

The Lord Rescues David from a Major Dilemma of David's Own Making

1 Samuel 29

"Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. ² And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. ³ Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"

And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me."

⁴ But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men? ⁵ Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"

⁶ Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, as the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. ⁷ Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines." ⁸ So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

⁹ Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' ¹⁰ Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart." ¹¹ So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel."

Background Notes

In 1 Samuel 28 we saw that the Philistines had joined their various military forces together and were planning to attack Israel. 1 Samuel 28:1 *"Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men."* 1 Samuel 29:1 tells us that the Philistines staging area was at Aphek - possibly the same staging area as in 1 Samuel 4, when the Ark of the Covenant was captured. The Israelites were camped by a fountain in Jezreel, in the same area of the Jezreel Valley where Gideon and his men had camped about 180 years before this time, when Israel defeated the Midianites. But the result of the battle would be different this time. King Saul had turned away from the Lord, and God had

decided to remove him as king, and replace him with David. In fact, the prophet Samuel had already pronounced King Saul's judgment and death in a most unusual event, when Saul consulted a witch at the village of Endor. God allowed the prophet Samuel to come back from the dead and communicate this bad news to King Saul (1 Samuel 28:15-19).

At this point David was in a serious dilemma of his own making. David and his men had joined themselves to a Philistine king for security reasons, and in return they became a mercenary army for King Achish. Now David was obligated to fight for the Philistines against his own people! 1 Samuel 28:1-2 - "...the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men. ² So David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever." And 1 Samuel 29:1-2 - ""Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. ² And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish."

David certainly didn't want to fight against Israel, but if he refused the Philistines would likely kill him and his men. What a dilemma! And it was David's own fault.

Doctrinal Points

1. Moral mistakes of believers always result in greater problems.

Now when we say "moral mistakes," we mean mistakes in life that are **sinful**. We don't mean innocent mistakes that we all make, such as reading a road map incorrectly, or spilling a cup of coffee, or putting on socks of two different colors! No, these examples are not **moral** mistakes – they're non-moral mistakes. Moral mistakes involve doing things we know we should not do, and also not doing what we know we should do. Moral mistakes are doing wrong, and therefore sinful, things. David made a moral mistake in not trusting the Lord, and not asking the counsel of the Lord, but instead going down to the pagan King Achish and the Philistines for security. This was a moral mistake, and look what it led to - bigger problems! David was now obligated to fight for King Achish with the Philistines against his own people.

When the commanders of the Philistine army began to question Achish's wisdom at this point, look at what Achish said (v3) "*Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me."* David was serving a pagan king! David made the moral mistake of going to King Achish and the Philistines for security, and he ended up serving a pagan king. The moral mistakes of believers always result in greater problems.

Look again at what David said when King Achish suggested that he turn back: "*But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"* (v8). Can you believe it? David actually referred to this pagan king as "my lord the king." Even though David didn't really mean it, and it was all part of David's cover. It was just another aspect of the big dilemma that David had created for himself.

Moral mistakes of believers always result in greater problems. This is a moral law in God's moral universe. There is not only the law of the harvest: "You reap what you sow," but there is also the law of multiplication: "You reap **more** than you sow." Hosea 8:7 indicates that if "you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind." How true this is! Tell one lie and you have to tell more and bigger lies to cover your tracks - and your problems multiply. Dishonesty in handling money will come back to hurt you. Cheat in the area of sex, and it will result in all kinds of multiplied problems. And if you think some people are getting away with it, don't be deceived. Moral mistakes of believers result in greater problems.

2. God sometimes delivers believers from the consequences of their mistakes.

"Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.'"¹⁰ Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart." (v9-10).

You'd better believe that David breathed a sigh of relief when Achish said this! The Philistine commanders brought pressure to bear on King Achish. They reminded him that this was the same David who had killed Goliath and was a hero in Israel. This was the David about whom the Israeli women sang, "*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*"! Suppose, they said, in the heat of battle David decides to fight for his own people and turn on us? So King Achish reluctantly told David and his men to leave the attack force and go back to Ziklag. David was delivered from this huge dilemma of his own making.

God sometimes delivers believers from the consequences of their mistakes. But we say **sometimes**, because God doesn't always deliver us from the consequences of our moral mistakes. Our moral mistakes are eternally forgiven because Jesus died for all of our sins. But the **consequences** of our sins are a different matter. There are consequences to forgiven sin. God is gracious, and sometimes He delivers believers from what could be very serious consequences of their moral mistakes. As I look back over my life, I can remember a number of times when the Lord graciously delivered me from what could have been very serious consequences to my selfish decisions. What about you? God is gracious, and sometimes He delivers believers from the consequences of their mistakes.

Practical Application

Take the way of escape that God provides.

God provided David a way of escape from his dilemma - and David wisely took it! 1 Corinthians 10:13 says that God provides a way of escape from any temptation or test of faith that we face: "*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*" The Greek word that's used here for temptation is a word that can be translated either "temptation" or "test." This certainly applies to the dilemmas and problems we face because of our moral mistakes.

The Lord wants us to learn our lessons and get back on track in following him. In fact, He gives us all kinds of opportunities to turn around and go in the right direction - but some Christians

don't take advantage of these opportunities. Some Christians would even rather continue going in the wrong direction, for any number of reasons. Listen - there will always be further problems ahead when we make moral mistakes! Take the way of escape that God provides.