

David Among the Philistines

1 Samuel 27

1 Chronicles 12:1-7

by Don Falkos

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David kept thinking to himself, "Someday Saul is going to catch me and kill me. The only way I will ever be safe is to escape to the land of the Philistines."

David and his six hundred men, along with their families, went to Gath, a Philistine city, and joined forces with its king, Achish. When Saul heard that David had fled to Gath, he stopped hunting for him.

One day David said to Achish, "If it's all right with you, I would rather live in a town out in the country rather than here in the royal city."

Achish gave him the town of Ziklag. David lived there for a year and four months. During this time he was joined by many skilled warriors, expert archers from Saul's own family. David and his men spent their time raiding in the areas south of Philistine territory. Whenever David attacked, he killed everyone. Then he and his men would take all the livestock as well as anything else of value before returning home.

When Achish asked, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would reply, "Against the Negev of Judah" or "Against the Negev of the Kenites" or some such. And so David led Achish to believe that he was raiding Israelite outposts, which he certainly was not. And David left no one alive to come to Gath and tell the king where he had really been. This was David's standard mode of operation as long as he lived among the Philistines.

Achish trusted David and thought, "By now the people of Israel must hate him. He has no choice really but to stay here and serve me forever."