

1 Samuel Chapter 25 Continued

1 Samuel 25:23 "And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,"

This act of obeisance, and in fact, the whole tone of the wise wife of Nabal in her address to David, seems to betoken her consciousness that she was addressing the anointed of Jehovah, the future king, at no distant date, of Israel. Her worst fears she found realized when she met David, probably at no great distance from the principal residence of Nabal, accompanied by so large an armed force, evidently bent on some deed of violence. She eased his wrath by representing her husband not merely as a bad man, but as one scarcely responsible for his actions. Had she only known of the mission of David's followers to Nabal, she implies, very different indeed had been their reception; they would not, at least, have returned to David empty-handed.

Abigail bowed herself to David recognizing him as king. She knew in her heart that someday this honorable man would be king.

1 Samuel 25:24 "And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, [upon] me [let this] iniquity [be]: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid."

As a humble supplicant, having a favor to ask of him; it is very probable David was on foot.

“And said, upon me”: My lord, upon me let this iniquity be; which her husband had been guilty of; she desires it might be transferred from him to her, and be reckoned as if done by her. She would have it imputed to herself, and all the blame lie upon her, and the punishment for it be inflicted on her; for iniquity may be put for the punishment of iniquity. This was very artfully said, as well as expressed great affection for her husband, and care of his life. For she knew, if she could get the fault removed from him to her, she would be able to vindicate herself, and her innocence would soon appear. Nor would this strong affection for her husband fail of answering some good purpose, as she full well knew.

“And let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience and hear the words of thine handmaid”: As it was but reasonable she should be heard, since she stood now as the criminal, taking all the blame of her husband's conduct on herself.

Not only was Abigail an honorable woman, who was wise enough to realize what was going on, but was brave as well. She offered to take the blame herself. She pleads with David to hear her out before he continues on his mission of destruction.

1 Samuel 25:25 "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, [even] Nabal: for as his name [is], so [is] he; Nabal [is] his name, and folly [is] with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send."

“This man of Belial”: I.e., “troublemaker.”

“As his name is, so is he”: A name was not simply a label of distinguishing one thing from another, but a profound insight into the character of the one named. “Fool” has the connotation of one who is “morally deficient”.

You remember from the beginning of this lesson, the evil things that his name meant. Abigail says that his name describes the very way he is. She does not apologize for Nabal. She is aware that he is evil, and she admits it to David. She is saying that had David sent the young men to speak to her, the answer would have been different. She has proof of that, by all the gifts she has for David here.

1 Samuel 25:26 "Now therefore, my lord, [as] the LORD liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to [shed] blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal."

She represents him as a man that offended out of folly, rather than malice; which might in some degree excuse his rudeness. For as his name is, so is he. Nabal in the Hebrew signifies a fool, though not one by nature, but rather through pride and insolence.

"But I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send": As she had taken the blame upon herself, now she answers for herself, and pleads ignorance of his messengers, and their message. She had not so much as seen them with her eyes, and much less heard their message when reported; had she, she would have taken care, she intimates, that it should have been attended to; having so much interest in her husband, that she could have spoken to him to have used them with civility, and granted their request.

We see the wisdom of Abigail in this. She immediately relates her coming to meet David with God. She says she is there because God sent her to him. God has stopped David from shedding the blood of Nabal and his men. Abigail speaks doom upon those like Nabal, who are opposed to David. She has advised David not to avenge himself, but to let God do it for him.

1 Samuel 25:27 "And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord."

The present, consisting of the things mentioned (in 1 Samuel 25:18); which came as a blessing from God and with good will from her.

"Let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord": The servants of David: in the original it is, "that walk at the feet of my lord": and which the Targum paraphrases, "who minister before my lord". So Abigail's damsels are called "pedissequae", or "that walked at her feet" (1 Sam. 25:42). This also is very artfully said, as if the present was not good enough for David, and worthy of his acceptance; might be agreeable to his men, and of service to them.

We see in this, that Abigail is being very humble. She says the gifts she has brought to them are not good enough to give David, because he is a king. She explains that these gifts (of very little value in her sight), might be good enough for David's men who follow him. The gifts then are for

them. Notice she calls herself David's handmaid, as this is another way of calling herself the servant of David.

1 Samuel 25:28 "I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee [all] thy days."

“A sure house”: Abigail’s perceptive insight fit an essential feature of the Davidic Covenant (see 2 Sam. 7:11-16).

“Fighteth the battles of the Lord”: Unlike the king previously desired by the people (8:20), David was a man who fought the Lord’s battles. He was truly God’s king.

It seems that Abigail is already aware of the fact that David is the LORD's. This was either told her by the LORD, or she has heard this from the people who know David well. She is sure that David is destined to be king. She knows that David has lived uprightly before his LORD. Earlier she had asked David to let the blame fall upon her. Now, she is asking for forgiveness from David for those things.

1 Samuel 25:29 "Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, [as out] of the middle of a sling."

“Bound in the bundle of life”: This is a metaphor that reflects the custom of binding valuables in a bundle to protect them from injury. The point here was that God cared for His own as a man would his valuable treasure. David, she said, enjoyed the protection of divine providence which destined him for great things. On the other hand, God would fling his enemies away like a stone in a sling-shot.

The custom of binding one’s valuables in a “bundle” to protect them from injury is the picture of God “bundling” David to protect him. Abigail’s decisive words reminded David that he was one of God’s treasures.

She is speaking prophetically of the things that lie in store for those who hate David. This is probably, speaking specifically of Saul, but is also speaking of anyone else who might come against him. Because he has given himself entirely to the LORD, he possesses life eternal. "Bound in the bundle of life" means he is surrounded by life. He is in the protective care of the LORD. The LORD will sling his enemies away from him.

Verses 30-32: “Abigail” sensed the politically tragic results of her wicked husband’s foolish actions. She was also sensitive to the Lord’s good intentions for “David” and therefore submits herself to the Lord’s appointed ruler (verse 41).

1 Samuel 25:30 "And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;"

“Ruler over Israel”: Abigail was certain that David would exercise effective rule over Israel after Saul’s death. In the meantime, however, she did not want him to do anything to jeopardize his future, endanger his throne, or violate God’s will by seeking personal vengeance in anger (verses 33-34).

1 Samuel 25:31 "That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid."

With exquisite grace Abigail wound up her earnest simple words to the king of the future with a reference to the period when those happy days, to which she looked forward with such certainty, should have arrived. Then David must have no deeds of violence, of furious passion, and of shed blood to look back upon. When that golden time should have come, as come it surely would, he must remember then that Abigail, who was now speaking to him, had saved him from the commission of a wild and sinful act. And, in grateful memory for the good service, must then look kindly on her from his throne.

Notice she does not say “if”, she says “when”. She is assured that David will be king. She is reminding him of the great responsibility of keeping himself completely free of selfish acts. He must not take vengeance for himself in this matter, because he might look back on it with regret. Someone might even accuse him of killing Nabal because of his anger. She reminds him, that God will punish his enemies. She is so sure that he will be king, that she asks for him to remember her.

1 Samuel 25:32 "And David said to Abigail, Blessed [be] the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:"

Having heard her out, he was overcome with her rhetoric and powerful arguments.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me": Who put it into her heart to come out and meet him, and endeavor to avert him from his bad design, which his heart was set upon. He saw plainly the hand of God in it, and in the first place acknowledges the goodness of divine Providence, in directing her to take the step she did.

1 Samuel 25:33 "And blessed [be] thy advice, and blessed [be] thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to [shed] blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand."

And blessed be thou": I.e. the Lord bless and recompense thee for this thy good advice.

"From coming to shed blood": Which I had sworn to do. Hereby it plainly appears that oaths whereby men bind themselves to any sin are null and void; and as it was a sin to make them, so it is adding sin to sin to perform them.

1 Samuel 25:34 "For in very deed, [as] the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall."

An oath for the confirmation of what he was about to say.

"Which hath kept me back from hurting thee": From doing any ill to her family, as he intended, though not to her person, his resolution being only to slay the males; but that would have been a hurt, an evil, an affliction to Abigail, from which the Lord in his providence restrained him, and that through her good advice.

"Except thou hadst hastened, and come to meet me": If she had not made quick dispatch in preparing her present, or had stayed to persuade her husband into her measures. If she had delayed a little longer, David would have been at Nabal's house, executing his vengeance on him and his.

"Surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall": For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light.

David, not only allows her to speak, but receives what she has to say as a message of warning from the LORD. He knows that what she says is right. He blesses the LORD that sent her and blesses her for being brave enough to come with the advice. He admits he was about to kill all of the males with Nabal. He appreciates God for keeping him from shedding blood.

1 Samuel 25:35 "So David received of her hand [that] which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person."

Her present (1 Sam. 25:18); and which he kindly took for his own use, as well as for his men; for it was a present for a prince.

"And said to her, go up in peace to thine house": In peace of mind, having her request granted, and nothing to fear from David and his men. And so might return home with the greatest safety in her own person, with those that were with her, and be under no apprehensions of danger and destruction to Nabal and his family.

"See, I have hearkened to thy voice": To her arguments and reasoning, which were powerful; to her petitions, which were granted; and to her good counsel and advice, which he took.

"And have accepted thy person": Done as she desired, forgave the offence, and so lifted her up, as the word signifies, and made her countenance cheerful. He received her present kindly, and took well all she said and did; and promised to grant her, for the future, anything that lay in his power, whenever she should apply to him (see Job 42:8).

David forgives her for anything she might have done. He accepts the gifts she has sent to him, and sends her home in peace. David greatly admires Abigail.

Verses 36-39: Nabal may have suffered a stroke. Whatever his illness and cause of death, it was a direct consequence for dishonoring God's anointed king.

1 Samuel 25:36 "And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart [was] merry within him, for he [was] very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light."

As the manner which was upon those solemn occasions. Shameful covetousness and vain care or restraint were met together in him.

"She told him nothing": He then being incapable of admonition, his reason and conscience being both asleep.

She shows great wisdom in not telling him while he was drunk. People who are drunk do not have the capacity to make wise decisions. She lets him enjoy his feast and puts off telling him to a more favorable time.

Verses 37-38: "Heart died ... became as a stone": Intoxicated, Nabal apparently suffered a stroke and became paralyzed until he died.

1 Samuel 25:37 "But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became [as] a stone."

When he had slept, and was become sober, and so capable of attending to and understanding what might be related to him.

"And his wife had told him these things": Recorded in this chapter, before observed.

"That his heart died within him, and he became as a stone": He swooned away, became as cold as a stone, and remained as senseless, spoke not a word, but lay in a stupor. The Jewish writers generally say this was occasioned by the distress and uneasiness the present his wife carried to David gave him. But it is more likely the sense of the danger that was impressed upon his mind, which he had been exposed to through his carriage to David and his men; who, he feared, notwithstanding all his wife said would return and take vengeance on him.

1 Samuel 25:38 "And it came to pass about ten days [after], that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died."

That is to say, that after ten days had passed the Lord put an end to the base life by a second apoplectic stroke. Although the death was a sequel to the selfishness, passion, and the intemperance, it does not appear that anything more than the operation of natural causes occasioned his end here. In the language of these old divinely inspired writers, disease and sickness are often spoken of as the special “shafts” aimed by the Most High, as in fact they are.

This is simply saying that the shock from what she told him caused him to have a heart attack, and ten days later he died. This is the way that the LORD had of removing this evil Nabal. God had taken vengeance for David.

Verses 39-44: Because “David” recognized that “Abigail” was a godly and wise women (compare verses 32-34), and because a marriage to a prominent Calebite would be advantageous to his future position as king in Judah, David took Abigail as wife soon after Nabal’s death. Significantly, David would first become king of Judah at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:1-7). Despite its political expediency, David’s polygamous marriages (verses 42-43), are not commended by the Scriptures.

1 Samuel 25:39 "And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed [be] the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife."

As he soon might as Maon and Carmel were not far from the wilderness where David was.

"He said, blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal": Not that he rejoiced at the death of Nabal, simply considered, or from a private spirit of revenge. But because of the glory of divine justice, which he had shown to him in vindicating him from the reproach Nabal had cast upon him, and particularly was thankful for what follows.

"And hath kept his servant from evil": From slaying Nabal with his own hand, and doing hurt to his family.

"For the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head": And upon no other, none of his family suffered but himself, and which was another cause of thankfulness to David. Had he been suffered to have done as he in his wrath determined, not only Nabal, but all the males in his house, would have been cut off. But now, through the righteous judgment of God, only Nabal suffered, and not any of his family.

"And David sent and communed with Abigail": By his messengers to her; or "concerning" her, about marrying her.

"To take her to him to wife": For being both a beautiful and wise woman, he thought her a proper person to be his wife; which she might lawfully become. Nabal being dead, and Michal, David's wife, being taken from him, and given to another man, with whom she lived in adultery. Or as

divorced by David, as the Jews say, David by the law of God was free from her. These messengers were sent by David at a convenient time, at a proper distance from the death of Nabal; and he chose rather to send messengers than to go himself, lest being denied he should be put to shame. She being a rich widow, and he a poor persecuted man, and that her answer might be entirely free and unawed by him, and that it might appear that she was not taken to him by force. Besides, such a method has been always reckoned most honorable with great personages.

David greatly admired Abigail for her courage and her wisdom. She would make him a good wife. David lost no time in making it known he wanted her to be his wife. David's praise went to the LORD for taking vengeance for him.

1 Samuel 25:40 "And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife."

For though Nabal lived in Maon, yet having possessions in Camel, he had no doubt a house there also; and here Abigail was, and perhaps chose to be after his death, rather than at Maon.

"They spake unto her": Delivered the message to her they were sent with by David.

"Saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife": That is, to speak with her about his marriage to her, to propose it to her, and, if they could prevail upon her, to bring her with them, that David might marry her.

1 Samuel 25:41 "And she arose, and bowed herself on [her] face to the earth, and said, Behold, [let] thine handmaid [be] a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."

As she did before David (1 Sam. 25:23), and did as she would have done had he been present, considering his messengers as representing him and therefore showed the same respect and reverence and did the same honor, as if he had been there in person.

"And said": She expressed herself in such language as if David had been before her.

"Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord": 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 honor enough for her to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him. Or her sense is that it would be enough for her to be the wife of one of David's servants, and not his; it being the business of a wife, as Ben Gersom observes to wash the feet of her husband.

1 Samuel 25:42 "And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife."

She had no objection or hesitation in her mind about marrying David but at once consented, and immediately prepared for her journey, having as high an opinion, and as great an esteem of David, as he of her. And though she was rich and he saw this was no obstacle in the way, she

knew and believed he would be king of Israel (1 Sam. 25:30); and though he could not support her, she had enough to support herself, and supply him, till he came to the throne.

"And rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her": Whom she took with her, partly to wait upon her, and partly for her honor, and the honor of David, whom she was going to marry.

"And she went after the messengers of David": Not following them directly, but sometime after they were gone; partly for the sake of decency, and partly that their going before might acquaint David with the success of their message, and he might prepare to receive Abigail when she came.

"And became his wife": He espoused and married her according to the custom of the times.

The legal time for a widow to mourn was 7 days. It seems that Abigail was as pleased as David was. She humbles herself by saying she is willing to be a servant even to David's servant. This marriage is by mutual agreement. She immediately accepts the proposal of marriage and goes to David, riding an ass. She takes five of her servant girls with her. David seemed secure against Saul at this time.

1 Samuel 25:43 "David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives."

"Ahinoam of Jezreel": David's third wife, joining Michal and Abigail. For Jezreel (see note on 29:1).

It was not unusual in that day for a man to have more than one wife. "Ahinoam" means brother of grace.

1 Samuel 25:44 "But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which [was] of Gallim."

"Phalti ... of Gallim": Phalti means "my deliverance". The location of Gallim is unknown, but was probably a few miles north of Jerusalem (see 2 Sam. 3:13-16 for Michal's return to David).

David had been gone from the house of Saul for a very long time. Perhaps Saul thought he would never come back to her, so he gave her to Phalti of Gallim. She is eventually restored to David.

1 Samuel Chapter 25 Continued Questions

1. Not only was Abigail an honorable woman, but _____, as well.
2. How did she greet David?
3. What did she say about her husband's name?

4. Who did Abigail say had stopped David from shedding blood?
5. Why did she say the food she brought was for David's men?
6. What is she prophetically speaking of in verse 29?
7. What does Abigail suggest that David do, instead of going to battle?
8. Does David forgive her?
9. Why did Abigail not tell Nabal, what she had done that night?
10. When she told him later, what happened?
11. When did Nabal die?
12. What did David do, after Nabal died?
13. The legal time for a widow to mourn was _____.
14. How does she humble herself, when she accepts David's marriage proposal?
15. Who else did David marry?
16. What had happened to Michal?