

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON TWO

by Sandy Harber

"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. 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." I Sam. 25:2-3

David and his army went to the wilderness of Paran, or Maon, after Samuel died (v. 1). They camped there near the servants of a man of the tribe of Judah called Nabal. David and his men protected Nabal's servants and animals from thieves (vv. 7, 15-16) although they were not acquainted with Nabal.

Nabal was a descendant of Caleb (v. 3), one of the two spies that brought back a good report to Moses (Numb. 14:6-9). Caleb had been a brave, God-fearing man. But his descendant Nabal was an arrogant drunkard. Nevertheless, God had blessed him with many possessions and a wise and beautiful wife.

Nabal and his servants had gone to Carmel to shear the 3,000 sheep. This was an annual event where shepherds gathered together to shear their sheep and then celebrate with feasting. God had arranged for David's wanderings to bring him to a place where he and his men could be of service to their fellow tribesman. David and many of his men belonged to the tribe of Judah. This was their territory. They had a vested interest in protecting the people from mauraders and poachers. Perhaps David and/or some of his men knew some of Nabal's servants or their families. All the people in the tribe of Judah were, after all, descendants of one man. These people were their cousins. They all worshipped the same God.

Nabal himself was apparently not known to David personally or to any of his men. "Nabal" means "foolish." The name fit him perfectly. We shall see that in his dealings with God's anointed, Nabal's speech and actions were foolish to a degree bordering on suicidal.

On the other hand, Nabal's wife Abigail is described as a woman of good understanding. Why was a beautiful, intelligent woman married to a churlish fool? Probably because parents arranged marriages for their children in this society. Perhaps their parents were friends. Perhaps Abigail's family owned land adjacent to that of Nabal's family. Perhaps Nabal's wealth was a factor. The Bible doesn't tell us why sweet Abigail was tied to an ungrateful drunkard.

God allows us to be placed in uncomfortable circumstances not of our own making. Why we ended up in this position is not as important as how we respond in the situation. As we shall see, Abigail was a much better wife to Nabal than he deserved. Her actions and wisdom saved his life.

God brings people into our lives every day. Some remain in our lives for years. They may be family, friends, or neighbors. But others we may only encounter once. We may not even learn their names. Our interaction with each person may prove beneficial to one or both of us. Or, the encounter could be adversarial. It might even be neutral. Do you ever think, "Why did God bring this person into my life?" Probably not.

God brought Nabal and Abigail into David's life, and vice versa. Nabal and David never actually met. Their "business" was transacted through their servants. And it was through the intervention of one of Nabal's servants that the "business" did not result in blood-letting. On the other hand, Abigail and David did meet under dire circumstances. God used Abigail to prevent David from committing a grievous sin. And He would use godly David to rescue Abigail from her widowed state.

Be on the lookout for opportunities God brings your way to help someone. Even a brief encounter may allow you to give a word of testimony to a stranger. Remember there are no accidental meetings in God's realm.

"Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Proverbs 16:24