

Abigail

Women of Faith and Courage · Women of the Bible

Described as a woman of good understanding and beautiful countenance, Abigail was married to Nabal, a wealthy but churlish and evil man of Maon whose flocks grazed near Carmel. When David and his men, who had protected Nabal's shepherds in the wilderness, requested provisions, Nabal insulted David with contemptuous refusal—"Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse?" Enraged, David gathered four hundred men to destroy Nabal's household. One of Nabal's servants urgently informed Abigail of the impending disaster, recognizing that "evil is determined against our master."

Abigail acted swiftly and wisely, gathering substantial provisions and riding to meet David without informing her fool husband. Falling before David, she took responsibility for Nabal's offense, appealed to David's better nature, and prophetically acknowledged his divine calling as Israel's future king. Her gracious wisdom turned David from bloodshed, causing him to bless God for her discernment.

When she informed Nabal the next morning (after his drunken feast), "his heart died within him, and he became as a stone," dying ten days later. David then sent for Abigail to become his wife, and she humbly accepted, becoming mother to his second son Chileab. Her account demonstrates godly wisdom in crisis, respectful appeals that turn away wrath, and God's vindication of the righteous.

Note: Abigail's name means 'my father's joy,' while Nabal means 'fool'—a fitting description of his character. Her prophetic speech to David (1 Samuel 25:28-31) displays remarkable theological insight, referring to the 'bundle of life' with the LORD and predicting David's dynasty. Her swift action (preparing provisions, riding to David) combined prudence with courage. The text's contrast between

her wisdom and Nabal's folly serves didactic purposes, illustrating Proverbs' teachings about wise and foolish conduct.

Key Verses

1 Samuel 25:3

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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