

about Nabal & Abigail

1. The author of First Samuel introduces Nabal as a rich fool and his wife, Abigail, as a wise and beautiful woman (25:2-3). The rest of the chapter confirms their contrasting character, much like most of First Samuel as a whole contrasts Saul and David.

2. One wonders why so much is written about Nabal and Abigail (1 Sam. 25:2-44), since David had other wives in addition to Nabal's widow (25:43-44). Moreover, Abigail's son, Chileab (2 Sam. 3:3), did not become king or important in any recorded way. He isn't even mentioned till much later. So there must be something about the events and main characters in ch. 25, itself, that are significant.

3. In the previous chapter (ch. 24) and the following chapter (ch. 26) David had opportunities to kill evil King Saul, but refused to do so. Here, in ch. 25, David intended to kill the rude and thankless Nabal but was stopped from doing so by Abigail's wise and humble actions and advice. Soon afterward God, himself, judged Nabal. Thus, Nabal's death at God's hand was a preview of what would happen to King Saul. As Abigail said in 25:29 God, himself, would act against David's enemies. This is one of the main points in ch. 25.

4. Another purpose of this long chapter may be simply to show the exemplary character and faith of Abigail, much like Rebekah's is revealed in the details of Genesis ch. 24. Why David took yet another wife, Ahinoam (25:43 and 2 Sam. 3:2), is not explained.

describing Nabal

Which terms below correctly describe Nabal?

a fool, unreasonable (25:3, 25)

harsh and rude (25:3, 10-11, 14)

obligated to reward David (25:21)

wrong about David (25:10-11)

selfish, unthankful (25:14-16)

drunk, happy (25:36)

materialistic, wicked (25:2, 36, 39)

like the rich fool in Luke 12:20

afraid of David (25:10-11)

killed by David (25:32-34, 39)

killed by the Lord (25:37-38)

much like king Saul (25:36)

describing Abigail

Which terms below correctly describe Abigail?

wise (25:3, 19, 36-37)

right about David (25:28-31)

right about Saul (25:29)

right about the future (25:30-31)

David's counselor (25:32-33)

encouraging to David

active, energetic (25:18)

beautiful, young (25:3)

godly, humble (25:23, 41)

rescued from Nabal

a fitting wife for David

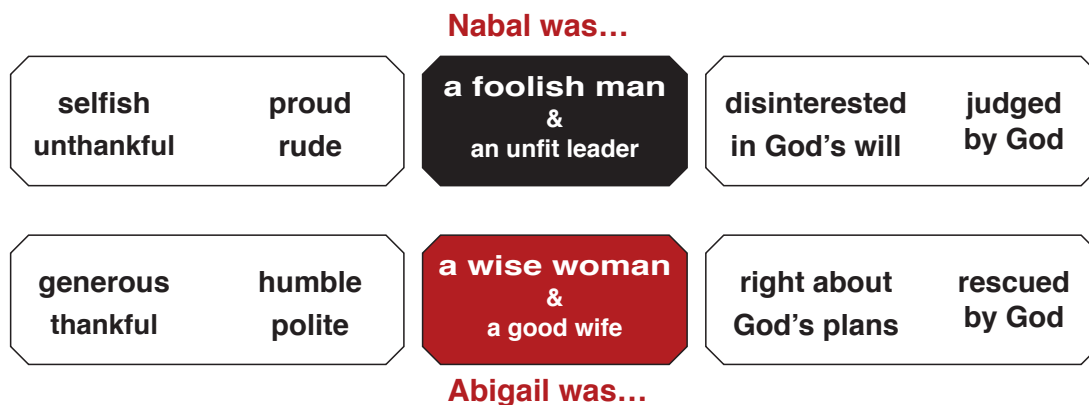
David's second wife (25:42-44)

mother of Chileab (2 Sam. 3:3)

mother of David's oldest (2 Sam. 3:2)

Nabal and Abigail

If there was ever a married couple who were total opposites, it's Abigail and Nabal. She was wise and godly and he was an ungodly fool. The summary diagram below show the key points in this contrast.



Most couples in the Bible are much alike. Abraham and Sarah were both godly and Ahab and Jezebel were both evil. The only other well-known example of a totally mismatched couple in the Bible are Hosea, the prophet, and Gomer, his unfaithful wife. Gomer represented the sinful nation of Israel and Hosea represented God. What a mismatch God and Israel have often been!

The story of Abigail and Nabal in First Samuel ch. 25 is so long and detailed that one wonders if it's somehow intended to be symbolic, like Hosea and Gomer. The text doesn't directly say that they are to be understood that way; and it's usually wrong to interpret the Bible symbolically. Chapter 25 is about real people who need to be discussed as real people.

Nevertheless, it's obvious that Nabal was a lot like Saul, powerful but unreasonable, proud, and selfish. Abigail, on the other hand, was wise and godly like David's advisors, Samuel and the other prophets. Moreover, like the nation, itself, Abigail needed to be rescued from her unfit overlord. which God himself did by judging her husband.

The most obvious parallels between Nabal and Saul are:

- 1.) that they were both unfit leaders,
- 2.) that they both had wrong attitudes toward David, and
- 3.) that God, himself, judged them both, without David doing so.

These similarities were undoubtedly not lost of David and as a result he was probably greatly encouraged by the events of ch. 25. Of course, Abigail, herself, was also a great encouragement, since she was such a wise woman and good wife. Isn't it wonderful how God leads and encourages his servants!