

FIRST SAMUEL
CHAPTER 24 IN REVIEW

1. How many men did Saul take to catch David? _____
2. What name was given to the area where Saul went? _____
3. Where was David hiding? _____
4. What did David's men urge him to do to Saul? _____
5. What part of Saul's clothing did David cut? _____
6. What ancient proverb did David quote? _____
7. By what figures did David allude to himself? _____
8. What did Saul do when he recognized David? _____
9. Where did Saul go after leaving David? _____
10. Where did David go after Saul left? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 25

- V. 1 *The death of Samuel.* The grand prophet of God finally reached the end of his earthly pilgrimage. He was buried in his home at Ramah. Although mention is made of David's activities, it is not specified that he was able to be in Ramah at the time of Samuel's burial. Since he went farther south after Samuel died, he probably felt he had lost a great friend and that he should get farther away from Saul.
- Vv. 2-13 *Nabal's shameful treatment of David.* David had befriended Nabal by protecting his flocks from time to time. He therefore felt that he had a right to ask for some consideration at the time of the shearing. Nabal was churlish, however, and refused to send any provisions to David. David thus determined to fight against Nabal.

Vv. 14-38 *Abigail appeals to David.* Abigail was Nabal's wife and when she heard of her husband's unfair treatment of David she went to meet David and asked him to spare her husband. Her words were wise and David listened to her appeal. Although David did not attack Nabal, Nabal was overcome with fear when he heard how close to feeling David's wrath he had come. The Lord then smote him and he died.

Vv. 39-44 *David's wives.* David married Abigail after Nabal died. He also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Michal, David's wife, had been given to another man by Saul.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*" (Psalm 116:15). Verse one of this chapter should stand alone. It records the death of a valiant soldier of the cross. Special notice should be taken of this event. God's followers should always mark well the fall of His valiant leaders.
2. "*Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold*" (Proverbs 25:11). Abigail's words to David were words of wisdom. He did well to heed them. Wherever Christian people find words of wisdom, they should give full attention to them. They are indeed like apples of gold.

David's Continued Flight, 25:1—26:25.

The Death of Samuel. 25:1

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

1. *Why was all Israel gathered together? 25:1*

All Israel was gathered together because Samuel had died. They came to Ramah to lament him and to bury him. The fact that he was buried in his house is a reference to a custom of the day for a man to be buried on his own property. The Hebrew word might have better been translated "a sepulchre," especially one that is much adorned. Such a reference is made in Isaiah 14:18 and also in Ecclesiastes 12:5. Samuel was buried in his own private tomb on his own property.

2. *Where was the wilderness of Paran? 25:1 b*

The wilderness of Paran was in the Negeb, the southern part of the land of Palestine. Several main divisions are made in the Promised Land. The Hill Country was the center of the land and sloped down to the west to the Mediterranean Sea. From the Hill Country another slope went east to the Jordan Valley. This mountainous region is often referred to simply as the Hill Country. The Philistine Plain was occupied by the enemies who were constant in their opposition to the people of God. The Valley was the territory of the Jordan which ran the full length of Canaan, beginning in the foothills of Mt. Hermon on the north and ending at the Gulf of Akabah on the south. The South was the land below Beersheba. This wilderness area was very sparsely populated, and some have concluded that it has always been an uninhabited and uninhabitable place. Recent studies made in the area have shown that there were many settlements here in ancient times, some of them dating back to the days of Abraham. Moses and the people of Israel wandered for forty years in the Wilderness of Paran (Numbers 13:3). Much of this time was spent in and around Kadesh-Barnea. David went to this extreme southern border of the land of Israel in order to escape the wrath of the demented king.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Nabal's Shameful Treatment of David. 25:2-13

2 And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep; and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

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.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace *be* both to thee, and peace *be* to thine house, and peace *be* unto all that thou hast.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee, Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

9 And when David's young men came they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto men, whom I know not whence they *be*?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

3. *Who were Nabal and Abigail? 25:2, 3*

David had protected the shepherds and the sheep of Nabal while they were in Carmel. Consequently, when David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent his young men to Nabal that Nabal might give to David and to his men some food and provisions in return for their protection. Nabal railed at the servants of David and sent them away empty-handed. One of Nabal's servants told this to Abigail, who saw the injustice of Nabal's action, and as a result, secretly took provisions to David. When Abigail returned to her husband, she found him in the midst of a drunken feast, so she told him nothing until the morning. When Nabal knew how close he had come to being wiped out and that his wife had saved him by her kindness, his heart died within him; and ten days later he died. David loved Abigail. When the news of Nabal's death was told to David, he sent to Abigail to ask her to become his wife. She consented, and they were married.

4. *What was the basis of David's request? 25:7*

While David was in and around Maon and Carmel, he had protected Nabal's shepherds and their flocks. Nabal may have been one of those who profited greatly from David's driving the Philistines away from Keilah. Whether David had protected Nabal's flocks from wolves or human predators, David felt that Nabal should be grateful for what he had done. He asked Nabal to check among his own young men to find out the truth of the matter. The occasion of sheep-shearing was also a joyous occasion when a man's heart should be opened to his friends and benefac-

tors. The sheep had been sheared and the profit from the sale of the wool would have brought prosperity to the owner. For all these reasons David asked for any token of Nabal's good pleasure which might have been convenient for him.

5. *What was Nabal's attitude towards David? 25:10*

Nabal sneered at David. He asked who David was, although he knew him. He cast reflection upon his ancestry by asking what benefit there was in being a descendant of Jesse. He also evaluated the situation by saying that David was simply a renegade deserter from Saul's army. He classed him with many servants of the time who had broken away from their masters without fulfilling their obligations to them. Nabal utterly despised David and turned a deaf ear to David's request.

6. *What was David's reaction? 25:13*

David armed himself for war. He commanded his men to prepare for battle. Two hundred men were left with the women and children to guard their homes and supplies. David took 400 men with him and was preparing to attack Nabal. He not only intended to take some of the food and supplies provided for the festive occasion but he also intended to kill Nabal. Such drastic action is not typical of David, who usually inquired of the Lord before he went into battle. This incident reveals an occasion when David allowed his quick temper to get the better of him and overrule a decision he would have made had he given more thought to it.

Abigail Appeals to David. 25:14-38

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

15 But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

FIRST SAMUEL

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 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.

18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on asses.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

20 And it was *so, as* she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertained* unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

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.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

26 Now therefore, my lord, *as* the Lord liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days.

29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, *as out* of the middle of a sling.

30 And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

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.

34 For in very deed, *as* the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

35 So David received of her hand *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone.

38 And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died.

7. *How did Nabal escape? 25:14*

Some young man told Abigail, Nabal's wife, how her husband had railed on David's men. The young man was evidently one of Nabal's servants who was ashamed of his master's actions. He was one of the men of whom David suggested Nabal make inquiry and must have known that David had a right to request a token of appreciation from Nabal. Nabal's actions must have been of such nature as to make it almost a matter of honor for David to avenge himself. The young man affirmed all that David had said. None of Nabal's flocks were missing while they were under David's protection. None of their equipment was missing as long as they were in contact with them. David had saved Nabal from very many losses. As a matter of fact a young man said that they felt as safe as if they had been behind a city wall.

8. *What was the young man's estimation of his master?*
25:17

The young man was so ashamed of his master's action that he terminated his discourse with his master's wife by

referring to Nabal as the son of Belial. This epithet was one which was hurled to any man who was of bestial character. He viewed Nabal as a son of Satan, a worthless man. He was ashamed of him, and had gone to his wife to see if some action might be taken to rectify the situation.

9. *What did Abigail do? 25:18*

Abigail took matters into her own hand. She took provisions for David and his men. Without telling her husband, she loaded beasts of burden with 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep already dressed, five measures of parched corn, and 100 clusters of raisins, in addition to 200 cakes of figs. She organized a company of servants to lead the asses and urged them to go on before her. She may have been afraid that if she were in the first contingent she would be attacked by David who was evidently going to take the spoils from Nabal by force. She also knew that the situation demanded speed and she did not want the servants to wait for her.

10. *What were David's intentions? 25:21*

David was not only out to get some provisions from Nabal, but he was also bent upon the utter destruction of the man and his family. He vowed a vow to God that he hoped God would wipe him out if he did not destroy Nabal from the face of the earth. As the American Standard Version expressed it, he said that he would not leave "by the morning light so much as one man child" (25:22b).

11. *How did Abigail stop David? 25:23*

Abigail took the initiative when she came within sight of David. She did not wait to see if he would attack her; but she approached him, got down off her donkey, and fell on her face to the ground before David. She must have known that David would not attack a woman, and yet she asked that all the iniquity of her husband be

laid upon her. She was willing to take the responsibility for what had happened although she had evidently had nothing to do with it. She asked David to let her speak to him about the matter.

12. *What is the meaning of the word Nabal? 25:25*

The word *Nabal* is a word from the original which means "fool." She also describes her husband as a worthless fellow, a son of Satan, a "man of Belial." She went on to say that she had not seen the young men whom David had sent to Nabal. Had she seen them, she would have attempted to give them these tokens of their appreciation of what they had done for them. Abigail then thanked God that David had been stopped from going out to shed innocent blood. David really had no right to take Nabal's life, although he was treated shamefully. Finally Abigail called attention to the provisions which she had brought. She called the present a blessing (25:27a).

13. *What was Abigail's estimation of David? 25:28*

Nabal had referred to David as a worthless servant who had broken away from his master. He had classed him with runaway slaves, but Abigail saw through the transpiring events that God was building a sure house for David. This meant that she viewed David as one to become the father of a great family in Israel. She believed that this was true because David was fighting the battles of the Lord. He was not fighting for himself, but he was putting down injustices and championing the cause of the righteous.

14. *What is the meaning of the phrase "the bundle of life?" 25:29*

If an object were in the midst of a lump of clay in a sling, it would not fall out. Any separated object would fall away. Abigail may have known of David's great victory over Goliath as David used his sling to kill the giant. She knew that David would appreciate this figure of speech and hoped that this would convince him of her good intentions towards him. Abigail went on to say that

she foresaw the time when David would be appointed ruler of Israel (25:30). She asked David to think of how he would feel about this after he became ruler. Since he had withdrawn his hand from harming Saul, she knew that he must not have any intention of offending. If he had been over anxious in avenging himself in the case of Nabal, he would regret this later.

15. *What was David's final decision? 25:32*

David knew that Abigail was speaking the truth. He prayed that God would bless Abigail for what she had done. He viewed this intercession on the part of Abigail as providential. He believed that God had sent her to him to stop him from shedding innocent blood. He admitted that if she had not come, he would have utterly destroyed Nabal and all his descendants before morning (25:34). David then received the gift which Abigail had brought him and sent her away in peace. He promised her that he would not attack her or her husband.

16. *What happened to Nabal? 25:37*

Nabal was full of wine when his wife returned to their home, and she did not mention her trip to meet David. When he was sober in the morning, she told him what had happened, and "his heart died within him" (25:37). He became as stone. The affliction which came upon Nabal was sent from the Lord, and ten days later he died.

David's Wives. 25:39-44

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 com. .uned with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

40 And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

41 And she arose, and bowed herself on *her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

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.

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim.

17. *Was David's marriage to Abigail an honorable one?*
25:39

From the beginning it was not God's intention that man should have more than one wife. The Law was given at a time when men were practicing polygamy, and God did not reveal the full Christian standard at that time. He did give legislation to regulate polygamy, and this led men to the place where they could receive Christ's full revelation. In the light of the dispensation it was perfectly permissible for David to marry Abigail. Her husband was dead, and she was free from her obligations to him. Abigail was a very wise woman, viewing herself as unworthy of the love of David (25:41).

18. *What kind of woman was Abigail?* 25:42

Abigail was an honorable person and made a good wife for David. She was the mother of Chileab, David's son, of whom little is known (II Samuel 3:3). Her conduct showed her to be discrete in that she did not reveal her actions to her husband when he could have stopped her. She was humble (v. 23), generous (v. 27), god-fearing (v. 29), knowledgeable (v. 30), and affluent (v. 42).

19. *Who was David's other wife?* 25:43

David's other wife was Ahinoam (25:43). Ahinoam is introduced only as the Jezreelitess. Jezreel must have been a town in the mountains of Judah (Joshua 15:56), and

not the city of that same name in the tribe of Issachar (Joshua 19:18). The place in Issachar is so far north that it would seem improbable that David would have been in that area.

20. *What had happened to Michal? 25:44*

Michal was David's first wife. She had lied about his threat to her when David fled from their home as Saul came to kill him. Saul had then given Michal to Phalti, the son of Laish of Gallim. Phalti is called Paltiel in II Samuel 3:15. Gallim was a place between Gibeah of Saul and Jerusalem. David later persuaded Ish-bosheth and Abner to bring Michal back to him (II Samuel 3:14).

CHAPTER 25 IN REVIEW

1. Where was Samuel buried? _____
2. In what wilderness was David hiding? _____
3. To what man did David send for supplies at the time of shearing? _____
4. Where was the man's home? _____
5. What was his wife's name? _____
6. How many men did David take to fight Nabal? _____
7. By what title did Nabal's servant refer to him? _____
8. What is the meaning of Nabal's name? _____
9. What other woman did David marry? _____
10. To what man had Saul given Michal? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 26

Vv. 1- 5 *Saul pursues David again.* Saul had once said that he would leave David alone, but he could not resist the temptation to try to kill the man who threatened his position as king. The Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah and told him that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah. Saul then pursued David again.