

Scriptures and Doctrine :: David and Abigail

David and Abigail, on: 2008/5/6 5:59

Last weekend my pastor preached on 1 Samuel 25, where David and his men go to kill Nabal, but his wife Abigail plead s for his life.

I know that this passage can be interpreted in different ways, and when I read the chapter I couldn't help thinking that wh ereas my pastor said that he thought Abigail was a God-fearing woman who was honest and sincere, it seemed to me th at she is pretty cunning and her motives may not have been all that pure.

So I was interested just to see what various people think about Abigail: Godly and God-fearing? or deceptive and cunning g?

Re: David and Abigail - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/5/6 6:08

I agree with what Matthew Henry says about the situation, basically that as Nabal's wife, Abigail had the authority and th e duty to secure and protect Nabal, his family, and their property. What she brought to David was her own, as being one with her husband.

Here it is...

We have here an account of Abigail's prudent management for the preserving of her husband and family from the destru ction that was just coming upon them; and we find that she did her part admirably well and fully answered her character. The passion of fools often makes those breaches in a little time which the wise, with all their wisdom, have much ado to make up again. It is hard to say whether Abigail was more miserable in such a husband or Nabal happy in such a wife. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, to protect as well as adorn, and will do him good and not evil. Wisdom in suc h a case as this was better than weapons of war. 1. It was her wisdom that what she did she did quickly, and without del ay; she made haste, v. 18. It was no time to trifle or linger when all was in danger. Those that desire conditions of peace must send when the enemy is yet a great way off, Lu. 14:32. 2. It was her wisdom that what she did she did herself, bec ause, being a woman of great prudence and very happy address, she knew better how to manage it than any servant sh e had. The virtuous woman will herself look well to the ways of her household, and not devolve this duty wholly upon oth ers.

Abigail must endeavour to atone for Nabal's faults. Now he had been in two ways rude to David's messengers, and in th em to David: He had denied them the provisions they asked for, and he had given them very provoking language. Now,

I. By a most generous present, Abigail atones for his denial of their request. If Nabal had given them what came next to hand, they would have gone away thankful; but Abigail prepares the very best the house afforded and abundance of it (v . 18), according to the usual entertainments of those times, not only bread and flesh, but raisins and figs, which were the ir dried sweet-meats. Nabal grudged them water, but she took two bottles (casks or rundlets) of wine, loaded her asses with these provisions, and sent them before; for a gift pacifieth anger, Prov. 21:14. Jacob thus pacified Esau. When the i nstruments of the churl are evil, the liberal devises liberal things, and loses nothing by it; for by liberal things shall he sta nd, Isa. 32:7, 8. Abigail not only lawfully, but laudably, disposed of all these goods of her husband's without his knowledg e (even when she had reason to think that if he had known what she did he would not have consented to it), because it was not to gratify her own pride or vanity, but for the necessary defence of him and his family. which otherwise would ha ve been inevitably ruined. Husbands and wives, for their common good and benefit, have a joint-interest in their worldly possessions; but if either waste, or unduly spend in any way, it is a robbing of the other.

II. By a most obliging demeanour, and charming speech, she atones for the abusive language which Nabal had given th em. She met David upon the march, big with resentment, and meditating the destruction of Nabal (v. 20); but with all pos sible expressions of complaisance and respect she humbly begs his favour, and solicits him to pass by the offence. Her demeanour was very submissive: She bowed herself to the ground before David (v. 23) and fell at his feet, v. 24. Yieldin g pacifies great offences. She put herself into the place and posture of a penitent and of a petitioner, and was not ashame d to do it, when it was for the good of her house, in the sight both of her own servants and of David's soldiers. She hum

bly begs of David that he will give her the hearing: Let thy handmaid speak in thy audience. But she needed not thus to bespeak his attention and patience; what she said was sufficient to command it, for certainly nothing could be more fine nor more moving. No topic of argument is left untouched; every thing is well placed and well expressed, most pertinently and pathetically urged, and improved to the best advantage, with such a force of natural rhetoric as cannot easily be paralleled.

1. She speaks to him all along with the deference and respect due to so great and good a man, calls him My lord, over and over, to expiate her husband's crime in saying, "Who is David?" She does not upbraid him with the heat of his passion, though he deserved to be reproved for it; nor does she tell him how ill it became his character; but endeavours to soften him and bring him to a better temper, not doubting but that then his own conscience would upbraid him with it.
2. She takes the blame of the ill-treatment of his messengers upon herself: "Upon me, my lord, upon me, let this iniquity be, v. 24. If thou wilt be angry, be angry with me, rather than with my poor husband, and look upon it as the trespass of thy handmaid," v. 28. Sordid spirits care not how much others suffer for their faults, while generous spirits can be content to suffer for the faults of others. Abigail here discovered the sincerity and strength of her conjugal affection and concern for her family: whatever Nabal was, he was her husband.
3. She excuses her husband's fault by imputing it to his natural weakness and want of understanding (v. 25): "Let not my lord take notice of his rudeness and ill manners, for it is like him; it is not the first time that he has behaved so churlishly; he must be borne with, for it is for want of wit: Nabal is his name" (which signifies a fool), "and folly is with him. It was owing to his folly, not his malice. He is simple, but not spiteful. Forgive him, for he knows not what he does." What she said was too true, and she said it to excuse his fault and prevent his ruin, else she would not have done well to give such a bad character as this of her own husband, whom she ought to make the best of, and not to speak ill of.
4. She pleads her own ignorance of the matter: "I saw not the young men, else they should have had a better answer, and should not have gone without their errand," intimating hereby that though her husband was foolish, and unfit to manage his affairs himself, yet he had so much wisdom as to be ruled by her and take her advice.
5. She takes it for granted that she has gained her point already, perhaps perceiving, by David's countenance, that he began to change his mind (v. 26): Seeing the Lord hath withholden thee. She depends not upon her own reasonings, but God's grace, to mollify him, and doubts not but that grace would work powerfully upon him; and then, "Let all thy enemies be as Nabal, that is, if thou forbear to avenge thyself, no doubt God will avenge thee on him, as he will on all thy other enemies." Or it intimates that it was below him to take vengeance on so weak and impotent an enemy as Nabal was, who, as he would do him no kindness, so he could do him no hurt, for he needed to wish no more concerning his enemies than that they might be as unable to resist him as Nabal was. Perhaps she refers to his sparing Saul, when, but the other day, he had him at his mercy. "Didst thou forbear to avenge thyself on that lion that would devour thee, and wilt thou shed the blood of this dog that can but bark at thee?" The very mentioning of what he was about to do, to shed blood, that it affected him.
6. She makes a tender of the present she had brought, but speaks of it as unworthy of David's acceptance, and therefore desires it may be given to the young men that followed him (v. 27), and particularly to those ten that were his messengers to Nabal, and whom he had treated so rudely.
7. She applauds David for the good services he had done against the common enemies of his country, the glory of which great achievements, she hoped, he would not stain by any personal revenge: "My lord fighteth the battles of the Lord against the Philistines, and therefore he will leave it to God to fight his battles against those that affront him, v. 28. Evil has not been found in thee all thy days. Thou never yet didst wrong to any of thy countrymen (though persecuted as a traitor), and therefore thou wilt not begin now, nor do a thing which Saul will improve for the justifying of his malice against thee."
8. She foretels the glorious issue of his present troubles. "It is true a man pursues thee and seeks thy life" (she names not Saul, out of respect to his present character as king), "but thou needest not look with so sharp and jealous an eye upon every one that affronts thee;" for all these storms that now ruffle thee will be blown over shortly. She speaks it with assurance, (1.) That God would keep him safe: The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God, that is, God shall hold thy soul in life (as the expression is, Ps. 66:9) as we hold those things which are bundled up or which are precious to us, Ps. 116:15. Thy soul shall be treasured up in the treasure of lives (so the Chaldee), under lock and key as our treasure is. "Thou shalt abide under the special protection of the divine providence." The bundle of life is with the Lord our God, for in his hand our breath is, and our times. Those are safe, and may be easy, that have him for the

ir protector. The Jews understand this not only of the life that now is, but of that which is to come, even the happiness of separate souls, and therefore use it commonly as an inscription on their gravestones. "Here we have laid the body, but trust that the soul is bound up in the bundle of life, with the Lord our God." There it is safe, while the dust of the body is scattered. (2.) That God would make him victorious over his enemies. Their souls he shall sling out, v. 29. The stone is bound up in the sling, but it is in order to be thrown out again; so the souls of the godly shall be bundled as corn for the barn, but the souls of the wicked as tares for the fire. (3.) That God would settle him in wealth and power: "The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, and no enemy thou hast can hinder it; therefore forgive this trespass," that is, "show mercy, as thou hopest to find mercy. God will make thee great, and it is the glory of great men to pass by offences."

9. She desires him to consider how much more comfortable it would be to him in the reflection to have forgiven this affront than to have revenged it, v. 30, 31. She reserves this argument for the last, as a very powerful one with so good a man, that the less he indulged his passion the more he consulted his peace and the repose of his own conscience, which every wise man will be tender of. (1.) She cannot but think that if he should avenge himself it would afterwards be a grief and an offence of heart to him, Many have done that in a heat which they have a thousand times wished undone again. The sweetness of revenge is soon turned into bitterness. (2.) She is confident that if he pass by the offence it will afterwards by no grief to him; but, on the contrary, it would yield him unspeakable satisfaction that his wisdom and grace had got the better of his passion. Note, When we are tempted to sin we should consider how it will appear in the reflection. Let us never do any thing for which our own consciences will afterwards have occasion to upbraid us, and which we shall look back upon with regret: My heart shall not reproach me.

10. She recommends herself to his favour: When the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid, as one that kept thee from doing that which would have disgraced thy honour, disquieted thy conscience, and made a blot in thy history. We have reason to remember those with respect and gratitude who have been instrumental to keep us from sin.

Re: David and Abigail - posted by Slow2Speak, on: 2008/5/6 13:50

Quote:
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Lord, keep him safe.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/5/6 14:07

How good for these people in the bible that they served a God who promised and provided a lamb for them!

MC