

Living with the Enemy

“How did I get here?” This is a question that David may have asked himself while living among the enemy of God’s people. Due to his jealousy, paranoia, and hard heart, Saul drove David out of Israel (1 Samuel 27). David found refuge among the Philistines. He lived among them for nearly a year and a half in Ziklag (a town given to him by the king).

Saul’s bad leadership and obsession with killing David allowed the Philistines to invade Israel and put Saul’s army north (1 Samuel 29:1). The Philistines gathered at Aphek. At the same time, the Israelites encamped in the valley of Jezreel. This put David in a stressful situation. He had gained King Achish’s trust but may have to fight against his people.

1 Samuel 29-30

- David can’t be the king of Israel if he betrayed and fought against them. Fortunately, he doesn’t have to work hard to get out of this mess because the Philistine commanders don’t trust him (1 Samuel 29:2-5). They are concerned that David will turn against them on the battlefield and fight for Israel.
- David pretended to be disappointed and insulted (1 Samuel 29:6-8). King Achish believed David’s act but sent him back to Ziklag (1 Samuel 29:9-11). He was unaware that while among them, David had been fighting against the enemies of Israel. King Achish is naïve and wants to believe that David is on his side.
- When David returned to Ziklag, he discovered that the Amalekites had raided it (1 Samuel 30:1-3). The city had been destroyed, possessions were stolen, and wives and kids were taken captive.
- No one likes David! His men blamed him for this misfortune (1 Samuel 30:4-6). They wanted to stone him!
- This section challenges us to gain perspective about our lives. David’s major problems could have driven him into despair and broken him down.

What can we learn from David’s response to these difficulties?

- God was with David. It is easy to miss this because God isn’t mentioned much in this part of the Bible. He is only mentioned by King Achish (1 Samuel 29:6). But just because God’s name isn’t mentioned much, doesn’t mean His presence is not throughout the story. While God was no longer in Saul’s life (because Saul constantly rejected God), He was very involved in David’s life. Through God’s providence, David has been able to escape David, survive in the land of the Philistines, and get out of fighting against Israel in battle. God continues to work providentially in the lives of His people!
- David sought God. During this crisis, David consulted God and strengthened himself in God (1 Samuel 30:6-8). What do we do in our “Ziklag” moments? Do we give up? Do we wallow in despair and try to take matters into our own hands? Or do we strengthen ourselves in God by praying, trusting in God, reminding ourselves of His promises, and seeking counsel from His word?
- David obeyed God (1 Samuel 30:8-9). He pursued the Philistines and, with the help of God, gained victory. He regained everything that was lost. He gave God the glory, divided up the spoils with all his men, and sent gifts to the leaders of Judah (1 Samuel 30:10-31). What about us? Do we simply obey God’s instructions (John 14:15)?

Conclusion:

Even though David put himself in a sticky situation, God continued watching over him and was determined to get him to the throne of Israel.