

1st Samuel 27

Verses 1 - 4

Then David said to himself, “Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to safely escape into the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand.” ² So David set out and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. ³ And David lived with Achish in Gath, he and his men, each with his *own* household— David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal’s widow. ⁴ Now it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him.

Then David said to himself, “Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to safely escape into the land of the Philistines.

Even though God had helped David in his struggle against Saul, providing a number of miracles to give David the Advantage, David decided that it was not wise to stay in the land of Israel any longer.

There may have been a number of reasons that brought David to this conclusion.

1. He and his six hundred men were outnumbered by Saul and his thousands.
2. He tried twice to persuade Saul that he was not the enemy without success.
3. There was increasing danger to the families of David and his men.

Long trials can tire the faith and patience of even the best men.

However, there is no mention of him consulting the will of God in this matter. God had warned David when to leave Moab and return to Judah.

See 1 Samuel 22:5

⁵ But Gad the prophet said to David, “Do not stay in the stronghold; leave, and go into the land of Judah.” So David left and went into the forest of Hereth.

This move is a little surprising since the last time he went to Philistia he had to act like a mad man and then quickly left for Adullam.

² So David set out and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. ³ And David lived with Achish in Gath, he and his men, each with his *own* household—David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal’s widow.

See map 2705



Despite what had taken place during David’s first visit to Gath in chapter 21, this time King Achish welcomes David and his men and nothing is mentioned about David’s first appearance before the king.

⁴ Now it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him.

Saul would have continued his efforts to kill David if he could have done so but the Philistines were a strong adversary and they would not give up David because of their ongoing battles with Saul. During his stay God used David to weaken the Philistines which was a good thing for Israel.

Verses 5 - 7

⁵ Then David said to Achish, “If now I have found favor in your sight, have them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, so that I may live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?” ⁶ So Achish gave him Ziklag that day; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. ⁷ The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

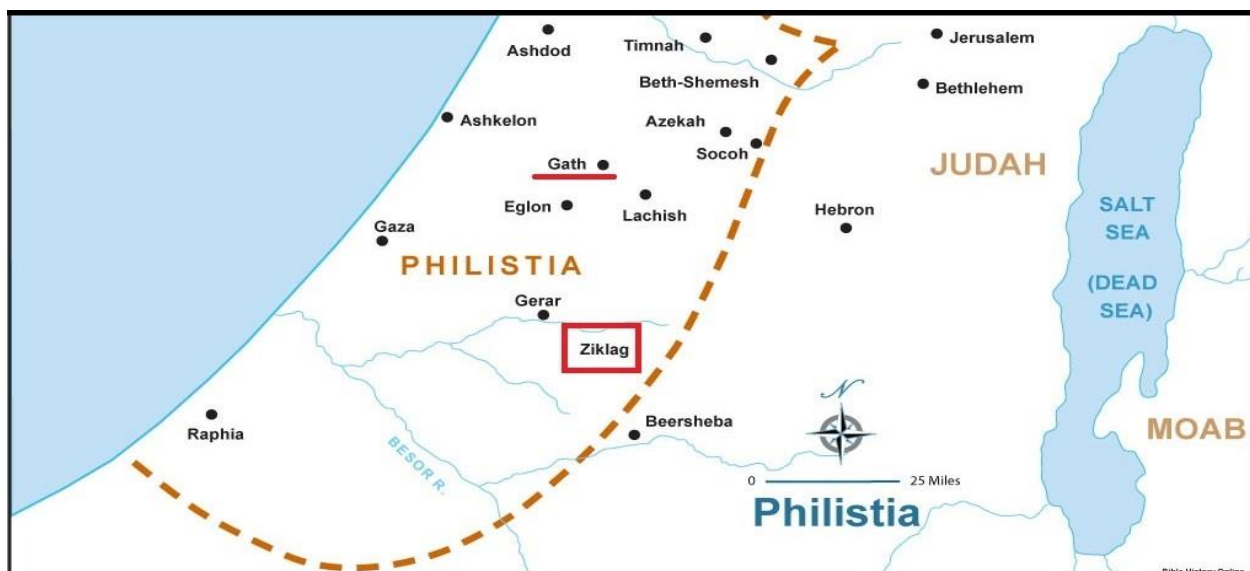
⁵ Then David said to Achish, “If now I have found favor in your sight, have them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, so that I may live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?”

This was a clever plan on David’s part.

1. David would not be a financial burden to the King.
2. David wanted to be a good distance from Achish so he could carry out his attacks on the Philistines without any evidence pointing to him as the culprit.
3. He would be able to provide financial support to the king. It’s always about money.

⁶ So Achish gave him Ziklag that day; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

See Map 2710



Ziklag was originally assigned to Simeon which was part of Judah

See Joshua 19:1- 5

Then the second lot went to Simeon, to the tribe of the sons of Simeon according to their families; and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the sons of Judah. ² So they had in their inheritance Beersheba or Sheba and Moladah, ³ Hazar-shual, Balah, and Ezem, ⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, and Hormah, ⁵ Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah,

Apparently the Philistines controlled Ziklag at this point in time and the King of Gath gave it to David.

⁷ The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

The Hebrew text says, days and four months. Most versions specify the time to be a year and four months. The reason for this is based on more info in 1 Samuel 29:3

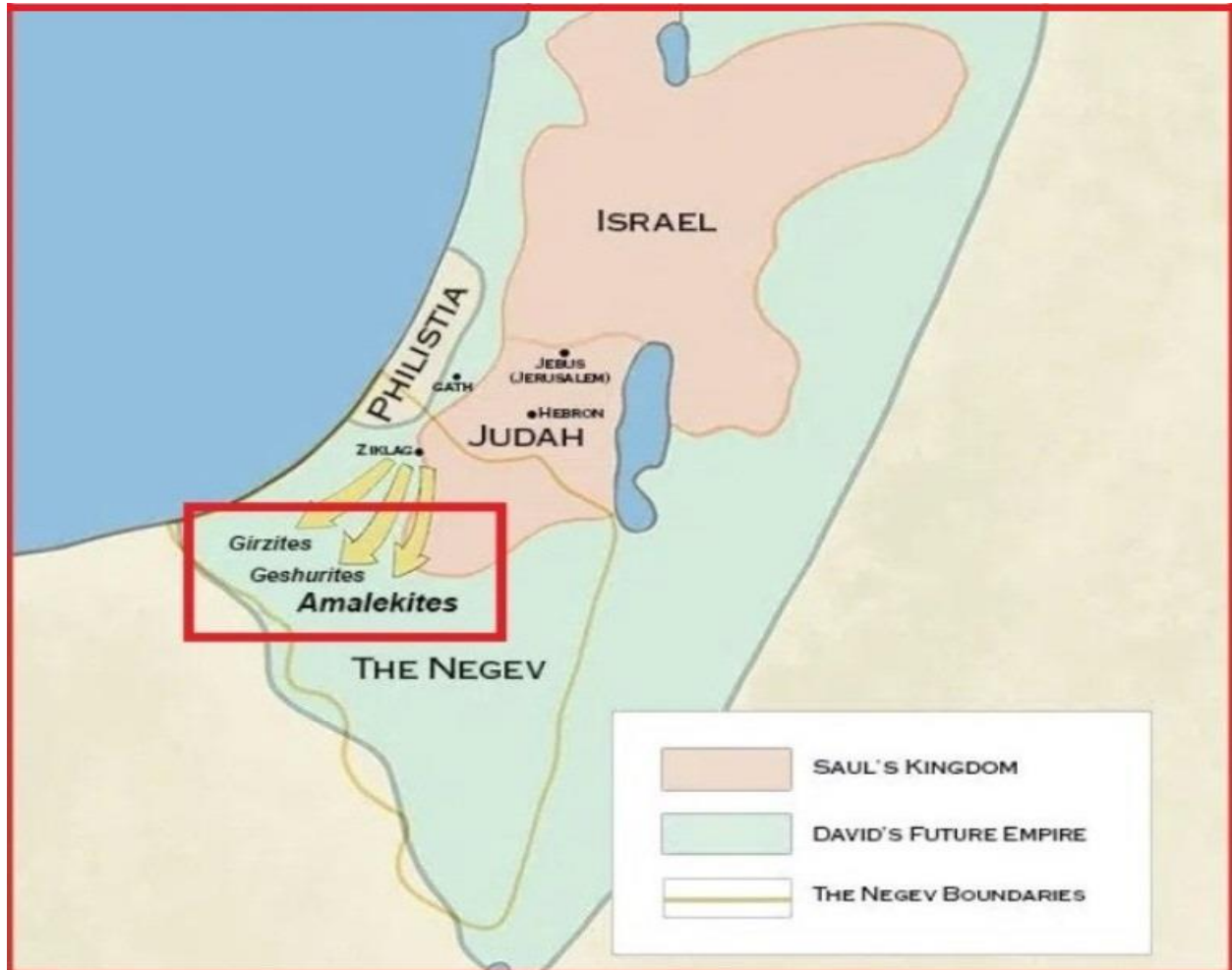
³ Then the commanders of the Philistines said, “*What are these Hebrews doing here?*” And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, “*Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have found nothing at all suspicious in him since the day he deserted to me to this day?*”

Verses 8 - 12

⁸ Now David and his men went up and attacked the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as far as the land of Egypt. ⁹ David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and came to Achish. ¹⁰ Now Achish said, “Where did you carry out an attack today?” And David said, “Against the Negev of Judah, against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites, and against the Negev of the Kenites.” ¹¹ And David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, “Otherwise they will tell about us, saying, ‘This is what David has done, and this *has been* his practice all the time that he has lived in the country of the Philistines.’” ¹² So Achish believed David, saying, “He has undoubtedly made himself repulsive among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever.”

⁸ Now David and his men went up and attacked the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times.

See Map 2715



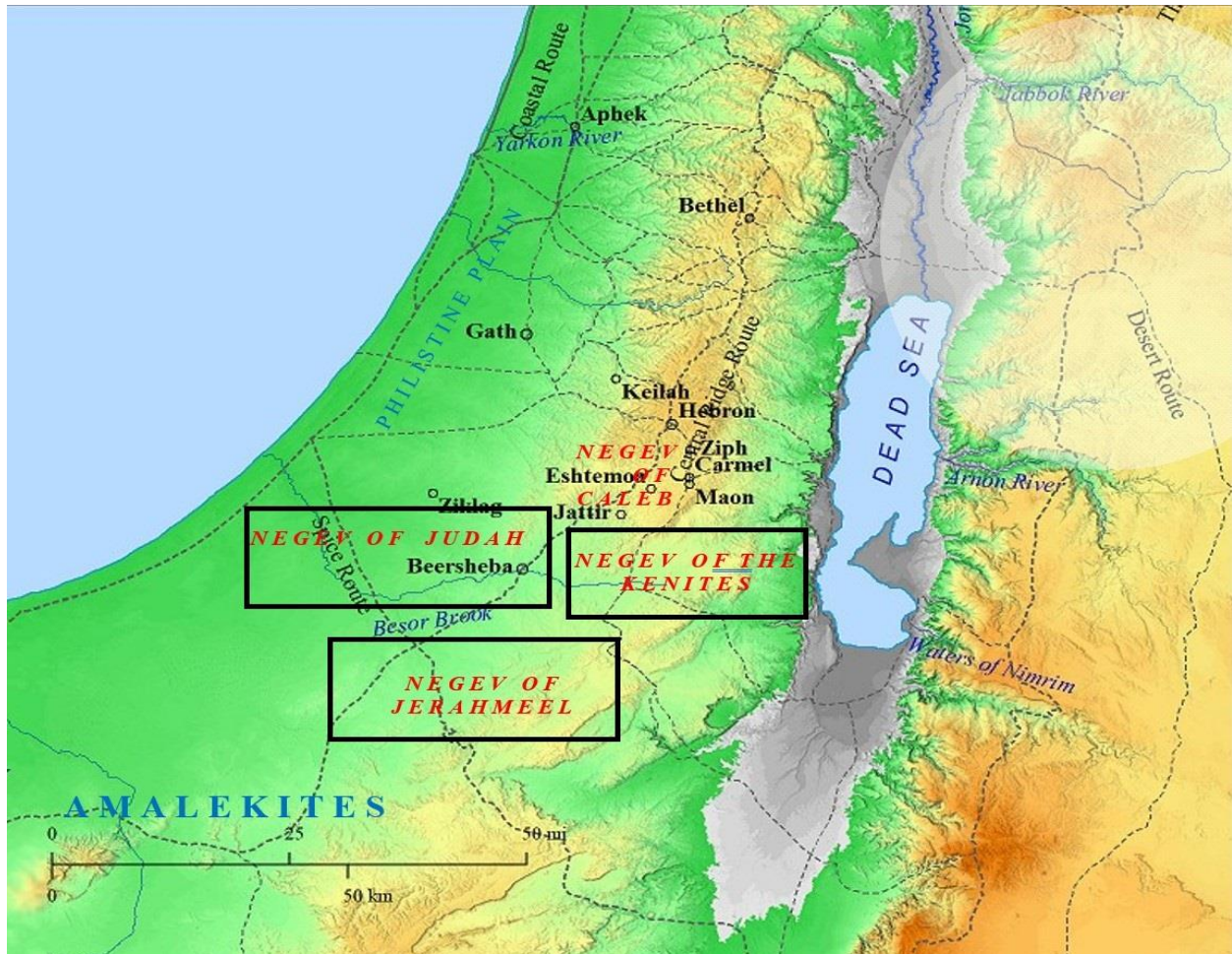
⁹ David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and came to Achish.

David was not the king of Israel at this time therefore his killing cannot be justified as an act of war against an enemy. Nor does the text say that God told him to do this.

David had some very admirable qualities and was quite noble in not killing King Saul but at other times he could be quite ruthless and seemingly not the least bit concerned about killing woman & children. He was also no stranger to telling lies. David was a great man of faith but we should not overlook his darker side.

¹⁰ Now Achish said, “Where did you carry out an attack today?” And David said, **“Against the Negev of Judah, against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites, and against the Negev of the Kenites.”**

See map 2720



David went back to the king and reported on his escapades and to give the king his share of the spoils. However, David lied when he informed Achish that he was raiding the Israelites.

The Jerahmeelites were a prominent clan of Judah

See 1 Chronicles 2:42

⁴² Now the sons of Caleb, **the brother of Jerahmeel**, were Mesha his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph; and his son was Mareshah, the father of Hebron.

The Kenites had been associated with Israel since the days of Moses. Moses’s father-in-law Jethro was a Kenite.

¹¹ And David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, “Otherwise they will tell about us, saying, ‘This is what David has done, and this has been his practice all the time that he has lived in the country of the Philistines.’” ¹² So Achish believed David, saying, “He has undoubtedly made himself repulsive among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever.”

David left no survivors so no one could report back to the king. We have no indication from the text that this was a judgment from God on these people. David did this to survive but one has to believe that God would have provided another way if David had consulted Him.

We all go thru difficult and dark times in our lives but this kind of behavior cannot be accepted as being part of God’s will. To whom much is given, much will be required.

See Luke 12:48

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.