

1Samuel 29:1 ¶ Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel.

1Samuel 29:2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish.

1Samuel 29:3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?*

Verse one adds a bit more detail to the encampments of the two armies as they prepared to meet in battle. Jezreel is on the northern slope of Mount Gilboa. The area was noted for an abundance of springs. The lords of the Philistines led their troops out in groups of hundreds and thousands. David and his men followed in the rear with Achish.

The princes of the Philistines took issue at the presence of the Hebrews. Achish noted that David was a servant of Saul who became his enemy, and he had lived among them for over a year. During that time he had found no fault in him.

1Samuel 29:4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it not be* with the heads of these men?

1Samuel 29:5 *Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

This answer did not appease the anger of the Philistine princes. They demanded that David be sent back to his appointed place and not allowed to join them in battle. They pointed out that he would be tempted to turn against them in battle, hoping to reconcile with Saul. They reminded Achish that it was of David the women of Israel had sung and danced in praise of his killing ten thousands (Philistines is understood).

1Samuel 29:6 ¶ Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.*

1Samuel 29:7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

Achish yielded to the will of the Philistine princes. He called David and assured him that although he trusted him, the lords of the Philistines did not. So he told David to go back to Ziklag in peace in deference to the will of the Philistine lords.

1Samuel 29:8 And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what

hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

David didn't yield without an argument. He demanded to know what he had done to be considered so untrustworthy.

1Samuel 29:9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

1Samuel 29:10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

1Samuel 29:11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Achish again assured David that he trusted him as surely as if he were an angel of God. However, the Philistine lords did not. He then told David that early the next morning he was to take his men and leave. David and his men did as they were told, and the Philistines headed to Jezreel.

The narrative of this chapter certainly doesn't cast a good light on David. It presents him as a sincere subject of Achish, but it is really hard for me to accept that as fact. It was made clear in chapter 27 that David curried favor with Achish through deception. I believe he is doing the same thing here. I truly believe that David and his men would have functioned as a fifth column as the Philistine lords feared. It was evidently not in God's plan that they be put in that position.