

WISDOM AND FOLLY PERSONIFIED: ABIGAIL, NABAL, & DAVID

I SAMUEL 25 | 10.6.19 | ALPHA BAPTIST CHURCH

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CONTEXT

- In 1st Samuel 17, David defeats Goliath. Saul makes gives David a high rank in the army (1 Sam 18:5)
- When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: “**Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.**” (1 Sam 18:7, NIV)
- Saul grew angry (1 Sam 18:8-9) and tried to kill David. David eludes him (1 Sam 18:11)
- Saul still unsuccessfully tries to kill David (1 Samuel 18-20)
- 1 Samuel 21: David goes to Nob and asks for bread from the priest, Ahimelek, and gets Goliath’s sword (1 Sam 21:1-9). David flees to Gath and pretends to be a madman (1 Sam 21:10-15)
- David’s family and others join him, and he becomes commander of about 400 men (1 Sam 22:1-5)
- Saul has the **priests** of Nob killed – along with the **entire town of Nob** (1 Sam 22:6-23)
- David and his troops save the town of Keilah from the Philistines (1 Sam 23:1-6). Saul pursues David at Keilah until he hears that the Philistines are raiding the land (1 Sam 23:7-29)

DAVID SPARES SAUL

I SAMUEL 24

- After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the Desert of En Gedi.” So Saul took **three thousand able young men** from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said, “This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’ ” Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. (I Sam 24:1-4, NIV)
- Afterward, David was **conscience-stricken** for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD.” With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way. (I Sam 24:5-7, NIV)

DAVID SPARES SAUL

I SAMUEL 24

- Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David **bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.** He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the LORD’s anointed.’ See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. **May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.** As the old saying goes, ‘From evildoers come evil deeds,’ so my hand will not touch you. (I Sam 24:8-13, NIV)
- “Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? **May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.**” (I Sam 24:14-15, NIV)

DAVID SPARES SAUL

I SAMUEL 24

- When David finished saying this, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David **my son?**” And he wept aloud. “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me **well**, but I have treated you **badly**. You have just now told me about the **good** you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that **you will surely be king** and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s family.” So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold. (I Sam 24:16-22, NIV)

DAVID SPARES SAUL... AGAIN

I SAMUEL 26

- So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him. Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won’t strike him twice.” But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the LORD lives,” he said, “**the LORD himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.** But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let’s go.” (I Sam 26:7-11, NIV)

DAVID SPARES SAUL... AGAIN

I SAMUEL 26

- Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Come back, David **my son**. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a **fool** and have been terribly wrong.” “Here is the king’s spear,” David answered. “Let one of your young men come over and get it. The LORD rewards everyone for their righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed. As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble.” Then Saul said to David, “May you be **blessed**, David **my son**; you will do great things and surely triumph.” So David went on his way, and Saul returned home. (I Sam 26:21-25, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25

“NARRATIVE ANALOGY”

- The account of David, Abigail, and Nabal is **sandwiched** between two parallel accounts of David sparing Saul. There are several **literary connections between Saul and Nabal** who both acted like a **fool** (cf. I Sam 26:21) – “narrative analogy” (Baldwin, 157 cf. Vannoy, 223; Evans, 138; Firth, 265; Youngblood, 237)
- This is not a disconnected account; **Saul “is Nabal’s alter ego”** (Vannoy, 223 also Youngblood, 237 cf. Firth, 265; Klein, 253).
- Both refuse to acknowledge David – unlike those around them (Vannoy, 224)
- The narrator is making a point without stating it explicitly (Vannoy, 224)

I SAMUEL 25:1-3 THE STAGE IS SET

- Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Paran. A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and **three thousand sheep**, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings—he was a Calebite. (1 Sam 25:1-3, NIV)

THE STAGE IS SET

I SAMUEL 25:1-3

- Samuel's death marks the end of an era (Payne, 317; Baldwin, 156; Bergen, 243). Perhaps both Saul and David were at the funeral (Evans, 137)
- Samuel had anointed David as the new king (I Samuel 16:13) and Saul had finally recognized this (I Sam 24:20). His "work was done" (Payne, 317)
- David fled from Saul and was sought refuge from Samuel (I Sam 19:18; Vannoy, 225; Firth, 266)
- "David is left without one of his strongest supporters" (Wolf, 284 cf. Klein, 247); Samuel's counsel and rebuke are no longer available to either of them (Evans, 137 cf. Bergen, 243). David was **vulnerable** (Vannoy, 225)
- Will things fall apart now that Samuel is gone? (Cf. Evans, 137; Firth, 265)
- Saul delivered Carmel from the Amalekites and built a monument in his own honor (I Sam 15:12; IVP; Walton, 369; Evans, 138; Bergen, 245; Firth, 266; Klein, 247). Perhaps this is why Nabal apparently sides with Saul (IVP; Walton, 369)

THE STAGE IS SET

I SAMUEL 25:1-3

- Abigail = “my father rejoices” (Walton, 369) or “my father is joy[ous]” (Baldwin, 158; Bergen, 245 cf. Tsumura, 577; “divine Father” Youngblood, 241; Klein, 248).
- Abigail is described as **intelligent**, similar to how David was described (Hb. *śkl*; I Sam 18:5, 30; Bergen, 246). David was also attractive (I Sam 16:12; Firth, 266; Klein, 248 cf. I Sam 16:18; Youngblood, 242)
- Nabal = “fool” / “foolish” (IVP cf. Walton, 369; Vannoy, 223; Bergen, 245; Tsumura, 577; Firth, 266; Youngblood, 241; Klein, 247) but it’s unlikely that his mother gave him this name (IVP; Walton, 369; Baldwin, 157; Youngblood, 241; Klein, 247). Could have been a **nickname** (Evans, 138; Youngblood, 241)
- Perhaps the biblical writers give him this name to indicate his character (IVP), or there was some other positive meaning of the word (Walton, 369; Youngblood, 241), or of a similar-sounding word (Tsumura, 577)

THE STAGE IS SET

I SAMUEL 25:1-3

- Nabal is wealthy like Job (Job 1:3; Firth, 266; Klein, 247) but a fool. Foolishness and wealth are a dangerous combo (cf. Job 30:22; Firth, 266; Youngblood, 250). Saul also had **three thousand** men (I Sam 24:2, 26:2; Youngblood, 241)
- The **fool** says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. (Ps 14:1 NIV; Baldwin, 157; Tsumura, 588; Youngblood, 242; Klein, 248)
- **Fools** find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. (Pr 18:2, NIV; Baldwin, 157)
- The mouths of **fools** are their undoing, and their lips are a snare to their very lives. (Pr 18:7, NIV; Baldwin, 157)
- Abigail is of **good** (בטוב | *tôb*) **understanding** (שֵׂקֶל | *sēkel*); Nabal is **evil** (רָע | *raʿ*); They’re **mismatched** (Baldwin, 158) opposites (Klein, 248). Sharp contrasts foreshadows... (Bergen, 246).
- Abigail represents wisdom, Nabal represents folly (Klein, 246). Good **judgment** (*sēkel*) wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful leads to their destruction. (Pr 13:15, NIV; Firth, 266; Youngblood, 241)
- **Good** (*tôb*; I Sam 25:3, 8, 15, 21, 30-31, 36) and **Evil** (*raʿ*; I Sam 25:3, 17, 21, 26, 34, 39) appear in Hb. **seven** times each (Youngblood, 241)

THE STAGE IS SET

I SAMUEL 25:1-3

- Abigail is like the “wife of noble character” of Proverbs 31 (Evans, 138; Pr 31:10; Tsumura, 575). Perhaps, implies that anyone who was attractive and wise like Abigail would side with David (Evans, 138)
- Caleb was one of the faithful spies (Numbers 13-14); Hebron was given to him and his descendants (Josh 14:13-15; Judg 1:20; Walton, 369 cf. Baldwin, 158; Tsumura, 577; Klein, 248).
- Nabal is a member of a prominent clan (Firth, 267)
- Bethlehem was apparently settled by descendants of Caleb, David was from Bethlehem... they were **distant relatives** (1 Ch 2:19, 50-51, 54; Walton, 369 cf. Bergen, 245)
- Calebite also sounds like the Hebrew word for “dog”; could be a pun (Walton, 369; Tsumura, 577; Youngblood, 242 cf. LXX; Firth, 264 but see Vannoy, 221)

I SAMUEL 25:4-9

DAVID'S REQUEST

- While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’ “ ‘Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and **your son David** whatever you can find for them.’ ” When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited. (1 Sam 25:4-9, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:4-9

DAVID'S REQUEST

- Instead of “long life”, it may mean “you shall say to my **kinsman**” (*ḥay* cf. Vg.; I Sam 18:18; Firth, 262), “brethren” (Tsumura, 577 cf. “brother” Klein, 243). Good health = םלִשׁ (šālôm) (Youngblood, 242)
- Sheep-shearing time was a time of feasting for all (Wolf, 284; IVP; Evans, 140; Bergen, 246; Tsumura, 576; Youngblood, 241) – a time of abundance and (hopefully) generosity (Walton, 369 cf. Baldwin, 157; Evans, 140)
- Sheep would be counted and shepherds would be rewarded (IVP). Herdsmen would be compensated for safely delivering sheep (IVP; Walton, 370); David requests a part of that compensation (IVP)
- Shepherds would be liable for any lost sheep (Walton, 370).
- Wool was one of the largest commodities in the economy (Walton, 369). One sheep → two pounds of wool. Nabal's 3,000 sheep → **three tons** of wool (Walton, 369)

I SAMUEL 25:4-9

DAVID'S REQUEST

- Feeding six hundred men was likely a challenge (Evans, 139). David wanted provision/compensation from Nabal in exchange for his protection (from raiders like the Amalekites) (Payne, 317 cf. Bergen, 246)
- Some say it was a **protection racket** (Baldwin, 158; Youngblood, 242); if so, it was “a fairly gentle one” (Evans, 139). He did not threaten (Firth, 267)
- They could have plundered farms (Evans, 139); instead they rely on customary standards of hospitality (cf. Genesis 19; Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 5:10; 1 Pet 4:9; Evans, 139) and requests “whatever” Nabal may be willing to give (Youngblood, 243). He requests “payment for prior protection” (Klein, 248)
- David sends a small (unthreatening) group of ten men (Evans, 140 cf. Bergen, 246)
- David calls himself his **son** as **Saul** had called David his son (1 Sam 24:16; Bergen, 246; Youngblood, 243 cf. 1 Sam 26:17, 21, 25; Klein, 248). David is using polite and humble terms while negotiating (Tsumura, 580)

I SAMUEL 25:10-11 NABAL'S RESPONSE

- Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this **son of Jesse**? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" (I Sam 25:10-11, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:10-11

NABAL'S RESPONSE

- Could be seen as a “brave refusal” of someone who supported Saul to give in to bullies (Evans, 140). Nabal didn't ask for Nabal's help (Tsumura, 581)
- David did **kind of** break away from his master (Payne, 317) – but only because his master was trying to kill him...
- Readers know that David is the **chosen king**, not a rebel (Payne, 317) or a deserter (Wolf, 284)
- Nabal is oblivious to God's plans (Payne, 317). Nabal rejects David's request and insults David (IVP) – unnecessarily and in violation of hospitality norms (Evans, 140)
- Nabal knows who David is (“son of Jesse”) but refuses to “adopt” him as a “**son**” (Baldwin, 159 cf. Evans, 140) and implies that he is merely a **runaway slave** (Bergen, 246)

I SAMUEL 25:10-11

NABAL'S RESPONSE

- Saul calls David “son of Jesse” when talking about him dismissively (1 Sam 20:30-31; 22:7-9, 13; Firth, 267 cf. 1 Sam 20:27; Youngblood, 243; Klein, 248)
- David is likely the most famous/infamous member of his tribe (Bergen, 246). “Who is David?” is a “formal rejection” (Tsumura, 581)
- Self-centeredness: there are **eight** first-person references (“I” / “my”) (Bergen, 247; **four** apiece; Youngblood, 243)
- He is unwilling to even give them bread and water – the “most basic food and drink” (Nu 21:5; Dt 9:9, 18; 1 Ki 13:8–9, 16–17 cf. Jdg 8:4-6, 15; Youngblood, 243)

I SAMUEL 25:12-13 DAVID'S RESPONSE

- David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. David said to his men, "Each of you strap on your **sword!**" So they did, and David strapped his on as well. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. (1 Sam 25:12-13, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:12-13

DAVID'S RESPONSE

- David was wronged, but this is an **overreaction** (Payne, 317)
- Takes 400 men, leaves 200 to guard the supplies and perhaps the women and children (cf. I Sam 27:3; Bergen, 247)
- David is like, “If you want to behave like a fool it will be the last time you do so” (Vannoy, 225)
- More lit. “Put on your **swords!**” So they put on their **swords**, and David put on his **sword.**” Repetition is important. (Vannoy, 225 cf. Tsumura, 581; Youngblood, 242)
- Contrast: May the **LORD** judge between you and me. And **may the LORD avenge** the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. (I Sam 24:12, NIV; Vannoy, 226; Tsumura, 575)
- May the **LORD** be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by **delivering me from your hand.**” (I Sam 24:15, NIV; Firth, 273)

I SAMUEL 25:14-17 ABIGAIL FINDS OUT

- One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his **greetings**, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very **good** to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a **wicked** man that no one can talk to him." (1 Sam 25:14-17, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:14-17

ABIGAIL FINDS OUT

- Ironically, Nabal's servants are not **too loyal to him!** (cf. 1 Sam 25:10-11; Baldwin, 159; Firth, 268; Youngblood, 243; Klein, 249). As with Saul, Nabal's family and servants side with David (Tsumura, 582)
- The servants confirm David's claim (Walton, 370); David was "very **good**" to them (Baldwin, 160; Hb. *ṭōbîm mē'ōd*; Bergen, 247) – just as David was very **good** to Saul (Hb. *ṭōbîm mē'ōd*; 1 Sam 19:4; Bergen, 247)
- "Greetings" is lit. **blessing** (Tsumura, 582). The word **ble**ss (בָּרַךְ | *bārak*) is repeated throughout
- Just as David was a protected his flocks (1 Sam 17:34-35), so he protected their flocks – as a good shepherd (cf. 2 Sam 7:7; Bergen, 247)
- He "sought the **good** of Nabal but received **insults** in return" (Baldwin, 159)
- They would appreciate David's protection; they would be liable for any lost sheep (Walton, 370)
- The servants know that Nabal is foolish and that "it is **no use talking to [him]**" (Evans, 140).

I SAMUEL 25:18-19 ABIGAIL ACTS QUICKLY

- Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, **five** dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. (1 Sam 25:18-19, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:18-19

ABIGAIL ACTS QUICKLY

- Unlike Nabal, Abigail acts **quickly** (1 Sam 25:18, 23, 34, 42; Youngblood, 244)
- Bread, water, and meat were mentioned as a reward by Nabal in 1 Sam 25:11; Abigail acknowledges David's services (IVP) and shows hospitality (Walton, 370)
- Giving gifts was tied up with the honor/shame culture (Walton, 370); Nabal had not only refused David's request, he **dishonored** him (Walton, 370)
- Bushel (five seahs) of roasted grain, one omer (2 quarts) of raisins, and 200 pressed fig cakes could be stored and eaten later (IVP; Youngblood, 244). Seah is about 15 liters (Tsumura, 584) or six quarts (Firth, 264).
- These were probably already prepared for the feast (Baldwin, 160). Not enough to feed six hundred men and their families for long, but it was substantial (Bergen, 248)
- Nabal may have been too drunk or too dull to notice... or maybe they had so much that this loss would be insignificant (Evans, 141)
- She prepares a gift like Jacob did for Esau when he came w/ **four hundred men** (Gen 32:3-31; Gen 32:6; Tsumura, 583 cf. Firth, 269)

I SAMUEL 25:20-22

SUSPENSE BUILDS

- As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back **evil** for **good**. **May God deal with David, be it ever so severely**, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!” (I Sam 25:20-22, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:20-22

SUSPENSE BUILDS

- David repaid Saul **good for evil** (1 Sam 24:17), but here he does not care about blood-guilt (Baldwin, 160; Klein, 249 cf. 1 Sam 24:7; Tsumura, 585)
- Saul made a foolish vow in 1 Samuel 14 (Evans, 141; Bergen, 248): Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, “**Cursed** be anyone who **eats food** before evening comes, before I have **avenged myself** on my enemies!” So none of the troops tasted food. (1 Sam 14:24, NIV)
- But **Jonathan** had not heard that his **father** had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. (1 Sam 14:27, NIV)
- Saul said, “**May God deal with me, be it ever so severely**, if you do not die, Jonathan.” But the men said to Saul, “Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death. (1 Sam 14:44-45, NIV cf. Vannoy, 225)

I SAMUEL 25:20-22

SUSPENSE BUILDS

- The Hb. is actually different, David's oath more lit. says, "Thus may God do to David's **enemies**, and thus may he add..." He avoids taking the LORD's name in vain (cf. Ex 20:7; Bergen, 248).
- He is essentially saying: May God kill all of my enemies I fail to kill (Bergen, 248)
- 22 *May God do thus to David's enemies and thus again, if I leave from all that belongs to him, by the morning, one wall-pisser!"* (cf. wall-pisser when referring to killing all males 1 Ki 14:10; 16:11; 21:21; 2 Ki 9:8; Tsumura, 585; Klein, 250 also see Firth, 269 who translates differently)
- Evil will never leave the house of one who **pays back evil for good**. (Pr 17:13, NIV; Tsumura, 585 cf. Gen 44:4; Jer 18:20; Ps 35:12, 38:20, 109:5; Youngblood, 245)

I SAMUEL 25:23-27

ABIGAIL'S SPEECH (PART I)

- When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said: “Pardon **your servant, my lord**, and let me speak to you; hear what **your servant** has to say. Please pay no attention, **my lord**, to that **wicked** man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means **Fool**, and **folly** goes with him. And as for me, **your servant**, I did not see the men **my lord** sent. And now, **my lord**, as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you live, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming **my lord** be like Nabal. And let this gift, which **your servant** has brought to **my lord**, be given to the men who follow you. (1 Sam 23:27, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:23-27

ABIGAIL'S SPEECH (PART I)

- The **aroma** of food may have partly pacified David (Evans, 141), but Abigail's speech is masterful – the longest speech by a woman in the OT (Bergen, 250 also cf. 2 Sam 14:2, 20:16-19; Tsumura, 587)
- Abigail has nothing good to say about her husband (Wolf, 284); she admits that he is a fool as his name suggests (Baldwin, 161; Firth, 270). He has done wrong by not paying David for his services (cf. Dt 24:15; Bergen, 250). She is **honest** (Youngblood, 247)
- For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: They practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD; the hungry they leave empty and from the thirsty they withhold water. (Is 32:6, NIV; Baldwin, 161; Tsumura, 588; Firth, 270; Youngblood, 247; Klein, 248)
- Abigail calls David “**my lord**” repeatedly (Wolf, 284; Firth, 270) and speaks from a lowly place – his feet (Baldwin, 160; Firth, 270) (more lit. his **nose**, which could also metaphorically refer to his anger cf. Gen 27:45; Ex 32:12; Firth, 264)
- She calls herself his **handmaid** (אֲמָהָ | 'āmâ; Baldwin, 160; Youngblood, 246) six times (1 Sam 25:24, 25, 28, 31, 41) and his (**maid**)**servant** twice (שִׁפְחָה | šiphâ; 1 Sam 25:27, 41; Firth, 270). She speaks humbly unlike Nabal who refers to David as a servant (Youngblood, 246)
- More lit. ““**With me myself, my lord, is the guilt!**” (Tsumura, 586 cf. Firth, 263; Klein, 244). Likely hard to put the guilt on a beautiful and wise woman (Baldwin, 160; Tsumura, 588 cf. Evans, 141; Bergen, 250; Youngblood, 246).

I SAMUEL 25:23-27

ABIGAIL'S SPEECH (PART I)

- Her self-sacrifice demonstrates her loyal character. Would David want a wife who could not be trusted? (Youngblood, 246)
- She speaks presumptively as if God has already restrained David from incurring blood-guilt (Baldwin, 161 cf. Evans, 141; Bergen, 250). She engages in imprecation (Baldwin, 161) and/or prophecy (Tsumura, 588-9)
- David is contrasted with Nabal, and therefore wise David is contrasted with foolish Saul (Wolf, 284)
- Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest. (Pr 26:2, NIV; IVP) – “undeserved curses would really have no affect [sic]” (Longman, 463)
- “Gift” is lit. “blessing” (בְּרָכָה | *běṛākâ*) (Bergen, 250; Tsumura, 589; Youngblood, 247; Klein, 259). Nabal is stingy but Abigail is generous (Youngblood, 247)
- Saul admits he acted like a **fool** (though a different Hb. root; I Sam 26:21; Youngblood, 247)
- She calls herself his handmaid, but Abigail is the “master of the situation” (Baldwin, 161 cf. Tsumura, 589)

I SAMUEL 25:28-31

ABIGAIL'S SPEECH (PART II)

- “Please forgive **your servant’s** presumption. The LORD your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for **my lord**, because you fight the **LORD’s battles**, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of **my lord** will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. When the LORD has fulfilled for **my lord** every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, **my lord** will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD your God has brought **my lord** success, remember **your servant.**” (I Sam 25:28-31, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:28-31

ABIGAIL'S SPEECH (PART II)

- Then we will be like all the **other** nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight **our** battles.” (1 Sam 8:20, NIV; Youngblood, 248)
- Pun: **bound** in the **bundle** of the living; **slung** from the **sling** (Walton, 371). Could be a bound **document**: the “Document of the Living” or the “Book of the Living”, a heavenly book in which all living people are recorded (Walton, 371; cf. Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:29; Tsumura, 589 cf. Is 4:3; Klein, 251)
- Could refer to the bag of small stones shepherds carried to tallied sheep that were bought or sold (Walton, 371; Tsumura, 589). Alludes to David defeating Goliath with a sling stone (1 Sam 17:49; Baldwin, 161; Bergen, 250; Firth, 270; Youngblood, 248)
- Abigail knows about the political conflict between David and Saul. She is confident that the LORD has chosen David (Evans, 141 cf. 1 Sam 13:14; Bergen, 250). She assures him he’ll have a “sure house” (cf. 2 Sam 7:11, 17, 26, 27; 1 Kgs 2:24; 1 Kgs 11:38; Klein, 250-1)
- Abigail tells David not to avenge himself (and jeopardize his future (Youngblood, 249)), but to leave it in the hands of the LORD – as David did with Saul (Baldwin, 162 cf. Vannoy, 226; 1 Sam 24:3-22; Bergen, 250)

I SAMUEL 25:28-31

ABIGAIL'S SPEECH (PART II)

- For the **LORD** your God is the one who goes with you to **fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.**” (Dt 20:4, NIV cf. Jdg 7:2; Klein, 250)
- David is to fight “the LORD’s battles” (cf. I Sam 18:17; Tsumura, 589; Youngblood, 248; Klein, 250); not take personal revenge (Vannoy, 226) over petty wrongs (Bergen, 250). Abigail mentions the LORD **seven** times (Youngblood, 249)
- “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. (Lev 19:18, NIV; Berge, 250)
- It is **mine to avenge; I will repay.** In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them.” (Dt 32:35 NIV; Evans, 142; Bergen, 250; Youngblood, 247)
- **Do not take revenge**, my dear friends, but **leave room for God’s wrath**, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. (Rom 12:19, NIV; Evans, 142)
- **Remember:** alludes to Saul’s request: “Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s family.” (I Sam 24:21, NIV; Evans, 142) – and Jonathan’s (I Sam 20:14-18; Tsumura, 591).
- Remember = “act favorably in behalf of” (Bergen, 250) like Joseph asked the cupbearer (Gen 40:14; Youngblood, 249)

I SAMUEL 25:32-35

DAVID TAKES ABIGAIL'S WISE ADVICE

- David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.” Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.” (I Sam 25:32-35, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:32-35

DAVID TAKES ABIGAIL'S WISE ADVICE

- God providentially uses Abigail to prevent David from committing a heinous evil (Payne, 317)
- Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion. (Pr 11:22 NIV; Youngblood, 249; Klein, 251)
- Otherwise, “no one left urinating against the wall” would be alive (Bergen, 250). Contrast: Saul wiped out the priests and people of Nob (1 Sam 22:6-23; Bergen, 251)
- “**Blessed** be the LORD”... (Baldwin, 162); Blessed is mentioned **three** times (Bergen, 251; Tsumura, 591; Klein, 244)
- David recognizes that the LORD has **sent** her to keep him from acting foolishly, avenging himself (Wolf, 284; Baldwin, 161; Evans, 142; Vannoy, 226; Firth, 271), bloodshed and bloodguilt (Baldwin, 161; Firth, 271)
- The idiom “avenging oneself with one's own hand” occurs **three** times (1 Sam 25:26, 31, 33; Vannoy, 226). Violence often breeds violence (Baldwin, 162). David is liable to act on **impulse** (Baldwin, 162; Evans, 142)
- It is wise to listen to godly wisdom even from “unexpected sources” (Evans, 143 cf. Vannoy, 226). David thanks Abigail and praises God for her (Vannoy, 227). “Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the **wise** and they will love you.” (Pr 9:8, NIV)
- Go in *peace*, “more than a conventional salutation” (Baldwin, 162; Tsumura, 592)

I SAMUEL 25:36-38 FATAL REACTION

- When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until daybreak. Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died. (1 Sam 25:36-38, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:36-38

FATAL REACTION

- While others went hungry, Nabal was gorging himself (Baldwin, 162; Klein, 251). Hb. *nebel* means “**wine-skin**” (Tsumura, 592 cf. Firth, 264; Youngblood, 245, 250; Klein, 249, 252); *něbēlâ* means **corpse** (Firth, 270)
- Like the feast of a **king** (Baldwin, 162) – like King Saul (Bergen, 251). Both were wealthy men who benefited from David’s actions but repaid evil for good. Both had female members of their family marry and help David. Both died under God’s judgment (Bergen, 251 cf. 1 Sam 19:11f.)
- Sheep-shearing = party-time. Drunkenness was not uncommon (Wolf, 284). **Daybreak** was when David said he would kill all the males (1 Sam 25:22; Youngblood, 250)
- May have been a stroke (Baldwin, 163; Evans, 141; Bergen, 252; Tsumura, 592) due to rage(?) (Evans, 143). He lost **five** sheep out of three thousand! (Youngblood, 245)

I SAMUEL 25:36-38

FATAL REACTION

- Heart like **stone** echoes (1 Sam 25:29; Firth, 271). He may have **lost heart** (i.e., courage) (cf. 1 Sam 17:32; Youngblood, 250). In Ex 15:16, Moses says God's enemies will be "**still as a stone**" (Youngblood, 250)
- I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your **heart of stone** and give you a heart of flesh. (Eze 36:26, NIV; Youngblood, 250; "disobedient heart of stone" Klein, 252)
- Nabal died of natural causes but ultimately all life and death is in the hands of the Supernatural (Payne, 318) – it is interpreted as God's judgment on him (Baldwin, 163)
- As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will **strike** him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. (1 Sam 26:10, NIV; Vannoy, 224; Tsumura, 575; Klein, 252)
- David's messengers wished him "long life" and "good health"... (1 Sam 25:6) he was denied **both!** (Bergen, 246)

I SAMUEL 25:39-44

WEDDING A WISE WOMAN

- When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.” Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, “David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.” She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, “I am your servant and am ready to serve you and wash the feet of my lord’s servants.” Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five female servants, went with David’s messengers and became his wife. David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David’s wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim. (I Sam 25:39-44, NIV)

I SAMUEL 25:39-44

WEDDING A WISE WOMAN

- David sees the LORD's hand in Nabal's death (cf. I Sam 25:22 Hb.; Bergen, 252), likely foreshadowing Saul's death (Tsumura, 592 cf. Wolf, 284)
- **Three times** David (I Sam 25:34, 39) and Abigail (I Sam 25:26) say the LORD **kept** David from wrongdoing (Vannoy, 226). **Avenge** (נָשָׂא | *yāša`*) also occurs **three times** (I Sam 25:26, 31, 33; Youngblood, 247)
- Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will **avenge** (*yāša`*) you. (Pr 20:22, NIV; Baldwin, 163; Youngblood, 247)
- Abigail is willing to be a servant. "Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before his nobles." (Pr 25:6,7ab, NIV; cf. Mt 23:10-11; Lk 14:8-10; Bergen, 252)
- Footwashing was usually **self-administered** (Ge 18:4, 19:2, 24:42, 43:24, Judg 19:21, 2 Sam 11:8, SS 5:3; Youngblood, 251; Klein, 252). She demonstrates her willingness to be "slave of all" (Mk 10:44 cf. Jn 13:5-17; Youngblood, 251)
- David was married to Saul's daughter, *Michal* (I Sam 18:27); marrying her to another man showed Saul's **contempt** for David (Payne, 318 cf. 2 Sam 3:13-16; Wolf, 284). Saul had no legal right to do so (Evans, 143)

I SAMUEL 25:39-44

WEDDING A WISE WOMAN

- Politics: David was no longer Saul's **son-in-law** (Payne, 318), weakening his claim to the throne (Wolf, 284; Tsumura, 594; Firth, 272).
- Marrying Abigail and Ahinoam had political advantages, linking him with influential families in Judah/Hebron (Payne, 318; Wolf, 284; IVP; Walton, 371-2; Tsumura, 594; Firth, 271). He would also likely have the right to Nabal's property (Baldwin, 163 but see Tsumura, 593). David would later be anointed king in Hebron near Carmel (2 Sam 2:4; Bergen, 253; Tsumura, 576; Firth, 265; Klein, 246, 252)
- Marrying Abigail was not his aim; he was just trying to feed his troops (Baldwin, 163). Abigail gains protection from Saul (Evans, 143); David gains her wise council (Evans, 143). Marriage was likely good for Abigail since she admits he was **“good-for-nothing”**
- Abigail and David had a son named Kilean (2 Sam 3:3) or Daniel (1 Ch 3:1) (Evans, 143). He may have been acting as her **kinsman redeemer** (Bergen, 252)
- Perhaps the account foreshadows how David can be “susceptible to feminine charms” (Baldwin, 163). David can be passionate – for good or for evil (Baldwin, 163).
- There are many parallels in this account and the account of **David and Bathsheba** (2 Samuel 11; Firth, 273). Foreshadowing: David tries to kill a man, and marries his wife (Youngblood, 252)

CONCLUSION

- The LORDs providential hand is clearly working through these events (1 Sam 25:32; Baldwin, 164) – God works through all things (Rom 8:28; Tsumura, 576, 594)
- Though Samuel died (Firth, 272), David wisely recognizes the godly wisdom of Abigail and takes her advice; a lesser man would have rejected her (Baldwin, 164)
- Despite David's flaws, God protects him from personal vengeance and bloodguilt, preparing him for the throne of Israel (Baldwin, 164)
- Temptation vs. Divine Providence (Vannoy, 224). Satan attempts to lead us astray (1 Pet 5:8; Vannoy, 227) often when we're **vulnerable** (Vannoy, 227)
- The relationship between David and Nabal is paralleled with the relationship between David and Saul (Vannoy, 224). In both cases, David deals with injustice. But he must wait for the LORD's justice, not take it into his own hands (Vannoy, 225; Firth, 273)
- Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "**It is mine to avenge; I will repay,**" says the Lord. (Rom 12:17-19, NIV; Vannoy, 227 cf. Pr 25:21-22; Rom 12:20-21; Firth, 271)
- No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (1 Cor 10:13, NIV; Vannoy, 227)

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