

Introduction: It is not easy to be a leader of people, at any level, in any place. There are many responsibilities to balance; and, many personalities to direct to a common goal. *** In any culture, the greatest pressure of leadership is experienced by governors or kings, at a state level and especially at the national level. One of the most famous statements of the troubles that can overwhelm kings to the point of losing sleep and making poor decisions was written by William Shakespeare and spoken by king Henry IV: uneasy lies the head that wears the crown (Henry IV, Act III, Scene 1, line 31). *** Moses is the greatest example of this in the Bible, outside of Jesus who is The King who came to voluntarily give His Life so all people who ever lived may be forgiven by God and brought into His eternal Kingdom. As Israel was about to enter the land God told Abraham would be their possession (Genesis 15:18-21), Moses sent twelve explorers throughout the land. They gave a good report about the land, but also made mention of dangerous giants. The people then rebelled against Moses, calling for a new leader to take them back to slavery in Egypt (Numbers 14). But, God had called Moses the most humble of all men (Numbers 12:3). Jesus was also a humble servant of His Father God (Mark 10:42-45; John 13:12-16). *** We have seen and heard that from the time Saul tried to kill David in his jealousy and frustration because God deposed Saul as king of His people, David twice ran to the pagan king of the Philistine city-state of Gath. As we are about to hear the story of the climactic battle that will end Saul's life on earth, we get more insight into this decade from this story that could be titled: the tale of three kings (1 Samuel 15-29). All three kings were mixtures of good and bad. We saw last week Saul's last desperate attempt to find reconciliation with God. Today we see the climax of the deceptively complex relationship of David and Achish marked by misunderstanding on both sides. David was in a no-win situation which God providentially resolved in David's favor through the concerns of Achish's commanders. *** We also heard the beginning and end of a song composed by David as a mature king when he had time to reflect on what he learned about God during this difficult time in his life. *** We will first look at the events in David's thirtieth year of life, and then his reflections some twenty to thirty years later. I pray God will use His Word to convict and comfort us in our current circumstances.

I. Achish, king of Gath, marched north to fight Israel, David with him; God works through Achish's commanders who do not want David, Achish requests David leave with his men; after a protest, they leave. (1 Samuel 29(1-11))

A. Before Saul went to the medium, Achish, king of Gath, marches north with a great army and David; but, his commanders do not want David with them. (*Verses 1-5*)

1. The Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek and the Israelites were encamped by the fountain in Jezreel. (*Verse 1*)

Geography: Aphek was about midway between Gath in the south near Judah and Jezreel in the north near Galilee.

So the events of this chapter were before Saul met the medium in Endor.

2. And the 'lords' of the Philistines were passing on with hundreds and thousands; and, David and his men were passing on in the rear with Achish. (*Verse 2*)

Formation: The word for Achish's 'generals' is a Philistine, not Hebrew word. It seems unusual that the king is not leading his vast army from the front.

3. Then the commanders of the Philistines said: What (are) these Hebrews (doing here with us)? Achish said to them: Is not this David, servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me these days and these years; I have not found anything with him since he fell (out with Saul) until this day. (*Verse 3*)

Question: The commanders remember too well what David did to them after he slew their champion Goliath (1 Samuel 17). They want him removed before the battle so he does not turn on them.

Answer: The first time David fled to Achish, Achish's servants warned him about David and, in fear of man, he feigned insanity (1 Samuel 21:10-15). Did he forget this? This time, David stayed far from Achish and 'successfully' lied to him about what he was doing. David must know that if he encounters his people with the Philistines, he will be in an impossible position.

4. The commanders of the Philistines (who were with their king) said: You must make him to return (to Ziklag); he must not go down (to the valley of Jezreel) with us so he will not be our adversary (satan); he could reconcile with his lord with the 'heads' of these men; is this not David of whom they sang: Saul has slain his thousands / and David his ten thousands? (*Verses 4-5*)

Truth from many counselors: Achish's counselors are absolutely right. Twice before they had heard the words of this song (1 Samuel 18:7; 21:11)!

Tale of three flawed kings: Saul began in humility but disobeyed God and lost the kingship to David, whom he is pursuing to death. David was chosen by God to be king, but he twice fled to Achish, whom he deceived, and now he is expected to kill his own people. Achish did not know his power over David and misjudged his character; he will lose either way.

No man can be king in his own wisdom.

Application: From this 'story of the three kings' we must commit to always pray for our leaders, good and/or bad, as Paul commanded Timothy to teach his people (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

B. God works through these commanders, then Achish tells David he has nothing on him, but tells him to leave; David protests, but leaves with his men. (*Verses 6-11*)

1. Then Achish called David and said: Yahweh (is) alive, and you (are) upright and good in my eyes; you (should) go out and come in with me in the camp, for I have found no evil in you from the day you came to me to this day; but, in the eyes of the 'lords' you (are) not good; Now: return and go in peace, and you will not do evil in the eyes of the Philistine 'lords'. (*Verses 6-7*)

Philistine 'lords': Achish is out of touch with his hand-picked senior officers.

2. David said to Achish: For what have I done? What have you found in your servant, from the day I was in your service until this day that I will not go and fight the enemies of my lord, the king? (*Verse 8*)

Ambiguous reply: Which 'adonai' does David mean? Is it lower case Achish king of the Philistines, or is it Upper Case: Yahweh King of His created universe? Is David beginning to see this objection of the Philistine 'lords' as Yahweh's way of rescuing him from his impossible position?

3. Then Achish answered David: I know that you are good in my eyes as an angel (messenger) of God; but, the commanders of the Philistines said: He will not go up with us to the battle. (*Verse 9*)

Achish: Achish is still good with David, but in the end, he sides with his hand-picked senior officers.

This is the invisible hand of God's providence to rescue David, in spite of himself!

Sometimes God rescues in unexpected ways

4. Now, you must rise early in the morning with the servants of your Lord who came with you, (when) you have light, you all must go. (Verse 10)

Go: Achish acknowledges David's 'lord' is Adonai as he commands David and his men to depart at the first light of the next day.

Sometimes God rescues in unexpected ways

5. Then David started early with his men to go in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines; and, the Philistines went up to Jezreel. (Verse 11)

Rescued: David accepts Achish's command to return to Ziklag with his men to their families. Surely, by now, David realized God saved him out of his impossible position by using foreign commanders who would have sought to kill him in battle!

Sometimes God rescues in unexpected ways

Application: Let this story give us hope whenever we feel trapped and about to give up because we cannot see a good solution, God can rescue us in an unexpected way we could never imagine!

II. David cries to God for salvation from 'deep waters' and confesses his sins; he says Yahweh saves humble and needy people into His covenant relationship promise. (Psalm 69:1-7, 33-36)

- A. David cries out for salvation in danger from 'deep waters', then confesses his sins to God. (Verses 1-7)

1. { To the choirmaster, according to 'Lilies', by David } Save me, God! / For the waters have come to my neck (breath, soul) // I have sunk in deep mire and not foothold / I have come to depths of water, and the flood has overflowed (on) me. (Verses 1-2)
Salvation from floodwaters: David implores God to save him, using many word pictures to describe being suffocated by drowning in deep floodwaters.
2. I am weary in calling, my throat is parched / my eyes grow dim while I wait in hope for my God. (Verse 3)
Hope in thirst: In a startling mixed metaphor, David describes his throat is parched as if thirsting, as he holds his head above water and cries out with no answer, while holding on to his hope in God.
3. They are more than the hairs of my head, those hating me without cause / they are mighty, those that would destroy me, lying enemies / what I did not steal, then will I be made to return? (Verse 4)
Causeless hatred: In the Upper Room Jesus quoted this verse, saying He was hated without cause (John 15:22-15).
4. God, You know my folly / and my guilt is not hidden from You. (Verse 5)
Confession of sin: David confesses his sin to God using a Hebrew word, *ee-will*, which may have come into English as evil. As he wrote in Psalm 32, the confession of hidden sins is the key to forgiveness and deliverance.
5. They will not be shamed through me, those waiting in hope, Lord Yahweh of hosts / they will not be humiliated through me, those seeking You, God of Israel. (Verse 6)
Wait in hope: David confidently addresses Adonai Yahweh Sabaoth that those waiting in hope and seeking the God of Israel will not suffer for David's foolish guilt.
6. For Your sake I have taken reproach / and my face covered with shame. (Verse 7)
Anticipates Jesus on Cross: With this couplet, David is anticipating the shame of his Messiah Son, Jesus, in His suffering on the cross (Isaiah 53:3-5).

- B. Then David asserts the Covenant God hears humbled people in need and will save them, fulfilling His covenant promise to be their God so they will be His people. (Verses 33-36)

1. For Yahweh (is) hearing the needy / His prisoners, He has not despised. (Verse 33)
Poor and needy: The Covenant God always hears the cries of the poor and needy and never despises His falsely imprisoned people (Psalm 12:5; 72:12-14; Isaiah 25:1-4; 41:17-18).
2. They will praise Him, heaven and earth / the seas and all moving in them. (Verse 34)
Universal praise: Because of God's great care for the humbled poor, needy and oppressed, He will be universally praised!
3. Because God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah / they have dwelt there and will possess it. (Verse 35)
Salvation: Under David, God's people got a taste of what was to come IN the Messiah – Jesus! All who turn to God in humility, confessing their guilt to Him and trusting IN Savior Jesus to graciously give them obedient faith, will be forgiven, saved and adopted into God's family!

When we confess our guilt to God, He will save us in our humility

4. The children of his servants will inherit it / and those loving His Name will dwell in it (God's new city of Jerusalem – Revelation 21:1-7). (Verse 36)

Dwell with God: This will be the fulfillment of God's Covenant promise given through Moses:
I will be your God and you will be My people (Leviticus 26:1-13)!

Application: Bottom line: We must be quick to confess our sins to God, and then continue with God in the sure hope we have IN Jesus because of what He accomplished on the Cross and from the Empty Tomb that comes from the humble, dependent faith of obedience so we will enjoy His Presence, LOVE, joy and peace.

Conclusion: Achish, king of Gath, marched north to fight Israel and David was with him. God works through Achish's commanders, who do not want David with them, so Achish requests David to leave with his men. After a mild protest, David leaves with his men. As a mature and established king, David remembers crying to God for salvation from 'deep waters', and then confessing his sins. He concludes by saying Yahweh saves humble and needy people so they share in His covenant relationship promise to people.

Sometimes, often, almost always, God rescues in unexpected ways