

1 Samuel 25:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

Analysis

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

The contrasts in this verse are striking. Nabal's name means 'fool' in Hebrew—either a birth name proving prophetic or a narrative epithet. Abigail receives double commendation: 'good understanding' (Hebrew 'tovat sekel') indicates wisdom and discernment, while 'beautiful countenance' (yephat to'ar) describes physical attractiveness. The Hebrew 'qasheh vera' ma'alilim' (harsh/hard and evil in his doings) characterizes Nabal's disposition. His descent from Caleb connects him to Israel's faithful spy, making his behavior more blameworthy—noble lineage did not guarantee noble character. The mismatch between husband and wife creates narrative tension and foreshadows Abigail's crucial role.

Historical Context

Names in Hebrew often carried prophetic significance. Whether Nabal was actually named 'fool' at birth or this represents authorial characterization, the

name perfectly describes his conduct. The Calebite clan settled in this region of Judah after the conquest.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do wisdom and foolishness coexist in households and communities?
2. What does the contrast between Nabal and Abigail teach about the relationship between heritage and character?

Interlinear Text

וְשֵׁם	וְהָאִישׁ	נָבָל	וְשֵׁם	וְהָאִשָּׁה	
Now the name	but the man	was Nabal	Now the name	and she was a woman	
H8034	H376	H5037	H8034	H802	
אֲבִיגַיִל	וְהָאִשָּׁה	טוֹבַת	שֶׁכָּל	יִפְתָּ	
Abigail	and she was a woman	of good	understanding	and of a beautiful	
H26	H802	H2896	H7922	H3303	
תֵּן אָרְ	וְהָאִישׁ	קָשָׁה	וְכָע	מַעֲלָלָיו	וְהָיָה
countenance	but the man	was churlish	and evil	in his doings	
H8389	H376	H7186	H7451	H4611	H1931
וְהָיָה:					
and he was of the house of Caleb					
H3614					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 14:1 (Parallel theme): Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

Proverbs 31:10 (Parallel theme): Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

Psalms 10:3 (Evil): For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

Proverbs 31:26 (Parallel theme): She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

1 Samuel 25:17 (Evil): Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.