

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON FOUR

by Sandy Harber

"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." I Sam. 25:5

David had 600 mighty warriors traveling with him. In addition, the wives and children of his soldiers stayed in the camps they set up and journeyed from place to place with them. So, David was responsible for the well being of at least 1,000 people, some of them babies and young children.

When David learned that Nabal was shearing his sheep he identified an opportunity to feed his people. His men had earned the right to eat with Nabal's employees by the protection they provided to his servants and animals in the fields. What David was requesting was no more than their due.

Rather than descend on Nabal with a multitude of armed men, David sent 10 ambassadors to entreat the wealthy sheep owner to include them in the hospitality extended to workers and neighbors during the annual celebration.

David instructed his men to be sure to make the request in his name. David was a celebrated national hero because of his defeat of Goliath and Israel's enemies, the Philistines. And, nowhere in the country would David's name be worth more than in Judah, his home territory. When King Saul dies it will be Judah that accepts David as king first before the other tribes.

So far David has acted honorably. He respected the property and lives of Nabal and his servants. He provided protection against marauders and thieves. He gave Nabal the respect due the sheep owner, requesting that which normal hospitality in Israel would provide willingly. Yet we will see that Nabal's response is most inhospitable.

We can't help but wonder why bad things happen to us when we have done everything right. It is not fair that we suffer when we have not done anything wrong. Just the opposite. We have behaved honorably. But it seems like we are being punished. It's hard to understand why God allows this to be so. Meanwhile, it seems like the bad guys are rewarded. They disobey God's laws and nothing bad happens to them. Instead they seem to prosper.

David understood this and composed a Psalm to record what the Lord had taught him. Psalm 37 begins, "Fret not thyself because of evil doers. . ." (v. 1). To fret, be upset or angry is the natural response. It's not fair! It is hard to let that go, to trust God knows what He's doing and it will all work out in the end.

David assures us that "the evil doer shall be cut off" (v. 9). In "a little while" the wicked will cease to exist (v. 10). But the evil doers will meet their fate in God's time, not ours. David tells us that "the Lord shall laugh at him (the evil doer): for he seeth that his day is coming" (v. 13). Unlike us, God is patient. He gives the wicked time to repent. But, if they do not their punishment is sure.

David faced many hard times but he never lost faith in God. He meditated on the Lord and His Word. And he recorded his insights in the form of poems and songs. His words are comforting when we are hurting. I found encouragement in the Psalms when I lost my husband. There are so many gems of wisdom embedded in the text. Psalms gives us insight into the ways of God. They give us instruction on

how to proceed. God's promises lift us up and give us new purpose. Search the Psalms and you will find answers to your questions, comfort in your grief, and encouragement in your distress.

"And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long." Psalm 35:28