

WHOSE SIDE IS THIS MAN ON?

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 27 and 28 confront us as readers with two really big surprises. For who would have thought, before reading chapter 27, that *David*, with all his past experiences of God and the countless examples of His protective care, should now, in a moment of desperation, turn to *the Philistines* for help and shelter. And who would have thought, before reading chapter 28, that Saul, having earlier launched a violent crusade to 'put away' all forms of witchcraft and demonism from Israel, 28. 3, should now, in a moment of desperation, turn to *occult powers* for their help and skills?

CHAPTER DIVISION

Verses 1-4	David cast down – a conversation with himself
Verses 5-7	David settled down – a country abode
Verses 8-12	David swooping down – a case of deception

EXPOSITION

Verses 1-4	David cast down – a conversation with himself
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Verse 1. *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.* David's words certainly hit the reader as something of a bombshell, and, because of the important issues which call for attention here, we shall need to spend a disproportionate amount of time in considering this opening verse.

No doubt many considerations weighed heavily on David's mind when he reached the decision he did, but one thing beyond question is that he had no confidence whatever in Saul's confession and good wishes recorded at the close of chapter 26. That David was right on that score is shown by verse 4 of our chapter, which makes it clear that Saul ceased searching for David, *not* because of any long-term change of heart on his part, but simply because David had removed himself beyond his reach and jurisdiction.

In spite of what he had said to Abishai in 26. 10, there was no evidence as David saw it that Saul was going to die in the foreseeable future. Back that night in Saul's camp, he had speculated that it was possible that one day Saul would 'descend into battle and perish' – but he has now come around to the view that, if he stayed in Israel, it would be *him*, and *not Saul*, who would 'perish'.

I find that, according to the biblical record, David was one of three men who thought they knew how and when he would die. Earlier, Goliath had said to him, 'Come to me, and *I* will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field', 1 Sam. 17. 44; and later, Ahithophel will say to Absalom, 'Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night. I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid, and all the people that are with him shall flee; and *I* will smite the king only', 2 Sam. 17. 1-2. Now, between those two incidents, David himself is convinced that he will perish by Saul's hand. And all three men were wrong! David did not die by the hand of Goliath, Saul or Ahithophel. In the event, he died as an old man – in bed. 'So David slept with his fathers', we read in 1 Kings 2, 'and was buried in the city of David', having 'reigned over Israel ... forty years', 1 Kings 2. 10.

But, of course, David had no way of knowing that and it isn't difficult to understand how David felt at this time. His was a precarious existence, to say the least. In terms of the contents of 1 Samuel, his victory over Goliath in chapter 17 has been followed by nine chapters largely packed with nail-biting, high-blood-pressure narrative. He has been hunted and tracked relentlessly by Saul and has had many *very* close shaves.

David has, for example, recently been betrayed for the *second* time by the Ziphites, men of his own tribe, 23. 19; 26. 1. Sometime earlier he had been informed by the Lord that the inhabitants of Keilah, who he had courageously rescued from a raiding party of Philistines, would, if besieged by Saul, have handed him over to the king, 23. 12. Nice people!

David clearly felt that now that, given his recent narrow escapes, he wasn't able to stay one step ahead of Saul indefinitely and to keep his band of six hundred men, not to speak of their families, concealed for ever. I referred just now to 'nine chapters' of 'nail-biting' narrative – and so they are – but this statistic is really very deceptive and grossly understates the true position. For it is clear that what we find in those nine chapters is just a very small sample of the fiery trials which befell David throughout what was in all likelihood a *nine-year* period. In due course, we will come to a tell-tale comment at the end of chapter 30. That chapter, having listed many of the cities and regions of Judah to which David sent gifts, closes with the words, 'and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt ('went about', literally)'. That is, David's flight from Saul had involved him in moving round over an extensive area, and our nine chapters provide us with just a handful of the hair-raising situations through which David and his men had passed as they did so.

It is hardly surprising therefore that such unremitting pressure took its toll, and that, in the end, the stresses and strains of David's hide-and-seek existence – with no foreseeable end to the tunnel – proved too much for him. When

at Keilah, its citizens would have delivered him up; when in the woods of Ziph, the local inhabitants had betrayed him; when seeking supplies at Nob, Doeg had reported him to Saul; when seeking supplies at Maon, the wealthy sheep-farmer there had insulted him and refused him any help.

But why, we may well ask, did David seek refuge in 'the land of the Philistines' of all places? What with David's widespread reputation as the slayer of Goliath, together with his previous unhappy experience and close call at Gath, recorded in chapter 21, we might have thought that Gath would have been the very last place to which he would flee. Surely for David to 'escape' from Israel to the Philistines would, in effect, be for him to jump 'out of the frying pan, into the fire'? In the biblical and graphic words of Amos, surely it would be 'as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him', Amos 5. 19.

'David', we may feel like asking, 'why not Moab (the original homeland of your great grandmother) or some other foreign land? Why "the land of the Philistines"?' I imagine that David chose Philistia, not so much because it was near at hand – though it was that – but because it was the one place where he could be confident Saul wouldn't dare pursue him – that Saul wouldn't want to risk sparking off a full-scale war for which neither he nor Israel were equipped. So, knowing that he would receive no welcome from any of Saul's allies and friends, David clearly concluded that his only hope of survival was to become an apparent ally of Saul's avowed enemies.

In attempting to explain David's uncharacteristic action at this point, I have no doubt that **one** of the factors which explained his sad failure was that he was exhausted – he was plain *weary*. And, unless I am mistaken, weariness is a far more effective enemy of Christian life and service today than many of us realize.

Apart from my own experience and observations, I note that not a few of the New Testament letters make reference to it. I read, for instance, not only Paul's own testimony in 2 Corinthians 4, 'Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, *we faint not (we are not weary)*', 2 Cor. 4. 1, but his exhortations to both the Galatians and the Thessalonians, 'Let us not be *weary* in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, *if we faint not*', Gal. 6. 9, and 'But ye, brethren, be not *weary* in well doing', 2 Thess. 3. 13. Turning to the letter to the Hebrews, I find myself confronted with, 'Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, *lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*', Heb. 12. 3, and, in Revelation 2, I hear the commendation given by the Lord Jesus Himself to the church at Ephesus, 'You have persevered and have patience ('endurance'), and have laboured for My name's sake and have not become *weary*', Rev. 2. 3 NKJV.¹

And as I see it, David was *weary*. We are all familiar with the precious promise at the end of Isaiah 40, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and *not be weary*; and they shall walk, and *not faint*', Isa. 40. 31. Of course, David didn't have that passage in his 'Bible' – but it seems to me that at the heart of David's problem lay the fact that at this time he *wasn't* 'waiting upon the Lord' – and so became 'weary' and 'faint'!

In reaching this conclusion about David's lack of 'waiting on the Lord', I note the statement of our verse, 'David said *in his heart*' – that is, he consulted with himself. Now it is certainly not wrong to 'commune with your own heart'. We might plead, for example, David's words in Psalms 4 and 77 about his nocturnal custom: 'Stand in awe, and sin not: *commune with your own heart* upon your bed, and be still', Ps. 4. 4, and, 'I call to remembrance my song in the night: *I commune with mine own heart*', Ps. 77. 6, and we might further point to his exclamation 'O my soul', which we find occasionally in his psalms.²

Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit appears to set this particular reference to David taking counsel with himself against the background of his practice, both earlier and later, of seeking counsel from God when making any major decision. In chapter 23, in connection with his smiting the Philistine raiders at Keilah, we read twice that 'David inquired of the Lord', 23. 2, 4, and, in chapter 30, in connection with his pursuit of the Amalekites, we find that 'David inquired at the Lord', 30. 8. And that reference in chapter 30 proves that, here in chapter 27, David still had access to Abiathar and his ephod, which enclosed the Urim and Thummim by which he was able to enquire of God. I find it particularly sad that David would ask counsel of God about smiting the Philistines in chapter 23 but not about going to live among them in chapter 27! Although I am delighted to note that, whereas he doesn't enquire of the Lord now about going down to Gath and from there to Ziklag, he does enquire of the Lord later about leaving Ziklag and returning to the land of Judah, 2 Sam. 2. 1. David was always ready to learn.

I observe that when speaking to himself here, he makes constant reference to himself – to both 'I' and 'me' three times each – but with not one mention of 'the Lord'. And this is the more striking when we contrast how he had expressed himself in the preceding chapter – making referring to 'the Lord' no less than 14 times in just 8½ verses of his reported speech, 26. 9-11; 17b-20; 22-23. At that time he had spoken of 'the Lord' delivering Saul into his hand, 26. 23; now he speaks, not of the Lord delivering him out of Saul's hand, but, in effect, of delivering himself (of 'escaping') out of Saul's hand. Then, in chapter 26, he had been concerned only that his life should be valued 'in the eyes of the Lord', 26. 24; now he is concerned only that he finds favour 'in the eyes of' a Philistine king, v. 5.

It seems clear that David's focus has totally changed. He has taken his eyes off the Lord and turned them onto himself – onto his circumstances, his anxieties, his problems. And, quite predictably, he began, metaphorically, to sink – just as Peter later did literally, 'when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?', Matt. 14. 28-31. And that quote gets us to the very root of David's problem – his lack of faith.

It is a great pity that, at this critical moment, David had no Jonathan at hand, who, back in chapter 23, had gone 'to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God', 23. 16. Now David lacks his soul-brother to perform again that priceless ministry of strengthening him by putting his weak hand into God's almighty hand!

G. K. Chesterton, a famous English journalist, writer and poet of the early twentieth century, was noted for being disorganized. On one occasion he sent a telegram to his wife, saying, 'Am in Market Harborough. *Where ought I to*

be?' His wife, Frances, cabled the answer, 'Home' – because, as she later explained, 'it was easier to get him home and to start him off again'. I am convinced that, rather than David looking only at his circumstances and persuading himself that he had no choice but to flee to the Philistines, he would have done far better asking himself, in Chesterton's words, 'Where *ought* I to be?', and calling out to God for an answer to that question.

If, as we will see, towards the beginning of chapter 28 Saul enquired of the Lord but received no answer, v. 6, here at the outset of chapter 27 David doesn't even enquire!

I recognize, of course, that in most circumstances it isn't wrong to take advantage of an opportunity to save one's own life. We read, for example, not only of many instances in the life of Paul when he did just that, but also of several occasions when the Lord Jesus Himself hid to escape from those who sought *His* life.³

And I acknowledge also that it is sometimes far from easy for the believer to discern and distinguish between prudence and unbelief. I have no reason to believe that David did it, but, for all I know, he may have asked himself, 'Do I lack faith in going to the Philistines, or do I lack sense in staying in Israel? If I remain in such a dangerous environment, am I trusting God or tempting God? Would staying be faith or presumption?' Certainly questions of that sort express a real practical issue which often exercises the minds of God's people today.

But, while accepting the force of these points in general, as far as David in his present situation was concerned, I believe he possessed some very clear pointers to the will of God.

And probably the most powerful indication of the Lord's will for him came through the manifold ways in which God had proved Himself faithful as David's deliverer through all David's previous experiences. If He, the Lord, had successfully protected David so many times before, what reason did David have for doubting that He could, and would, continue to protect him now?

It is true that David had no reason to trust *his king*, who, in the past, had gone back on his word several times⁴, but David had every reason to trust *his God*, who, in the past, had shown Himself both able and willing to preserve David's life in keeping with the assurances He had given him.

'David', we may well ask, 'have you forgotten ... ? David, *have you forgotten what happened back in chapter 16* – when Samuel, God's prophet, anointed you as Israel's next king? Do you really believe that the Lord is going to let his chosen king now 'perish' at the hand of Saul? Is His purpose to be so easily thwarted?

'David, *have you forgotten what happened in chapter 17* – when you expressed your confidence to Saul that, 'the Lord that delivered me out of the paw (hand) of the lion, and out of the paw (hand) of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine', 17. 27? Well, did God not do it? Of course, he did! And is the God who then delivered you, not only from the 'hand' of the lion and the bear, but the hand of the Philistine champion, now unable to deliver you from 'the hand of Saul'? And where is the trust in God you asserted to Goliath's face; 'all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's', 17. 47? David, I have to say, that the David of 1 Samuel 27 would do well to listen to the David of 1 Samuel 17!

And we might well ask, 'Can't the man who once overcame *Gath's Giant, Goliath*, now overcome *Bunyan's Giant Despair*?' I think particularly of the words which Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, puts into the mouth of Hopeful when Hopeful spoke to Christian as they both lay imprisoned in the dungeon of Giant Despair's Doubting Castle: "My brother", said Hopeful, "rememberest thou not how valiant thou hast been heretofore? Apollyon could not crush thee, nor could all that thou didst hear, or see, or feel, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What hardship, terror, and amazement hast thou already gone through! And art thou now nothing but fear!' 'Well, on Saturday', Bunyan continues, 'about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day. Now, a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out in this passionate speech: "What a fool", quoth he, "am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle" ... Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt as he turned the key gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the castleyard, and, with his key, opened that door also. Then they thrust open the iron gate to make their escape with speed ... Then they went on, and came to the King's highway, and so were safe, because they were out of (Giant Despair's) jurisdiction'. 'Come on, David, show your self a giant-slayer again!

'And *have you forgotten what happened in chapters 18-19* – when God mercifully protected you, not only from Saul's spear on more than one occasion, and from his cunning plans to make you fall by the hand of the Philistines, but from his attempt to have you murdered by his own hit-men? Don't you remember that in those days it was *Saul* who was afraid of *you*, 18. 12, when, if anything, we should have thought that you would have feared Saul. But you didn't – so why fear him now? David, it has been well said, When your knees knock, kneel on them.

'David, *have you forgotten what happened in chapter 21* – when you on a previous occasion went over to Achish of Gath? Don't you remember the lesson you learnt then and which you expressed so eloquently in the very last words you sang when leaving the land of the Philistines, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but *the Lord* delivereth him out of them all ... None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate', Psa. 34. 22? David, is 'the Lord' no longer able to 'deliver' you out of your 'afflictions'? On that previous visit, you will recall, you escaped only by an act of *feigned* madness. Now, frankly, for you to go down the same road again is an act of *real* madness.

'David, *have you forgotten what happened in chapter 22* – when you went to 'Moab, and ... said to the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know *what God will do for me*', 22. 3? Do you no longer believe that God is able to 'do' for you – and that you now need to 'do' for yourself?⁵

'David, *have you forgotten what happened in chapter 23* – when God encouraged you, not only by the words of good Jonathan, 23. 16-18, but by a spectacular case of divine intervention? David, don't you remember that moment when 'Saul and his men compassed' you and your men to take you, and that just then 'there came a messenger to Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land', 23. 27. Such an outstanding instance of God's providence should surely speak volumes to you now of the Lord's ability to work behind the scenes if necessary to preserve you. Surely a God who could deliver you in such a dramatic fashion then can, if necessary, do it again.

'David, *have you forgotten what happened in chapter 24* – when, without any initiative on your part, and following Saul's 'coincidental' call of nature, the Lord placed him, the king, vulnerable and helpless, at your mercy in the cave? Don't you remember how you then told Saul that you happily committed your cause to God; 'The Lord ... plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand', were your very words, 24. 15? And don't you recall Saul's own acknowledgement, 'Behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand', 24. 20?

'David, *have you forgotten what happened in chapter 25* – when God renewed His promise of your ultimate triumph through the lips of Abigail; 'the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house ... when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel', 25. 28, 30? What, in the light of her words then, do you imagine that Abigail will think of your decision to flee to the Philistines – taking her with you, 27. 3? And don't you remember how churlish Nabal died, without you having to touch one hair of his head? Doesn't his sudden and unexpected death give you the assurance that the Lord has all things in His control, and encourage you to trust Him to remove Saul also in His own good time?

'And David, *have you forgotten what happened recently in chapter 26* – when you yourself said of Saul, 'As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish (literally, 'be swept away')', v. 10? Why then are you now so fearful that you will 'be swept away' by his hand? Don't you remember how, when you and Abishai went down into Saul's camp, the Lord preserved you both in that 'a deep sleep from the Lord fell on them', v. 12? Is His arm now shortened that He cannot preserve you still? At that time, you expressed your desire with respect to the Lord, 'let *him* deliver me out of all tribulation (adversity, distress, affliction)', v. 24. How is it that now you substitute for such sane and spiritual words the silly idea that you must do the delivering yourself? Don't you recall Saul's final statement to you before you parted for the last time, 'thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail'? Do such words now mean nothing to you?

'Oh, David, have you so forgotten all these things that you must now look to the Philistines rather than to the Lord for your safety and security?' We would all, I am sure, be startled at how soon and how much David forgot were it not that we know *our own* fickle hearts and failing memories!

So it is that discouragement and despair succeed in swaying David to do something which Saul and his 3,000 men could never in themselves have persuaded him to do, and David now succumbs to the very temptation he had told Saul in chapter 26 he feared the most, namely that of being driven away by men 'from sharing in the inheritance of the Lord', 26. 19.⁶ In that chapter, Saul had acknowledged that he had 'played the fool', v. 21; now, alas, it is David's turn!

As I see it, in terms of his spiritual well-being, this period in David's life stands in marked contrast to what had gone before. I can find no evidence that David composed any psalms during the entire sixteen months which he spent at Gath and Ziklag – not even of praise for the Lord's goodness to him – whereas, as a bare minimum, he wrote eight psalms in the preceding period⁷ – and probably many more. I acknowledge that there may be traces of David's stay at Gath in the title 'Gittith', found at the head of Psalms 8, 81 and 84 – 'Gittith' being the feminine form of 'Gittite' (one who came from Gath). This title may indicate some form of musical instrument used, and perhaps manufactured, in Gath, to be used as an accompaniment to the singing of these psalms, or it may signify a tune associated with Gath – perhaps a military march used by Gittite warriors. But, whichever, this doesn't affect the fact that there is no evidence that David wrote any psalms during the time he was at Gath or Ziklag. Indeed we know from its title that at least one of the three 'Gittith' psalms was written by somebody other than David at a later date.⁸ I cannot be dogmatic but this silence of scripture may well be intended as an indication that David's spiritual life was at something of a low ebb throughout this period.

In one sense our chapter completes a cycle. Back in chapter 17, David had come into prominence in Saul's life on account of a Philistine from Gath. And now in chapter 27, David moves out of Saul's life on account of a Philistine from Gath. The most significant difference is that, whereas in chapter 17 he had steadfastly refused to 'flee' *from the Philistine champion*, as had the men in Israel's army, 17. 24, he now chooses to flee *to the Philistine king*.

'There is nothing better for me', he said, 'than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines'. 'Did I hear that right, David? Nothing better? Nothing better than hastily to leave God's land and people to go and dwell among the ungodly and uncircumcised?' I beg to differ!

'And Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand'. The word translated 'despair' occurs only six times in the Old Testament, and is rendered 'no hope' on three of these.⁹ Although David speaks of Saul 'having no hope' of him, and of Saul's therefore seeing no point in continuing to pursue him, in reality it was David who was guilty of 'having no hope' of himself, and of seeing no point in continuing to hide himself from Saul in what he had so recently called 'the inheritance of the Lord', 26. 19!

David believed that, if he took refuge in the land of the Philistines', as he said, 'Saul shall despair of me'. But it was in reality David who, first, while in the land of Israel, despaired of himself and his own life.

As we noted earlier, David was confident that Saul wouldn't follow him into the land of the Philistines – and thereby risk provoking a war for which Israel was totally unprepared.

Verses 2-3. *'David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath'*. Once given David's decision to go to Philistines, 'Gath' was a good place to start. Apart from being near the Philistine/Israelite border, it was the capital city of the territory under the authority of Achish, one of the five Philistine 'lords'.¹⁰ As Gath is located almost thirty miles northwest of the Desert of Ziph, where David had been hiding, 26. 1, the task of moving himself, his two wives, together with all his men and their families, there would have required considerable effort. That David was willing to undertake such a major relocation of his forces and his family clearly meant that he planned to stay in Philistia for some time – presumably until God saw fit to remove Saul by one means or another.

I see no reason to doubt that this 'Achish, the son of Maoch' was the same king as the 'Achish' of whom we read in the latter section of chapter 21.¹¹ Assuming this to be so, we may wonder why it was that Achish should so readily receive David this time, when he wouldn't do so back then.

There were, I suggest, several reasons.

(a) First, a lot of water had gone under the bridge since chapter 21. Subsequent events, no doubt well monitored by the Philistine intelligence network, had demonstrated that David had been outlawed by Saul – that Saul regarded, and treated, David as his 'enemy', 18. 29; 19. 17. The Philistines no doubt assumed, quite reasonably, that David now equally regarded Saul as his enemy – which is, as we have seen, just how David's men regarded him, 24. 4; 26. 8. That is, the Philistines were aware that, in the eyes of *their* arch-enemy Saul, David fell into the same category as they did, 14. 24, 47; 18. 25. For his part, Achish could only be delighted to find that, as he saw things, he and David now had a common foe. In other words, in the reckoning of Achish, 'Any enemy of Saul is a friend of ours'.

(b) Second, David was no longer the solitary fugitive who, back in chapter 21, had then recently slain Goliath, the champion from Gath. This time, David brought with him a formidable band of 600 fighting men, whose services Achish could certainly use – indeed, whose prowess, he may have supposed, might even tip the scales in any future conflict with Saul. We know that the use of mercenaries was widespread throughout the ancient world.¹² Such private troops were often disgruntled men who were glad to hire out their services to some neighbouring regime, or who were political fugitives, whose loyalty to their new 'employer' was largely driven by their hatred for the ruler who had driven them into exile.¹³ Achish is therefore only too glad to welcome the influx of 600 trained mercenaries.

(c) Third, Achish would have remembered that David had caused no trouble to him on his previous brief visit, and, given the superstitious regard in which mad people were held in the Ancient Near East, he may even have expected the presence of a recovered madman to bring him good fortune.¹⁴

Verse 4. *'And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him'*. David's confidence that Saul wouldn't follow him into land of Philistines, v. 1, therefore proved well-grounded and his tactic of fleeing there entirely successful.

'That David was fled'. This had been the keynote of David's life for many years and this is in fact the last of seven times when we read that he 'fled' from Saul.¹⁵

Verses 5-7 David settled down – a country abode

Verse 5. *'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?'* David led a large contingent of warriors, and it must have been obvious to him that, whatever the personal views of Achish, the Philistines more generally were hardly likely to welcome Israelite soldiers alongside them unless they felt confident that, should a military confrontation arise, these soldiers would fight against their fellow-Israelites.

David and his men had the initial advantage, of course, that the Philistines would have been well aware that Saul had already proved himself to be their enemy. But David really needed to persuade the Philistines that he and his men were the enemy, not only now but would remain so in the future, not only of Saul himself but of Israel as a whole. We know, of course, that under no circumstances would David have been willing to attack his fellow-countrymen. So, in squaring this circle, David faced a somewhat difficult task – in addition, of course, to the problem of feeding and financing his small army.

Very astutely, David concluded that he needed to get out from under the eye of Achish and of his officials – not only to avoid provoking the envy of those officials – as had happened previously in the case of some of Saul's servants – but so as to have a place of his own away from the constant surveillance to which he was exposed in the capital city. This would give him the opportunity to launch attacks on some of Israel's enemies without the Philistines ever becoming aware of it. And so, 'Let them give me a place in some town in the country', he requested, 'that I may dwell there' – away, he added, from 'the royal city', a description well chosen to compliment Achish on the size, importance, and authority of his city.

Verse 6. *'Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day'*. During the time of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, Ziklag had in fact formed part of the tribal allotment of Simeon, which came 'within the inheritance of the children of Judah'.¹⁶ But I know of no evidence that either Simeon or Judah had ever actually possessed it, and, if they had done so, obviously at some point it had since fallen into the hands of the Philistines.

The city of Ziklag was located some 25 miles or so to the south-east of Gath – not very far from several Israelite cities. From Achish's point of view, therefore, it was not only somewhat out of the way, but having David's forces stationed there would provide him with a very welcome defensive buffer along that particular border – not only against Israel itself but against marauders who sometimes made their raids from the south. But we can see, and no doubt David could see, God's overruling in Achish's choice of Ziklag, in that Ziklag was near, not only to the Philistine border with Israel, but also to the frontier with several of those marauding tribes who were enemies of both Israel and the Philistines.¹⁷ This gave David the perfect opportunity he wanted in a location where his activities wouldn't be monitored by Achish.

'Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day'. Having been given by Achish to David, who not long after became king of Judah, and thereafter of Israel, this city was later annexed to the lands of the crown, and, consequent upon the division of the nation in the days of Jeroboam and Rehoboam became the property of 'the kings of Judah'. Interestingly, therefore, the legal title to Ziklag did full circle – in that, according to chapter 15 of the Book of Joshua, the city had originally been included in 'the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah', Josh. 15. 21, 31. Truly, the ways of the Lord are past finding out.

We might note in passing that the phrase 'unto this day', coupled with the title 'the kings of Judah', is evidence that our narrative was written at some time between the revolt of Jeroboam and the Babylonian captivity. And it is interesting to note that, following that captivity, when the Jews – in effect, 'the children of Judah' – returned from their exile, some of them settled in Ziklag, which was, of course, part of their original tribal allotment, Neh. 11. 28.

Verse 7. *'And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months'*. Apart from later references to the duration of his reign, this is the only precise time-note we find in the entire narrative of David's life.¹⁸ The Holy Spirit clearly took careful note of just how long David spent in the land of the Philistines! The Lord knows the number of years – and months – which the locust eats, Joel 2. 25!

According to 1 Chronicles 12. 1-7, it was while at Ziklag that David was joined by some outstanding warriors from Saul's own tribe, 'These are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close ('shut himself up') because of Saul the son of Kish: and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war (helpers 'in the battle' – that is, the battle with Amalek in 1 Samuel 30¹⁹). They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin'. The expression 'Saul's brethren' tells us that these 23 ambidextrous archers and stone-slingers came from the tribe of Benjamin, not that they belonged to his immediate family or near relatives – although I note that mentioned first were two brothers from Gibeah, Saul's own town, 1 Chron. 12. 3. It seems therefore that there were certain features of Saul's reign which fostered discontent even among some of Saul's own tribe, who, weary with Saul's misgovernment, came to realise that Israel's true hopes lay with David. I guess it was particularly fitting that these men of Benjamin should later have a hand in securing victory over the Amalekites in chapter 30 – in one sense, taking forward Saul's God-directed initiative against the Amalekites in chapter 15.

I have to confess that I am unsure about the meaning of one of the expressions in the passage from 1 Chronicles 12. In verse 4 of that passage, we read that 'Ismaiah the Gibeonite' was 'a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty'. This could either mean that Ismaiah brought with him thirty valiant Benjamites, being their leader and commander, or, perhaps more likely, given the repeated references in the previous chapter to 'the thirty' with reference to David's own mighty men, 11. 15, 25, that Ismaiah subsequently became one of David's thirty men and that, at some time, he was actually 'over' them.

The number of David's men is given in verse 2 as 'six hundred'. Yet, having been boosted by these 23 mighty men – together with a further seven 'mighty men of valour' from Manasseh (who had previously been captains of thousands in Manasseh) who we will meet a little later, 1 Chron. 12. 19-21, David's men are still described as being 'six hundred' in chapter 30 (vv. 9-10). I conclude that 'six hundred' is something of a rounded number – a conclusion supported in part (a) by the addition of the word 'about' – 'about six hundred' – back in 23. 13, and in part (b) by the fact that, as well as the several references to David's men, we read of other groups of 'six hundred' throughout the books of Judges and Samuel – to whom there are eight other references to be precise.²⁰

Verses 8-12 David swooping down – a case of deception

Verse 8. *'David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites'*. The expressions 'went up' in our verse and 'Achish said' in verse 10, indicate repeated action. That is, David made many incursions into foreign territory, and each time Achish enquired where he had been.

The same Hebrew word translated 'invaded' occurs in the question of Achish in v. 10, 'Whither have ye *made a road* to day?' – that is, 'Where have you raided today?' The basic idea in the word is that of 'stripping off'; it is used in chapters 18 and 19 of both Jonathan and Saul 'stripping off' their garments. In a military context such as this, it probably carries the idea of stripping the dead for plunder. We are being told that David and his men attacked these various villages or encampments, killed all the occupants, and stripped both the bodies of the slain and the village or encampment itself.

It is clear from 23. 1 that the Philistines themselves often engaged in raiding the lands around them; 'they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors'. It would therefore have been no surprise to Achish – or to anyone else – that one who was an ally or vassal of the Philistines would also engage in pillaging raids. David and his men were now in operation as desert raiders who raided desert raiders!

'For those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt'. All these peoples had lived in the region of southern Canaan and northern Sinai 'of old' – that is, 'from ancient times' – a statement wholly consistent with what we know from elsewhere about one of these peoples, the Amalekites. Of

them, Balaam had taken up his fifth 'parable', or oracle, saying, 'Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever', Num. 24. 20 – in all probability a reference to the fact that the very first attack on Israel after their Exodus had come from the Amalekites – 'when', as Moses had said at the time, 'ye were come forth out of Egypt', Exod. 17. 8-16, which connects, of course, with the expression 'unto the land of Egypt' at the end of our verse.²¹

Verse 9. *'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'*. Some have argued that David was acting scripturally here in clearing some of the land given to Abraham of its pagan inhabitants. Certainly there is no evidence that *Saul* was now doing anything to claim Israel's territory – as he had done so well in his earlier days; 'Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them', 14. 47. Indeed, it has been claimed that, when David left no survivors, he was doing exactly what the Lord had commanded; of the occupants of Canaan Israel was told, 'when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them', Deut. 7. 2, and it is claimed that David was, in effect, clearing the Promised Land of its pagan occupants so that Israel could later occupy it.

And yet we are told explicitly in verse 10 that David's real reason for slaughtering the inhabitants of every village or encampment he attacked was very different. We are told plainly that he did what he did – not out of the profoundly spiritual motive of exterminating the ungodly nations around – not because he been directed to do so by the Lord – but for the far more pragmatic reason that he simply couldn't afford to leave any survivors to report to Achish what he was really up to. It was, in truth, all one big cover-up operation. David killed these men and women for no more worthy reason than to cover up his steps, just as, many years later, he would have Uriah the Hittite killed to cover up his steps, although then with even less justification.

Nor can we claim that, in the case of the Amalekites at least, David was carrying through the commission which God had given to Saul in chapter 15, and which Saul had then signally failed to fulfill. Saul had then been under remit to put Amalek 'under the ban' – 'Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass', 15. 3. Our verse lists out, almost word for word, the very same categories, but it is important to observe that David 'destroyed' only 'man and woman' (a point noted again in v. 10) – and that he 'took away' the oxen and sheep, the camels and asses, v. 9. So that, if David had been attacking the Amalekites in order to obey God's command given to Saul back in chapter 15, we would have to say that he was no more obedient than Saul had been, who spared the Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle. Yet, on the subject of David's slaughter of all the Amalekite men and women, it would certainly be true to say that it was just as well for David and his men that, later, the Amalekites, for their own reasons, were more restrained than they had been – taking their womenfolk captive as opposed to killing them, 30. 2.

'And returned, and came to Achish'. David reported back to Achish – presumably to hand over to the king a significant share of the plunder. I suggest, though cannot prove, that there would have been some form of vassal-treaty between Achish and David, whereby Achish was guaranteed 'the king's share' of all his vassal's spoils. The remainder of the booty went, of course, to provide the food necessary for David, his men and their families.

Verse 10. *'Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites'*. As we are well aware, of course, David had been attacking and destroying Israel's enemies, but, when reporting his enterprises, he very shrewdly gave Achish the impression that his raids were directed against the southern portions either of Judah itself or of clans closely associated with Judah – such as the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites. The Jerahmeelites were a clan on the southern frontier of Judah, bordering also on the territory of the Kenites.²² And, for their part, it seems that the Kenites were in origin a Midianite tribe.²³ But Moses father-in-law had been a Kenite, Judg. 1. 16; 4. 11, and Moses had promised him that, if he accompanied Israel in the wilderness, 'what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee', Num. 10. 32. Although some Kenites did subsequently accompany Judah into their inheritance in the Promised Land, Judg. 1. 16, we find that, in the days of Saul, the Kenites dwelt among the Amalekites. But, because they had shown 'kindness' (*'chesed'*, steadfast love) to Israel 'when they came up out of Egypt',²⁴ Saul had deliberately given them the opportunity to distance themselves from the Amalekites to avoid being caught in the crossfire when he launched his attack on Amalek, 1 Sam. 15. 6.

Verse 11. *'David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David'*. It is necessary to correct the KJV translation on two scores in this verse. First, the AV erroneously inserts the word 'tidings', giving the impression that David took steps simply to see that no unhelpful news report reached Gath. Whereas the reference isn't to any suppression of news but to the absence of any prisoners. Captives would normally have formed an important part of any spoil – usually that they might be sold into slavery – but David didn't dare bring back any captives with him. And, because David had been careful to target those who were enemies of the Philistines as well as the enemies of Israel, he could rest assured that there would be no interested third-parties to report any of the massacres to Achish.

'So will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines'. This should read, 'And such was his custom as long as he dwelt in the country of the Philistines'.²⁵ That is, the words are not, as in the KJV, put by the Holy Spirit into the mouths of those who David slew – they are rather the Holy Spirit's summary of David's behaviour throughout the period he was among the Philistines.

Verse 12. *'Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever'*. Because, throughout this period, Achish accepted David's version of what David was doing, the Philistine king concluded that David had made himself 'to stink, to have a bad smell' (literal translation)

among his own people. This is the word of 2 Samuel 10; ' when the children of Ammon saw that they *stank* before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians', 2 Sam. 10. 6.²⁶ Achish was convinced that, on account of David's regular forays into the territory of Judah, David had well and truly 'got up the nose' of his own nation! – and that David had now burned all his bridges, not only with king Saul, but with the people of Israel in general.

I suppose it is one of the many ironies of this section of 1 Samuel that David would soon be using spoil taken from the Amalekites, not, as now, to give part to a Philistine king who believed that he was making himself wholly abhorrent to his people, but to seal his friendship with the elders of his people, 30. 26-31.

David had hoped that, by moving to Philistia, Saul would have given up looking for him, v. 1, which he did, v. 4. No doubt, David's men and their families had enjoyed their first sound sleep in many months. David had been given his own country town, well away from Gath, from which he had been able to attack some of Israel's oldest enemies – so helping Israel – while alleging he had been attacking Israelite territory – so convincing Achish. He no longer had to plead for handouts for his men from the likes of Ahimelech or Nabal. Now he and they were able to live high on the spoils of their raids. And, because of the precautions he had taken, his deception had worked a treat.

Undoubtedly, God had been good to David. Although, as we saw earlier, David's flight to 'the land of the Philistines' had betrayed scant faith in God and His ability to fulfil His promises in preserving David, the Lord had graciously cared for him there. This doesn't *necessarily* mean, of course, that David's action in leaving the land of Israel for the land of the Philistines turned out for the best in the long run. But we will hold back the question whether that was so or not until we reach the end of chapter 29 and have the advantage of observing the developments there.

Pick up the lessons :

Verse 1. I expressed my view that one of the factors which explained David's sad failure was that he was weary, noted several references to weariness in the New Testament, and suggested that weariness is a far more dangerous enemy of Christian life and service today than many of us realize. Let us determine therefore to spend more time in the presence of the One who has promised, 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint'.

I suggested that the reference to David taking counsel with himself is set against the background of David's normal practice of seeking counsel from God when making any major decision, and noted that in verse 1 he made constant reference to himself but none to the Lord. I further suggested that this was an indication that David had taken his eyes off the Lord and turned them onto himself – onto his circumstances, his anxieties, his problems. But how do I face my pressures and problems? Do I view them in the light of God's past and present provision and enabling – or do I allow them to come between me and Him? In other words, do my circumstances and trials drive me to the Lord, or, in effect, drive away from Him?

I suggested that another root of David's problem was his lack of faith. I find that I am never free from the temptation to doubt God and His word. In his book 'The Holy War', John Bunyan describes how, when the town of Mansoul was in the power of Diabolos (the devil), *Incredulity* (the reluctance and unwillingness to believe) was made Lord Mayor of the town. When Immanuel captured the town, Incredulity was doomed to execution, but managed to break out of prison, 'and lay lurking in such places and holes as he might, until he should again have opportunity to do the town of Mansoul a mischief'. Yet again, when the devil assaulted the town with the hope of retaking it, 'Old Incredulity', as Bunyan labelled him, reappeared, and was made general of the army 'because none truer than he to the tyrant' – to Diabolos, that is. After the assailing army was defeated, and many of the officers and soldiers in it were put to death, Incredulity still managed to evade capture. How often I have to pray, with the father of the lad with the unclean spirit at the foot of the Mount of the Transfiguration, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief', Mark 9. 24.

I acknowledged that it is not always easy for the believer to distinguish between prudence and unbelief – between trusting God and tempting God – between faith and presumption. We need – as David should have done – to judge each situation in the light of God's word to us.

I posed the question why, if the Lord had proved Himself faithful to David in the past in meeting his every need, David should now doubt that He could, and would, continue to meet his need now? But I was careful to add that we will be startled at how soon and how much David forgot of God's past faithfulness *only* if we lose sight of our own fickle hearts and failing memories! Let us praise God today that we have such a longsuffering and gracious Saviour who doesn't forget us but who bears with *our* forgetfulness.

Verses 4 and 12. I noted that Saul 'sought no more again for him', and that 'Achish believed David', and learn that the seeming success of a policy or action is not necessarily a guarantee that it was God's will.²⁷

Verse 7. We discovered that David abode with the Philistines, and I guess we might well ask, in words similar to those of the Lord to Elijah much later, 1 Kings 19. 9, 'What are you doing *here*, David?' Just, I suppose, as we might also ask "What are *you* doing here, Abram?', when the patriarch was in Egypt, passing his wife off as only his sister, Gen. 12. 10-20. Just as we might ask, 'What are *you* doing here, Peter?', when, having fled in Gethsemane, he sat warming himself among those who had apprehended the Lord Jesus and brought Him to the house of the high priest, Luke 22. 24-55. But the issue which faces me is not why Abram, David, Elijah or Peter were where they were at these times, but whether the Lord ever has occasion to say to me, 'And what are *you* doing *here*, Malcolm?'

And we noted that, apart from later references to the duration of his reign, the time of David's stay in the country of the Philistines is the only precise time-note we find in the entire narrative of David's life. I observed that, as far as I can tell, this period was marked by an absence of any psalm-writing and took note that the Lord knows the number of the years – and months – which the locust eats. Let us determine to cleave to the Lord and to starve that locust!

End-notes

¹ The word used in the last two references, Heb. 12.3; Rev. 2.3, is a synonym for that found in the earlier references.

² See Psa. 16. 2; 103. 1, 2, 22.

³ See Acts 9. 25 (with 2 Cor. 11. 32-33); 14. 6; 17. 10; 19. 30-31. Also Luke 4. 30; John 8. 59; 12. 36. And compare Matt. 10. 23.

⁴ See 1 Sam. 19. 6, 9-10; 24. 20-21; 26. 2.

⁵ True, it was about that time that Saul slew the priests of Nob, and as David now saw it, perhaps he thought he would go the same way. But such fears were groundless. During the course of His people's history, the Lord has permitted many a tyrant to 'go so far, but no farther'. Jezebel could do away with Naboth, but not with Elijah. Jehoiakim could slay Urijah the prophet, but not Jeremiah, Jer. 26. 20-24. Herod could kill James with the sword, but not Peter, Acts 12. 1-10.

⁶ Having won such a great moral victory over Saul in chapter 26, David is now overcome by despair.

⁷ See the titles of Psalms 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63, 142.

⁸ Psa. 81 was written by Asaph.

⁹ Isa. 57. 10; Jer. 2. 25; 18. 12.

¹⁰ It has been suggested that it was while at Gath here in 1 Sam. 27 that David acquired the 600 mercenaries referred to in 2 Sam. 15. 18; 'all the Gittites, six hundred men who came at his feet from Gath', lit. I cannot accept this. Apart from any other considerations, it would mean that from then on David would have had in the region of 1,200 men with him – the 600 of 23. 13 plus this further 600. This makes a nonsense of chapter 30, which makes it clear that David had only about 600 men available to him in total.

As I see it, these 600 Gittites probably joined David's forces as mercenaries following his victory over the Philistines recorded in 2 Sam. 8. 1, 'after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines'. I note that the word 'Methegammah' is rendered 'the bridle of the mother-city' in the Revised Version¹⁰; 'mother-city' clearly being a description of the capital, Gath, as confirmed by the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 18.1; 'after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns ('daughters', literally; a reference to its surrounding towns) out of the hand of the Philistines'.

I can't add anything to the comment in the Cambridge Bible about the term 'took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines' – 'The most probable explanation of this obscure expression is "*took the bridle of the metropolis out of the hand of the Philistines*"; i.e. wrested from them the control of their chief city. This is equivalent to the statement in 1 Chron. 18. 1 that "David took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines"; and it may be noticed that the metaphor of the "mother-city" is employed there, for the word translated "towns" literally means "*daughters*"; A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Second Book of Samuel*. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Cambridge University Press, 1891.

(This interpretation is consistent with the fact that 'Ittai *the Gittite*' isn't mentioned until well after 2 Sam. 8.1; namely for the first time in 2 Sam. 15. 19.)

¹¹ I have an open mind on whether the 'Achish, the son of Maach' of 1 Sam. 27. 2 is one and the same as 'Achish, the son of Maachah' of 1 Kings 2. 39. If there is only one 'Achish' throughout, he would have reigned for 50 years – not impossible but not really likely. It is possible that the same name (or title?) was carried by several individuals and that the Achish of 1 Kings 2 was a son or even grandson of the earlier Achish. It might even be that the 'personal' name of the 'Achish' of 1 Sam. 27. 2 was 'Maachah', and that the personal name of his father had been 'Maach'.

¹² Compare Jer. 46. 20–21.

¹³ Many of the Greek tyrants of the 5th century B.C. joined the Persian army after being expelled from their positions and fought against the Greeks at the Battle of Marathon.

¹⁴ See the notes on 1 Sam. 21. 13.

¹⁵ For the other six occasions, see 19. 10, 12, 18; 20. 1; 21.10; 22. 17.

¹⁶ See Josh. 15. 21, 31; 19. 1, 5, 31.

¹⁷ For evidence of the hostility between the Amalekites and the Philistines see 1 Sam. 30. 16.

¹⁸ Compare 2 Sam. 2. 11; 5. 5; 1 Chron. 3. 4 for the only other instance of a time-note in David's life which specifies a number of months.

¹⁹ The word translated 'war' is found on David's lips in 1 Sam. 30. 24; For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike'.

²⁰ The books of Judges and Samuel often specify units of six hundred' men. Apart from the several references to David's company, 1 Sam. 23. 13; 27. 2; 30. 9, we also read of groups of six hundred' in Judg. 3. 31; 18. 11, 16-17; 20. 47; 1 Sam. 13. 15; 14. 2; and 2 Sam. 15. 18.

It seems that the reference to David's chief 'Thirty' was in fact a title for the exclusive group. I note that more than more than 30 names appear in the list of the Thirty – a fact acknowledged by the Holy Spirit, 2 Sam. 23 – especially v. 37. (It is possible that, when one of David's mighty men died, someone else was appointed to take his place.)

That is, neither of the descriptions 'six hundred' or 'the Thirty' were meant to be taken precisely. If David's 'six hundred' was also used as a rough title, clearly the actual number of his men could not have been far off six hundred because of the split into 'four hundred' and 'two hundred' which plays such a significant part in chapter 30 – and clearly none of David's men had been left at Ziklag to defend it.

²¹ Compare also the references to 'Shur' in Exod. 15. 22 and 1 Sam. 27. 8.

²² See the article 'Jerahmeelites' in the IVP 'New Bible Dictionary'.

²³ Num. 10. 29; Judg. 1. 16; 4. 11. Some scholars claim that the name 'Kenite' means 'smith', and the presence of copper to the south-east of the Gulf of Aqabah, the Kenite-Midianite region, suggests they may be right.

²⁴ Exod. 18. 9, 10, 19; Num. 10. 29-32.

²⁵ See, for instance, Mr Darby's New Translation. The NKJV translates, 'Thus was his behaviour all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines'.

²⁶ The same word is also found in 'all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was *had in abomination* with the Philistines', 1 Sam. 13. 4, and ' Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art *abhorred* of thy father', 2 Sam. 16. 21.

²⁷ Compare Num. 20. 7-12.