

Shrewd and Cunning David

“David is being so cunning in this passage, that even now we’re not exactly sure what he was up to” – Alistair Begg (paraphrase)

“Every complex problem has a simple solution... that is wrong.” – Jim White

Verses 1-4

David Bad

Does David lose faith in the promise that he will be king?

25:30 “And when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel...”

Versus 27:1 “Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul.”

David Good

Or does David correctly understand that he is in danger, and through his insight and intelligence make a choice to preserve his life, cooperate with God’s revealed plan, and protect his men and family with him?

27:4 “And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him.”

Verses 5-7

David Bad

Does David forget his destiny and align himself with Achish, the enemy’s king?

27:5 “If I have found favor in your eyes... why should your servant...”

David Good

Or is David, through flattery and cunning, deceiving the sworn enemies of Israel to continue God’s purposes during his exile?

27:6 “So that day Achish gave him Ziklag. Therefore, Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.”

Verses 8-11

David Bad

Has David reduced himself from an upstanding man of God to nothing more than a lying, self-reliant, desert raider, plundering towns for their spoil, and killing to cover his lies? (See verses 10 and 11)

David Good

Or, having procured a base of operations outside of Achish’s purview, is David waging war against Israel’s historic enemy, fulfilling the commands given by Moses in Deuteronomy 7?

(see verse 8 and 9, and Deuteronomy 7:2)

Chapter 28:1-2

David Bad

Has David finally been caught in his own web of lies, now stuck between a rock and a hard place as he marches in the enemy’s army towards Israel? If he refuses Achish his lies are revealed, but if he accepts he marches against his own country and betrays everything his life has stood for.

David Good

Or, is David’s ruse coming to its epic conclusion, where he plans on betraying Achish and saving Saul and the armies of Israel once and for all from the Philistines?

Consider the ambiguous 28:2, “Very well, you shall know what your servant can do.”

For the precedent Hebrews betraying the Philistines in battle, see 1 Sam. 14:20-21

What Can We Learn?

1. *There’s one thing we have to agree on, and it’s not the correct interpretation of this passage.*
2. *There’s one person that can judge, and it’s not you or me.*
3. *There’s one true King and Messiah, and it’s not David.*

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. What do you think about David’s choices in this chapter? Do you think he was walking with God or not?
2. Why is it important to allow for different perspectives on non-essential doctrines in the church body?
3. Why are we not supposed to judge others? How does this chapter show us our inability to do so? Also, how are you tempted to judge others?
4. How does this passage show us the superiority of Jesus, who had no deceit in him?