

His Servants Are Everywhere (1 Samuel 25:1-31)

1. The Recollection of Samuel (v.1)

- No summary of Samuel's ministry is listed, for it is unnecessary since Samuel's reputation as God's servant was widely known. Additionally, the narrator is focused on the placement of his death: 1 Samuel 24-26 records monumental trials that had shaped David's character prior to his installation as king.
- David may not have attended any funeral arrangements, being he was a fugitive. We can only surmise whether Saul was present (15:34-35).

2. The Request of David (v.4-9)

- After Samuel's burial, David returned to the wilderness of Paran in the Judean wilderness. This was the same region where Saul and his men had almost captured David and his men (23:24-29).
- Within the vicinity of Paran is Carmel, which is an agrarian town in southern Judah. David and his men had supposedly been protecting Nabal's livestock. He was very rich and had large possessions of animals (3,000 sheep and 1,000 donkeys).
- During sheep-shearing season, which occurred after the summer grazing, David received word that this joyous and bountiful time of the year is commencing. He sent a ten-person delegate to receive some form of compensation from Nabal for protecting his property.
- In a spirit of humility, kinship, and belonging, David's men greeted Nabal with a tri-fold blessing (v.6), in which they referred to themselves as his "servants," and David as "your son," which are terms of submission and endearment. They reminded Nabal of their services to him (v.7) and would appreciate a gift from Nabal's hand (v.8).

3. The Refusal of Nabal (v.9-11)

- Nabal asked a rhetorical question (v.10). He knew who David was! To his own acknowledgement, David is the "son of Jesse." This has been a title of derision that Saul has previously used in reference to David (20:31; 22:12).
- Nabal is also insinuating that David is a nobody (fame and reputation). In addition, Nabal disrespects not only David, but his men in a three-pronged statement (v.10):
 - David is a runaway slave who is fleeing from his master, Saul.
 - David's servants would do well to break away from David and join his own household.
 - Ironically, unbeknownst to him, he is about to find himself in the role of the master whose slaves break away. One of his own servants is going to break away from him (v.14-17).
- Nabal is trying to cover up for his idolatry of self. Nabal uses first person and first person possessive singular pronouns seven times (v.11).
- David is ironically beginning to behave like the surrounding nations (8:17).
- The men of David have expectations that are not found in the letter of the law. Nabal never entered any "contractual agreement" and will not compensate

David and his men. David expects the "spirit" of the law, while Nabal looks to the "letter" of the law.

- While Nabal is very rich, poorly behaved, and harsh, he does compensate his shearers for their work (v.11).
- David, along with his men, expected to have a favorable reception, since Nabal is a fellow Judahite (Calebite). Upon Nabal's refusal to compensate, combined with the derogative and pejorative comments, David becomes enraged and marches towards Nabal's house to kill him, along with all the males in his household.

4. The Resourcefulness of Abigail (v.14-31)

- One of Nabal's servants informed Abigail of the recent conversation between David's men and Nabal. He added additional material: Nabal "railed" (yelled, screamed, shrieked) at David's men.
- The servant affirmed the protection of David and his men (v.15-16) and has educated Abigail to the impending disaster that is going to befall Nabal's household (v.17). David is coming to enact judgement on Nabal and his men.
- This servant approaches Abigail because of her discernment (v.3) and acknowledges what the reader has known: Nabal is a harsh and worthless man.
- Abigail is in a precarious situation: She cannot exculpate the actions of her husband, yet she cannot be disloyal to him. She must honor the LORD, honor to her worthless husband, and diffuse this situation. As she is considering what to do, David and four hundred of his men are approaching as Nabal is holding a feast in celebration of the successful shearing harvest.

Abigail's Present (v.18): she took five sheep that were already prepared, two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, one bushel of parched grain, one thousand clusters of raisins, and two hundred fig cakes and loaded the food on many donkeys (v.27). She departs and intercepts David and his men before they reach Nabal's household by sending the food ahead of her as gift to David and his men.

Abigail's Presentation (v.23): she dismounts her donkey, runs to David, and falls on her face in submission. She refers to herself as a servant fourteen times (v.24-31).

Abigail's Petition (v.24-25): she requests a hearing after humbling herself before David (v.24) and addresses Nabal. She calls Nabal by his name: "fool." She is not dishonoring her husband since his name literally means "fool." Nabal may be a pejorative nickname given to him after he was born. The Hebrew root is the same word used to describe Hophni and Phinehas: worthless men (2:12). The narrator (v.3), Nabal's servant (v.17), David (v.21), and Abigail have all agreed that he is a worthless man. She also assumes the guilt of this offense on herself and her failure to intercept David's men before they reached Nabal.

Abigail's Plead (v.28): after she has humbled herself and acknowledged what everyone in Judah knows (Nabal's Nabalishness), she pleads that David would accept the gift, and forgive her iniquity.

Abigail's Purpose (v.26-31): she believes she has been sent by the LORD to restrain David's anger and future regret if he follows through with his planned bloodshed.

Abigail's Prophecy (v.29-31): She is the first in Scripture to prophesy David's sure house (eternal kingship). She re-focuses David's mindset to the faithfulness of God in executing salvation (deliverance) himself, as opposed to David's sinful vindication.