

I Samuel 27 Handout

In the last chapter, David and Saul part ways for the last time. David has abandoned all hope of reconciliation and feels that his only option is to head to enemy lands.

The last five chapters of I Samuel narrate David's sojourn in Philistia, interrupted momentarily with chapter 28 which returns to Saul for one final episode.

Today's chapter is going to be broken down into five parts.

A. The Heart That Runs: Doubting God's Word (27:1)

Verse 1

Usually we are told that David sought the Lord for guidance in prayer.

What are we told at the beginning of verse 1? _____

What does David say will happen if he remains in Israel? _____

We are reminded of the struggle that has been dominating the book of I Samuel since chapter 18 with God's rejection and removal of His presence from Saul and Saul's jealousy and paranoia that sends David running for his life.

It has most likely been several years that David has been on the run. This first verse gives us a feeling of the weight that David has been enduring in this season of his life.

One commentator put it this way, *"Hunted, tracked, and attacked by Saul; treacherously exposed; making thrilling escapes and executing daring escapades—nine chapters full of high-blood-pressure narrative. It's the stuff that makes great movies but takes its toll on real people."* (Dale Ralph Davis)

Is David's assessment of his situation (that he's going to perish at the hand of Saul) accurate?

What does he say is his only option? _____

By doing this he hopes that Saul will give up the search for him.

He is obviously very discouraged right now and not thinking clearly. He is not remembering God's past deliverances. Up until now, David has trusted in the Lord to protect him from Saul's hand. He feels like his only option is to head into Philistine land to find refuge.

David's difficult life on the run from Saul is just part of the picture we've seen in the last nine chapters. These chapters also included reminder after reminder of God's provision and protection of David, who is God's anointed king. He has shown time and again that He will not let harm come to David.

Back in 23:17, Jonathan reminded David of this very thing:

“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 second in command to you; and Saul my father knows that as well.”

Abigail reminded David of this as well in chapter 25:28-29:

“28 Please forgive the offense of your slave; for the Lord will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil will not be found in you all your days. 29 Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling.”

Even though David has been encouraged in this way and he has seen time and again how God has protected him, here in verse one we see he is starting to have doubts. By this time, David is tired. He’s tired of running. Maybe he’s tired of hoping. It seems his faith is starting to waver.

So David chooses to do something without consulting God. On several occasions, God had forbidden His people from forming alliances with pagan nations around them because He knew they would eventually be influenced by their immorality and embrace their false gods. Yet here David goes to live among the Philistines without seeking the Lord’s counsel.

****When we run, we are ultimately running from God’s promises.**

B. The First Steps: In a Land of Idols (27:2-4)

Verse 2-4

Where does David go? _____

Unlike the last time he went to Gath, he is not alone.

Who goes with him? _____

We are told that David lived with Achish in Gath.

What did each of his men have with him? _____

David had his two wives with him. It is thought that David comes to Gath with somewhere around 1500-2000 people.

We are told that it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath. **What does Saul do?**

Let’s talk for a minute about where David has run with his men and their families. He is in Gath. This is the town in I Samuel 5 that housed the stolen Ark of the Covenant that the Philistines took in their victory of Israel. This is also the same place that Goliath was born - the warrior whom David ended up killing because he “reproached Israel” and “defied the armies of the living God.” David has run to the home of God’s enemies. He has run to the land of idols.

****When we run, we are running deeper into the world's influence.**

C. A Full Sprint: The Slippery Slope (27:5-12)

Verse 5-7

What does David ask Achish for? _____

What did Achish give David? _____

Achish was okay with David and his men living in Philistia, apparently as mercenaries. This would have been a major relocation for all of these men and their families. Evidently, David plans to stay here for quite some time. Living among the Philistines pretty much ensures that Saul won't continue to search for him, as he would have to take on the Philistine's to get to him and Saul's not going to want to do that.

David must have looked like the defeated leader of an ineffective coup to Achish. To him, any enemy of Saul would be a friend to him.

Ziklag would have been on the southwestern border of Philistia, about 25 miles away from Gath. This town became David's headquarters. It continued under Israelite control from the time David moved there until he incorporated it into his kingdom. In Ziklag, David could pretty much come and go as he pleased without constant observation from the Philistines, who mainly lived to the north of Ziklag

How long are we told that David lived in the country of the Philistines? _____

Verse 8-9

What are we told that David and his men do?

In other translations, the word used here is raided, which comes from the verb to strip with the idea of stripping the dead for loot.

It goes on to tell us that he didn't leave a man or woman alive, but took the animals.

The Geshurites were inhabitants of the southern territory, north of the border of Egypt and south of the Philistine coastal plain. The identity of the Gerzites is disputed as they are only mentioned here. It appears that they occupied territory between Philistia and Egypt. We already know about the Amalakites as this is the tribe that Saul was supposed to take out back in I Samuel 15.

It could probably be argued that David did what he had to do to survive. After all, he did have to provide for his family and for all the families of his men. Others might argue that David was justified in attacking these groups because they were living in the land. These would have been the very people that the Israelites were supposed to remove from the land when they originally inhabited it back in the days of Joshua. Maybe David was just trying to do the right thing here.

Let's keep reading to find out what David's motivation for killing all the people were.

Verse 10-12

What does Achish ask David? _____

David says that he attacked the southern districts of Judah. Is he telling the truth?

Why did David lie? _____

Why are we told that David killed all the people? _____

That's his motivation for killing all the people. So word wouldn't get back to Achish. Yes, David had to provide for his people. But he goes beyond what is necessary. He doesn't just steal all the animals and supplies. He also kills every man, woman and child. Why? Verse 11 is very clear. He did it so that he could keep his cover with Achish who believed he was actually attacking Israelite tribes. If he let people live, they could expose his deception.

Does Achish believe David? _____

What does Achish say David will become? _____

Achish believes that David has irreparably burned his bridges with his own people and will have no choice but to remain loyal to the Philistines.

Running from Saul, David has run to a place of death and destruction. He seems to see no other way; no other option.

****When we run, we rationalize.**

In Hebrews 3:12-13 it says:

"Take care, brothers and sisters, that there will not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called "today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Talking about these verses, Charles Spurgeon wrote:

"Sin will also plead with you that your circumstances are such that they furnish you with an excellent justification—you cannot do otherwise than make an exception to the general rule under the singular conditions in which you are now placed. It tempts you to put forth your hand unto iniquity, arguing that it is the quick way and the only way out of your present difficulties . . . Oh for Grace to watch and pray lest we, also, become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"!

D. Dead in Our Tracks: The Crossroads of Compromise (28:1-2)

Look where that slippery slope leads David.

Chapter 28 verses 1-2

What are we told the Philistines are doing? _____

Who are they going to war against? _____

Achish tells David that he and his men will ride out with him.

David responds by saying that Achish will see what his servant (meaning David) can do

What does Achish say at the end of verse 2? _____

****When we run, we eventually arrive at the crossroads of extreme compromise.**

Look where David's running has brought him too:

- His doubt in God's promises
- His choice to live among the enemy
- His tactics of death and deception
- He has put himself in a position of becoming the enemy of God's people

Sequence of how David got entangled in the deceit of sin:

1. Wrong thinking (vs. 1)
2. Wrong feelings
3. Wrong actions (vs. 2)
4. Wrong company (vs. 2-3)
5. More wrong actions (vs. 8-12)

David was the king that God chose for Israel, but he was far from a perfect king. We see David's doubt in the face of major, ongoing trials.

When we are at our most desperate, we always have two options:

1. Seek God and His counsel
2. Seek out worldly means of comfort

During times of frustrations, persecution or misery, our judgment can be easily clouded by anger and fear. We see how both Saul and David struggled to make wise choices. Both ended up making decisions that defied God to preserve their own safety. The difference is how they handle God's rebuke.

David was discouraged and said in his heart, he was about to die – even though God had promised deliverance. What we say in our hearts has incredible power to influence our choices.

In what ways has your heart discouraged you in the past?

What things can we do to avoid being deceived by sin?

What can you do in your life to remember the promises of God and position yourself to be obedient in all that you do?