

A Study of I Samuel
The Desiring for a King
David in Exile
Chapter 25

David's Request of Nabal (1-9): The death, burial and funeral of Samuel is just simply stated here (1).

David goes to the wilderness of Paran where David hears of a wealthy businessman named Nabal. It is recorded that Nabal had "3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats" (vs.2). Nabal lived in Maon but did his business in Carmel (2). Nabal was the husband of Abigail a woman of "good understanding" and of a "beautiful countenance" (3); while Nabal was a "churlish" (*rude and vulgar tone*) and was "evil in his doings" a man of Belial (vs3 cf. vs 17). Nabal means "fool" (3 cf. vs. 25).

David sends his servants to Nabal to tell Nabal that all the while his shepherds where with David in Carmel that David did his men no harm, nor did he take of any of his sheep (see vs. 15-16) and therefore would Nabal be willing to provide David with substance out of his abundance (4-9).

Nabal's Response and David's Reaction (10-13): Nabal was a shrewd businessman and evil in his dealings and as such he not only refuses to give David any substance but "rails on him" (10-11 cf. vs. 14 cf. 21). When David's men tell all that Nabal had spoken, David gathers 400 men to go and punish Nabal (12-13 see vss. 21-22).

Abigail's intercession (14-31): Nabal's wife, Abigail was told of what had transpired between David's men and Nabal and how Nabal railed on David's men and how "evil is determined against our master and against all his household" (14-17).

Remember it is Abigail who is of "good understanding" (vs 3) and as such she "made haste" to rectify the situation. Abigail gathers provisions (*200 loaves, 2 bottles of wine, 5 sheep ready dressed, 5 measures of parched corn, 100 clusters of raisins, 200 cakes of figs*) and lays them on asses to go before her to meet David and his 400 (18-19).

David's desire is made clear by what he told his men concerning Nabal in verses 21-22. As Abigail approaches David she falls to the ground and bows herself before him and begins to beg for mercy (23-28).

Abigail as did Jonathan and Saul, confirms that she knows that David will be king over the people of Israel, for God is with him in all his battles (29-31). The soul of David “shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God” is a most beautiful expression given by Abigail. In biblical times precious items would be bundled up in a cloth for safe traveling. Abigail is conveying to David that he is precious to the LORD and he will guard him safely to his destination.

David’s Respite (32-35): David is humbly appreciative for Abigail coming out and stopping him from carelessly avenging himself by his own hand (32-33). David understood that he would be acting in the flesh here in avenging himself.

Nabal’s Death (36-38): The LORD takes care of Nabal (*see vs.39*) in that 10 days following Nabal dies.

David and Abigail (39-44): David takes Abigail for his wife after he takes Ahinoam.

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Saul Pursuit of David (1-4): David for reasons untold hides in the hill country of Hachilah in the wilderness of Ziph (cf. 23:14). The Ziphites tell Saul that David is in their land (cf. 23:19). Saul and 3,000 men go after David. Saul pitches his tent in the hill of Hachilah where David was. David having sent out spies knows of Saul's whereabouts for they were in the very mount David was.

David Spares Saul's Life (5-12): David and Abish¹ai go to Saul at night. Saul and captain of his host, Abner lay sleeping, a deep sleep from the LORD (12²). Once again David standing before a sleeping Saul is encouraged to kill Saul, Abishai desired to kill Saul with one fell swoop of his sword (8).

David once again commands Abishai to stand down for "who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless"? (9). David also acknowledges that the LORD shall smite Saul for "his day shall come to die" (10).

Saul commands Abishai to take Saul's spear and a curse of water and departed fleeing to the other side of the mountain afar off.

Final Words Between David and Saul (13-25): David and his men are on the other side of the mountain a "great space being between" Saul and David. David calls out to Abner (14), mocking Abner for not being about to guard his king (14-16).

David upon Saul recognizing his voice asks the king why the king of Israel would spend his precious time pursuing a flea or a partridge (18-20 cf. as he did in 24:9-15).

¹ Abishai was David's nephew (I Chron. 2:15-16) and was a courageous warrior (2 Sam. 10:10) and remained faithful to David in Absalom's rebellion. Later, Abishai was to save David's life from the giant (2 Sam. 21:17). Yet, Abishai was involved in the murder of Abner (2 Sam. 3:30, a crime that grieved David.

² Deep sleep from the LORD is a term used for the sleep of Adam while the Lord created Eve from a rib taken from Adam's side, and upon Abraham during the Covenant ritual in Genesis 15.

Saul once again speaks words of remorse (21). David tells Saul to send one of his men to come get his spear and prays that the LORD would deliver him from all tribulation just as David delivered Saul this day 22-24.

Saul pledged not to pursue David anymore (25 cf. 27:4), however David had heard such words from Saul before. Thus, David will concede that one day he will die by the hands of Saul if he does not flee to the land of the enemy, the Philistines (27:1).

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David in the Land of the Philistines (1-7): David figures the only way to stop Saul from pursuing him is to throw himself at the mercy of the king of Gath, Achish. It will be a period of a year and four months that David would spend in the land of Philistines (7). David was not so successful prior to this time (I Sam. 21:10-15). However, it is clear now to the Philistines that David is Saul's mortal enemy, and he could be useful to the Philistines in their ongoing struggle with Israel.

Achish gave David the district of Ziklag (6). Here David would be free to worship Jehovah and not be under the constant surveillance of the king.

The Wisdom of David (8-12): David moves against the old enemies of the people of Israel: Geshurites and the Gezrites and the Amalekites who dwelt south of Judah (8). David smote all things living because dead men tell not tells for David was worried that Achish would find out that David was killing the enemies of Israel and next would turn on him. When David is inquired about the campaigns of David into other lands David merely replies he moved into the land south of Judah (10). This reply shows that the Geshurites, Gerzites, and Amalekites dwelt close to the southern boundary of Judah, so that David was able to represent the march against these tribes to Achish as a march against the south of Judah, to make him believe that he had been making an attack upon the southern territory of Judah and its dependencies.

David's words pacified and confirmed his loyalty to Achish (12).

