

Abigail (1 Sam. 25)

The Death Of Samuel (1 Sam. 25:1)

1 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

- It may be significant that Samuel dies at this point. What had he been doing?
- The alleged tomb of Samuel is revered in Israel today, just north of Jerusalem.
- David goes outside Israel, to Paran, in the southeast.

Nabal And Abigail (1 Sam. 25:2-3)

2 Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3 The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. He was of the house of Caleb.

- Nabal's name means that he is a fool, at least in Hebrew. How to explain this?
- In Hebrew thinking, a fool is unable or unwilling to receive spiritual truths.
- His character is strongly contrasted with that of his wife, Abigail. Her name means that she is the joy of her father. She has both wisdom and physical beauty.

David's Request (1 Sam. 25: 4-9)

4 When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, 5 David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. 6 And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have!' 7 Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.'" 9 So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

- Is it fair to draw from this that David was running a protection racket?
 - Asking for this gift wasn't necessarily inappropriate in that culture.
 - Second, it was a season of sheep-shearing, and there was going to be a lot of feasting and so on anyway. It might also have been Rosh Hashanah.
 - Third, David had to feed 600 people, but he only sent 10 men.
 - His approach was very humble, and he even calls himself Nabal's son.

Nabal's Answer And David's Response (1 Sam. 25:10-13)

10 Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. 11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?"

12 So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. 13 Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies.

- Nabal speaks of David very contemptuously, referring to him as *the son of Jesse*, and a runaway slave.
- If we count the times Nabal says "I" or "my" we'll see how he is self-centered. His attitude went greatly against the grain of the hospitality expected in that culture.
- David's men have a better attitude.

Abigail's Response (1 Sam. 25:14-19)

14 Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. 15 But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. 16 They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. 17 Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him."

18 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys. 19 And she said to her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

- Ironically, Nabal’s servant goes and tells Abigail everything. He testifies about David’s men with a glowing report.
- In Hebrew, the servant actually calls Nabal a “son of Belial,” or the Devil. Abigail must quickly consider what to do, because trouble is on the way.
- Abigail is also shown to be a woman of diligence and energy.
- She prepares large gift, even for 600 men, made up of the choice foods of the area. Abigail was more generous as to quality, also.
- There is a pun between fool (nabal) and wineskin (nebel).
- Abigail was probably thinking of the example of Jacob and Esau.

David’s Fierce Vow (1 Sam. 25:20-22)

20 So it was, as she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them. 21 Now David had said, “Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. 22 May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light.”

- Abigail didn’t care for propriety when life was at stake.
- David’s vow was very harsh, and vulgar to boot. This is the most Saul-like we’ve ever seen him. He literally said, “I’ve protected his fellow only to be deceived,” and was certainly in the heat of anger.
- How did David come to this? What was corroding his soul?

Abigail's Wise Appeal (1 Sam. 25:23-31)

23 Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. 24 So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. 25 Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him! But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. 26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal. 27 And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days.

29 "Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling. 30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel, 31 that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

- She appeals to David’s own self-interest and spirituality.
- She appeals to the fact that evil has never be found in David and he has fought the battles of Yahweh, who will therefore build him a sure house. This is important prophetic language!
- David, she says, will be bound up *in the bundle of the living*.
- Notice her clever, over-the-top, sling reference!
- What does her personal appeal mean?

David Relents (1 Sam. 25: 32-35)

32 Then David said to Abigail: “Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 33 And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. 34 For indeed, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!” 35 So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person.”

- David realizes that he came within a hair’s breadth of destroying his reputation.

The Fate Of Nabal (1 Sam. 25:36-38)

36 Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk;

therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. 37 So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone. 38 Then it happened, after about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

- She waits until the wine has gone out of Nabal, another possible play on words.
- Nabal apparently has a stroke, but we are specifically told that the Lord struck him so that he died.
- The 10-day period could be another Rosh Hashanah reference.

David Praises God And Marries Abigail (1 Sam. 25:39-44)

39 So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil! For the LORD has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head.” And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife.

40 When the servants of David had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, “David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife.” 41 Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, “Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” 42 So Abigail rose in haste and rode on a donkey, attended by five of her maidens; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives. 44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David’s wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

- David sees an opportunity here!
- Apparently, this was David's third wife. He had already married Ahinoam, and Saul had given Michal away, no doubt considering David to be a dead man.
- Opinion: David should have stopped at Abigail!

Chileab / Daniel

- David and Abigail had one son together, Chileab, who was also called Daniel.
- Oddly, he is not in the list of contenders to the throne.
- *Chileab* means *perfection of the father*, which could mean he resembled David physically. This could mean that he resembled David physically.
- It could also mean that having Abigail and Chileab in his life was a constant reminder to David of how God had kept him from shedding innocent blood.

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