

Joshua 15:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,

Analysis

And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah—Ziklag (זִקְלָג) became one of Scripture's most important southern cities. Though originally assigned to Judah, it later belonged to Philistine Gath. King Achish gave it to David when he fled from Saul (1 Samuel 27:6), and it remained Judah's possession thereafter. David's emotional connection to Ziklag intensified when Amalekites raided and burned it, capturing the women and children; David pursued and recovered all (1 Samuel 30). **Madmannah** (מַדְמָנָה, "dunghill" or "manure heap") and **Sansannah** (סַנְסָנָה) are less prominent, though Madmannah may be identified with Khirbet Umm ed-Deimneh.

Ziklag's history demonstrates how God works through complex circumstances. David's sojourn in Philistine territory during Saul's persecution seems like compromise, yet God used it to give David a base independent of Saul's control. Ziklag became David's headquarters where he welcomed refugees from Saul, built his army, and received news of Saul's death. What appeared like exile actually positioned David for kingship.

Historical Context

Ziklag's precise location remains disputed—proposed identifications include Tell esh-Sharia (Tel Sera), Tel Halif, and Khirbet Zuheiliqah. Archaeological challenges stem from the city's destruction and rebuilding cycle. The site must show Late Bronze/Iron Age I occupation, destruction (Amalekite raid), and continuity into David's reign and beyond. Tell esh-Sharia shows appropriate periods and

destruction layers consistent with biblical accounts.

David's possession of Ziklag as a Philistine vassal created unusual political dynamics. He served Achish while secretly raiding Israel's enemies (Amalekites, Geshurites, Girzites), deceiving Achish about his targets (1 Samuel 27:8-12). This morally ambiguous period shows David's tactical brilliance but also raises ethical questions about deception. God sovereignly used even David's compromises to position him for kingship, though David's choices carried consequences.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Ziklag's history in David's life illustrate God's sovereignty in using even difficult, compromising circumstances to accomplish His purposes?
2. What 'Ziklag moments'—times when you faced devastating loss or setback—has God used to reposition you for future blessing or ministry?
3. How should David's recovery of everything taken from Ziklag (1 Samuel 30:8, 18-19) encourage faith that God can restore what the enemy has stolen?

Interlinear Text

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| וְצִקְלָג | וּמַדְמָנָה | וְסַנְסַנָּה: |
| And Ziklag | and Madmannah | and Sansannah |
| H6860 | H4089 | H5578 |

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 27:6 (Parallel theme): Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

1 Samuel 30:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

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