

Day 290 - TUESDAY: November 21st

1 Samuel 25

1 Samuel 25:1-44 NKJV

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. 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. 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. When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, 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. 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! 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. 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.' " So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited. 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. 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?" So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. 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. 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. 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. They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. 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." 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. And she said to her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 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. 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. 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." Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. 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. 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. 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. And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. 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. 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. 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, 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." Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 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. 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!" 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." 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. 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. Then it happened, after about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died. 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. 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." 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." 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. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, dies. Greatly respected by all Israel, people gathered from all over the nation to honor him at his burial. As his death comes during the short-lived truce between Saul and David, it is possible, though not directly stated, that David was able to attend this memorial. Afterward, David ventures south into the wilderness of Paran.

Then follows the story of Nabal and Abigail. Nabal, a descendant of Caleb of the house of Judah, lived in Maon with his great flocks in nearby Carmel. Carmel is a town in the general area of Ziph and Maon in Judah (see Joshua 15:55–57), some 20–30 miles south of Jerusalem. (It is not to be confused with the northern Mount Carmel by the sea, which figures later into the lives of Elijah and Elisha.) Saul had set up a monument to himself in Carmel following his war with Amalek and before his final rejection by God (see 1 Samuel 15:12).

David and his men acting as a protective militia had protected Nabal's property from marauding bands of

thieves. Nabal's name means fool, and he was true to his name. Even his own wife Abigail remarks, "Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (verse 25)—or, in modern parlance, "Fool is his name and folly is his game." Abigail, on the other hand, was a woman of understanding who deserved better than Nabal (verse 3). Apart from a world of arranged marriages, it would be hard to imagine two such people ever getting together.

It was expected that those who were being protected would contribute to the support of those who made it possible for them to prosper—and Nabal is prosperous (verse 2). Yet Nabal, in his foolishness, denies any support to David's men (verses 4–11). His impulsive anger aroused in righteous indignation, David fully intends to wipe Nabal from the face of the earth (verse 22).

As the King James Version shows, the literal Hebrew of verse 22 says David will kill everyone who urinates against the wall. Most modern translations render this as simply meaning all the males. However, verse 16 mentions David's protection as a "wall" and David's reference may be to all those who were treating his help and protection with contempt (see "David's Threat to Nabal," *Bible Review*, October 2002, pp. 18–23, 59).

Abigail comes to the rescue of her husband and her household. She is wise enough to realize that Nabal's foolish rejection of David's men will bring a terrible and swift reprisal. So she brings generous supplies, part in payment of what is due and part to appease David's wrath. She explains Nabal's nature to David, but, as his wife, takes the blame and asks forgiveness, declaring herself David's servant, as her husband should have done (verses 25, 28). Abigail is well aware of David's reputation. Abigail gives David some insightful counsel. She realizes that his life is fully interwoven with the plan of God and points out that this insult by Nabal is nothing compared to the glory David will one day have—particularly since God Himself will deal with David's enemies. But, she goes on to say, if David were to react to what is now a small matter, it would then become a *huge* matter for him, as it would be a horrible mistake he would regret for the rest of his life. David accepts her good advice (verse 33). And note this: He gives God the credit for Abigail's intervention! He fully realizes how close he has come to making a disastrous mistake. He accepts and appreciates the intent with which Abigail has given her gifts (verse 35).

After Nabal recovers from a drunken stupor, Abigail tells him what she had done for David and his men. Apparently, Nabal's rage is so violent at this news that he has a massive stroke and dies about 10 days later (verses 36–38). Again, David gives God all the credit for keeping him from making a terrible mistake and for avenging him.

Abigail's request to be remembered (verse 31) brings her to David's side in marriage (verses 39–42).” [END]

Verse 3 – The house of Caleb was from the tribe of Judah, therefore both David and Nabal came from the same family tribe.

Verse 7 – John Gill’s commentary states: “they did not steal a sheep or lamb from them, as was common for soldiers to do; nor did they suffer any of the Arabs, that dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, to rob them, who lived upon plunder, or any of the wild beasts to hurt them, as much as in them lay; so careful were they of them, and were a wall unto them by night and day, as Nabal's servants owned, [1Sa_25:16](#); and this was the case:”

Verse 10 – John Gill’s commentary states: “his two questions, which relate to the same person, do not well

agree together, since by both he would suggest as if he knew not the person they came from, and whose name they made use of: had he stopped at the first question, it might have gone so, but his second question betrays him, and plainly shows he did know him, though he speaks with contempt of him, calling him "the son of Jesse", as Saul often did, 1Sa_20:27."

Verse 14 – It's interesting that even one of Nabal's young men/servants understood that Nabal did not do right by David and David's men. He felt compelled to go to the one he knew had wisdom & understanding; Abigail.

It also says that Nabal "reviled them". This word is only used three times in the OT. It can mean "to scream/shriek" (BDB) or it can mean to "swoop upon". We might say in English to "jump all over". But it seems to indicate that Nabal treated them poorly and aggressively. John Gill states: "gave them very abusive language, represented David and his men as a parcel of scoundrels, fugitives, and runaway servants, 1Sa_25:10; or "he flew at them"; or "upon" them, in great wrath and fury, calling them hard names, bidding them begone about their business; the

allusion is to a ravenous bird, which will fly at persons when it apprehends its young in any danger.”

Verse 16 – This young man backs up what David had his men tell Nabal. David and his men were a blessing and benefit to Nabal, protecting his animals and servants, but Nabal treated them terribly. John Gill states about the protection David provided: “Protecting and defending them against the Philistines, who, as they robbed the threshing floors of Keilah, would have plundered the flocks of Nabal; or it may be rather against the incursions of the Arabs in the wilderness of Paran, the posterity of Ishmael, who lived by plunder, and against the wild beasts of the desert, who otherwise would have carried off many of their sheep and lambs, by night or by day:”

Verse 17 – The NKJV says “scoundrel”. The Hebrew is “son of Belial”. John Gill states: “meaning Nabal, who was such a worthless, passionate, and ill natured man, such a lawless and imperious one, that he would not suffer a man to speak to him about anything; and it was to no purpose to attempt it, which was a reason this servant did not choose to speak to him about this affair, but to Abigail; and suggests, that it

would signify nothing for her to speak to him about it, but it would be most advisable for her to consider with herself what was to be done immediately, without consulting him:”

Verse 18 – I found the type of “skins of wine” interesting. Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “That is, two goat-skins full. The hide is pulled off the animal without ripping up; the places where the legs, etc., were are sewed up, and then the skin appears one large bag. This is properly the Scripture and Eastern bottle.”

Verse 39 – Matthew Poole’s Commentary states: “David sent, to wit, messengers; which he thought fitter than to go himself; partly because if he had met with a repulse, it had been less ignominious; and partly because he would leave her to her freedom and choice, and would not so much as seem to take her by violence. But this doubtless was not done immediately after Nabal’s death, but in some convenient space of time after it; though such circumstances be commonly omitted in the sacred history, which gives only the threads and most important passages of things.” [END]

Verse 41 – John Gill’s commentary states: “which she said through her great humility, this being one of the meanest services she could be put to; intimating, that she was so far from being worthy to be the wife of such a man that she was only fit and it would be honour enough to her to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him;”

Verse 43 – Most conclude that Ahinoam was David’s wife before Abigail as she is always mentioned first (compared 2 Samuel 3:2).