FIRST SAMUEL

Chapter 27

*David Among the Philistines*

**But David thought to himself, “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.” 2 So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maoch king of Gath. 3 David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. 4 When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him. 5 Then David said to Achish, “If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?” 6 So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. 7 David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months. 8 Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.) 9 Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish. 10 When Achish asked, “Where did you go raiding today?” David would say, “Against the Negev of Judah” or “Against the Negev of Jerahmeel” or “Against the Negev of the Kenites.” 11 He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, “They might inform on us and say, ‘This is what David did.’ ” And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. 12 Achish trusted David and said to himself, “He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever.”**

**27:1** *I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul.* David falters in his faith (see 23:14; 25:29) and under pressure of Saul’s superior forces feels compelled to seek security outside Israel’s borders. (CSB)

*land of the Philistines.* For the second time David seeks refuge in the land of the Philistines (see 21:10–15). (CSB)

**27:2** *Achish … king of Gath.* See 21:10. In contrast to David’s previous excursion into Philistia, Achish is now ready to receive him because he has become known as a formidable adversary of Saul. Moreover, to offer sanctuary under the circumstances would obligate David and his men to serve at his call in any military venture (see 28:1). (CSB)

**27:3** *Ahinoam.* See note on 25:43. *Abigail.* See 25:39–42. (CSB)

**27:4** *he no longer searched for him.* Saul did not have sufficient military strength to make incursions into Philistine territory, and with David out of the country he no longer faced an internal threat to his throne. (CSB)

**27:5** *in one of the country towns.* David desired more independence and freedom of movement than was possible while residing under the very eyes of the king of Gath. (CSB)

*Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?* David implies that he is not worthy of this honor. (CSB)

**27:6** *Ziklag.* Location unknown, but it is included in a list of towns in southern Judah (see Jos 15:31). It was given to the tribe of Simeon (see Jos 19:1–5) and was presumably occupied by them (cf. Jdg 1:17–18), only to be lost to the Philistines at a later, undisclosed time. (CSB)

*it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since.* As royal property. This comment implies that the book of Samuel was written after the time of the division of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms—an important consideration in determining the date of the writing of the book (see Introduction: Literary Features, Authorship and Date). (CSB)

**27:7** *David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.* It was not until after the death of Saul that David moved his residence from Ziklag (see 2Sa 1:1; 2:1–3) to Hebron. (CSB)

**27:8** *Geshurites.* A people residing in the area south of Philistia who were not defeated by the Israelites at the time of the conquest (see Jos 13:1–3) and who are to be distinguished from the Geshurites residing in the north near the upper Jordan in Aram (see 2Sa 3:3; 13:37–38; Dt 3:14; Jos 12:5). (CSB)

*Girzites.* Not mentioned elsewhere in the OT. (CSB)

*Amalekites.* See note on 15:2. (CSB)

*Shur.* See note on 15:7. (CSB)

**27:9** *he did not leave a man or woman alive.* David’s reason for this is given in v. 11; his action conformed to that of Joshua in the conquest of Canaan (see, e.g., Jos 6:21 and note on Jos 6:17). (CSB)

**27:10** *Negev of Judah.* Negev in Hebrew means “dry” and designates a large area of southern Palestine from Beersheba to the highlands of the Sinai peninsula. (CSB)

*Jerahmeel.* The Jerahmeelites were descendants of Judah through Hezron (see 1Ch 2:9, 25). (CSB)

*Kenites.* See note on 15:6.

**27:12** *Achish trusted David.* David led Achish to believe that he was raiding outposts of Israelite territory when in actuality he was attacking the Geshurites, Girzites and Amalekites (see v. 8). (CSB)