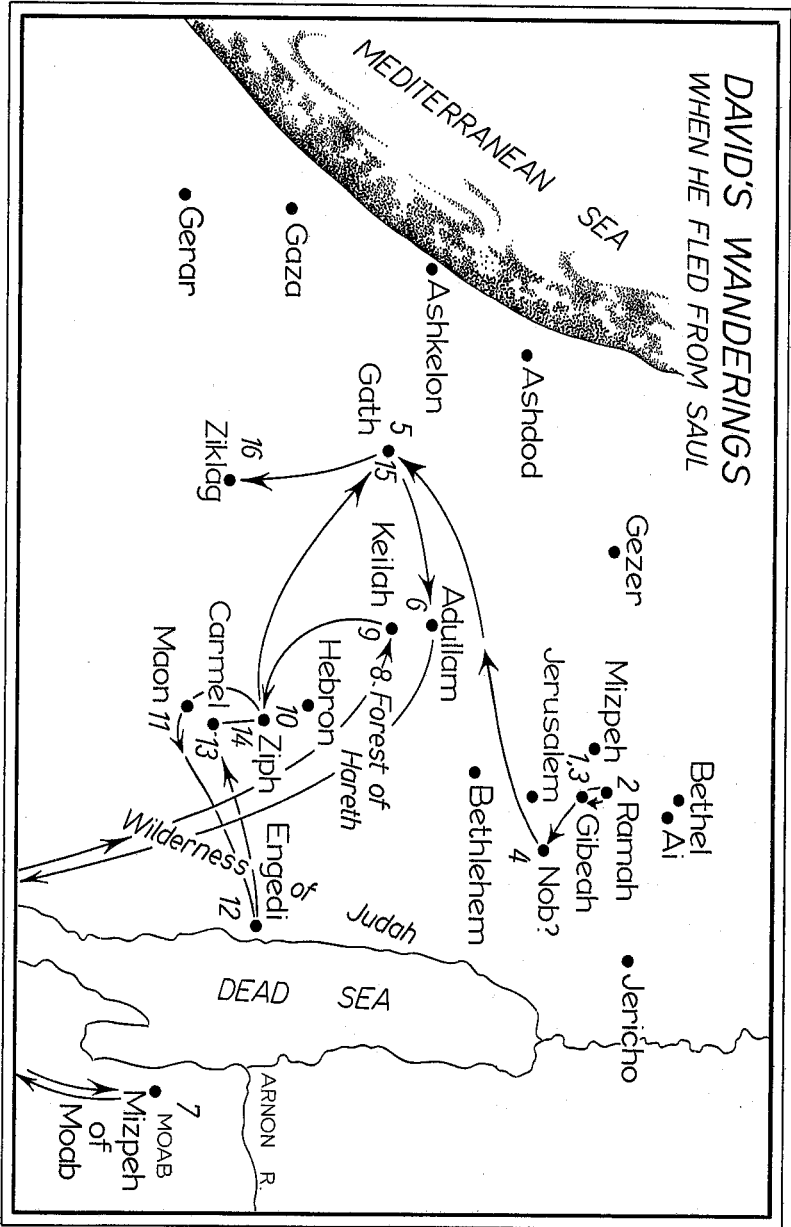
In exchange for the protection which David had received from Achish, David was expected to serve as a soldier with the Philistines. This was a high price to pay for the little bit of security which the Philistines afforded David. It has well been said that he who gives up a bit of his liberty in order to insure some security is worthy neither of liberty or security. David found himself in a position where he was expected to fight with the Philistines against his own people.

2. *Did David intend to fight against Saul? 28:1, 2*

While David was living in Philistia, the Philistines gathered their armies together for a campaign against Israel. Achish sent word to David that he was to go with him in his army along with his own men. David answered ambiguously. His words contained no distinct promise of faithful assistance in the war against the Israelites. There are no grounds for inferring that David was disposed to help the Philistines against Saul and the Israelites. Judging from his previous acts, it would necessarily have been against his principles for him to fight against his own people. Nevertheless, in the situation in which he was placed he did not venture to give a distinct refusal to the summons of the king. He was undoubtedly hoping that God would show him a way out of the conflict between his conviction and his duty to obey the Philistine king. He had no doubt prayed earnestly about it; and the faithful God helped his servant; first of all, by the fact that Achish accepted his indefinite declaration as a promise of unconditional fidelity and still more by the fact that the princes of the Philistines overrode the king.

Saul Forsaken by God. 28:3-6

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.



DAVID'S WANDERINGS

WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL

(The places listed are shown on the map.)

1. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 19:1-17.
 - a. Jonathan intercedes for David; 19:1-7.
 - b. Saul tries to spear David; 19:8-10.
 - c. Michal helps David escape; 19:11-17.
2. *Ramah*; I Sam. 19:18-24; Ps. 59 (?).
 - a. David visits Samuel; 19:18-19.
 - b. Saul and his messengers prophesy; 19:20-24.
3. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 20.
 - a. David absent from feast of new moon; 20:1-34.
 - b. Jonathan warns David with arrows; 20:35-42.
4. *Nob*;¹ I Sam. 21:1-9.
 - a. Ahimelech gives David food and weapons; 21:1-6, 8-9.
 - b. Doeg the Edomite witnesses Ahimelech's act; 21:7.
5. *Gath*; I Sam. 21:10-15; Ps. 34, 56.
 - a. David feigns madness.
6. *Adullam*; I Sam. 22:1-2; Ps. 142.
 - a. David gathers 400 followers.
7. *Mizpeh of Moab*; I Sam. 22:3-5.
 - a. David leaves his parents here for safety.
8. *Forest of Hareth*; I Sam. 22:5-23; Ps. 52.
 - a. Saul slays priests at Nob; 22:5-19.
 - b. Abiathar comes to David; 22:20-23.
9. *Keilah*; I Sam. 23:1-12.
 - a. David saves Keilah from Philistines; 23:1-6.
 - b. Saul pursues David; 23:7-12.
10. *Ziph*; I Sam. 23:13-23.
 - a. David escapes to the wilderness; 23:13-14.
 - b. Jonathan's last visit with David; 23:15-18.
 - c. Ziphites reveal David's hiding place to Saul; 23:19-23.
11. *Maon*; I Sam. 23:24-28.
 - a. David narrowly escapes Saul.
12. *Engedi*; I Sam. 23:29—24:22.
 - a. David spares Saul.
13. *Carmel*; I Sam. 25:1-44.
 - a. Samuel's death; 25:1.
 - b. Nabal refuses food for David's men; 25:2-13.
 - c. Abigail's intercession; 25:14-35.
 - d. Death of Nabal; 25:36-38.
 - e. David marries Abigail; 25:39-44.
14. *Ziph*; I Sam. 26:1-25.
 - a. Ziphites reveal David's hiding-place again; 26:1-3.
 - b. David spares Saul; 26:4-25.
15. *Gath*; I Sam. 27:1-4.
 - a. David dwells with Achish.
16. *Ziklag*; I Sam. 27:3-12.
 - a. David receives Ziklag from Achish; 27:5-7.
 - b. David raids southern tribes; 27:8-12.

¹ The location of Nob is uncertain. It is thought to be near the Mt. of Olives near Jerusalem.

And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

3. *Why had Saul put away the witches? 28:3*

Saul had kept the Law as recorded in Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; and Deuteronomy 18:10. Since Samuel was dead, Saul had no prophet to whom he could turn. He had chased out the people with familiar spirits and the wizards. He could not go to a false prophet. He could find no spiritual assistance of any kind, good or bad, valid or invalid.

4. *Where was Shunem? 28:4*

Shunem was a little town in the valley of Jezreel. The Philistines had marched to this far point between Mount Carmel on the west and Mt. Gilboa on the east. This was a famous battlefield, being the scene of the battle against Sisera in the days of Deborah (Judges 4:7). Gilboa was the mountain on the northeastern edge of the plain of Jezreel. Shunem was the modern Shulem or Solam, some eight miles away from Mt. Gilboa.

5. *Why was Saul so alarmed? 28:5*

Since he had met and defeated the Philistines in earlier battles, Saul's great alarm can be attributed only to the feeling that the Lord had forsaken him. No doubt the Philistine army was formidable, but he had met the armies of the Ammonites soon after he became king. He mustered 330,000 warriors out of Israel on that occasion. Using good military strategy and completely trusting in

God, Saul had been victorious against these eastern enemies (I Samuel 11:11). Throughout his career he had fought many battles against the Philistines, but his falling into the clutches of the evil spirit repeatedly must have enervated Israel's first king. He had been unsuccessful in his wicked attempt to kill David and David's continued wise behavior had convinced Saul that God was with David and not with him. All of these things combined left Saul a cringing coward.

6. *What were God's ways of revealing His will?* 28:6

Three of the various ways in which God revealed himself in ancient times are mentioned in connection with Saul's vain attempt to learn the will of God. God often spoke to people in dreams. This had been His way of indicating His will to Joseph (Genesis 37:5). The Urim was a part of the high priest's wearing apparel, and it was used to find out the Lord's will as the priests made inquiry of Him (Exodus 28:30). Prophets were active throughout most of Israel's history. There were bands of prophets in the days of Samuel, and God revealed His will through these men (I Kings 13:1). We need to remember that God "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Saul's desolate condition is emphasized by the statement of the fact that God did not answer Saul by any of these means.

Saul Seeks the Witch of En-dor. 28:7-14

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto

me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14 And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

7. *Why did Saul go to the witch of En-dor? 28:7*

The Philistines had collected their forces in the plain near Shunem. Saul's army was encamped on the slopes of Mt. Gilboa, some two miles away but plainly within sight of the enemy. The very sight of the enemy had thrown Saul into dread terror. He was greatly anxious about the outcome of the battle and inquired of the Lord what might be the results of the coming conflict. The Lord had left Saul as He had withdrawn His spirit from Samson during the time of the Judges; and He did not answer Saul, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Instead of repenting and humbling himself before Jehovah, Saul plunged stubbornly forward in an