

1st Samuel

Lesson 52

f) Abigail Accepts David's Proposal (25:40-42)

When the message arrives, Abigail accepts David's proposal. Verse 40.

"When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, 'David has sent us to you to take you as his wife.'"⁴¹ She arose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, 'Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants.'"⁴² Then Abigail quickly arose, and rode on a donkey, with her five maidens who attended her; and she followed the messengers of David and became his wife." (25:40-42)

So, in the proposal, David gains another wife and five maidens. What did Abigail give up to be David's wife? Nabal was rich; however, at Nabal's death, in that culture, the wealth would not have transferred by inheritance to Abigail; it would have transferred to Nabal's oldest son, of which we do not know if he had a son. If he did not have a son, it would have transferred to Nabal's closest male relative. Then, the son or the relative who inherited Nabal's wealth would have been responsible for the care of Abigail and her maids. Abigail already knew that David would be the next king of Israel if he survived to that day, for she had already said such to David on the road when she gave him the food supplies. Therefore, she knew that at the time, David did not have the wherewithal to support her as she was accustomed to with Nabal, but she was willing to take a chance on David. She was ready to leave the care that she would receive in Nabal's family line and transfer by marriage to David's family line in the hope of a brighter future in the future. Thus, she married David.

2. David's Second Marriage (25:43)

Without any reasoning or previous warning, after telling us about the marriage to Abigail, the writer tells us of David's second marriage. Verse 43.

"David had also taken Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both became his wives." (25:43)

We have all heard of the Valley of Jezreel in northern Israel, where more battles have been fought and more blood spilled than in any other place in the world. In fact, the Battle of Armageddon will be fought in that Valley, which is named for a town found on one edge of that valley. But, we must remember, Israel had many towns with the same name in different parts of the Promised Land.

Down near Maon and Carmel, where David and his men were camped, there was a town called Jezreel. It was in the same hills of Judah where David was camped. There, David had already taken Ahinoam as a wife before Abigail.

3. David's Troubled First Marriage (25:44)

Remembering that the writer recorded this part of the Scripture long after the events, the writer inserts here David's troubled first marriage. Verse 44.

"Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim." (25:44)

We can be assured of two things. First, Michal loved David, so she did not willingly allow Saul to give her to Palti. Second, at the time of David taking Ahinoam and Abigail as wives, he most likely did not know that Saul had given Michal away. We will learn more about this trouble later in 2nd Samuel after David has become king. Where was Palti from? He was from Gallim. Where was Gallim? It was a town between Saul's hometown of Gibeah in the tribal area of Benjamin and the border town of Jerusalem in the tribal area of Judah. Palti was a Benjamite.

One important point that we made in our studies of Joshua and Judges, the men of each tribe lived in their named tribal area. Benjamites lived on the land given to them by Joshua in the land of Benjamin. Never would they live in the land of another tribe, although they were cousins. Women were different. A woman born into one tribe could marry a man from any other tribe and would move to that tribal area for life. When widowed without children, she would return to her father's land to live out her life or until she married another Israelite. If the widow had adult children, specifically an adult male child who inherited her husband's possessions, the widow would remain in the tribal area and be cared for by her son. This was the case with the story of Naomi and Ruth. Naomi was a Judite who married a Judite named Elimelech. Because of a famine, Elimelech and Naomi decided to move to Moab. When Elimelech and both her sons died, the relative beneficiaries of their belongings lived in Judah. Naomi had to return to Judah to find a caretaker for her livelihood. She decided to return to Judah, her home tribal area. In the meantime, one daughter-in-law decided to stay in Moab, but Ruth, the other daughter-in-law, decided to stay with Naomi and return to Judah. Ruth was a Moabite. She had every reason to return to her Moabite father's household but was closer to Naomi and wanted to be with her. Because of the relationship between Naomi and Ruth, Ruth landed in Judah and married Boaz, the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. It was all part of the LORD's plan. And so was the plan for Abigail to be David's wife.

Chapter 26

B. The Story of the Mercy of David (26:1-27:1)

1. David's Sparing of Saul's Life at Hachilah

a) His Circumstance (26:1-5)

David and Saul had just seen each other at Samuel's funeral just a month or two before Saul was stirred to come address some problem with David at the bidding of the Ziphites. Chapter 26 records the who interaction. It is the story of the mercy of David, with David's sparing of Saul's life at Hachilah. David will catch Saul off guard. His circumstance will be unacceptable to David. David will once again prove his faithfulness to Saul. Before we begin the story, it is important to mention that, for those of you who have studied this book thus far with me, you will quickly think that the story is a second telling of the same story told in 1 Samuel 23:19 – 24:22. It seems that only a few modifications have been made. Almost any commentary you pick up will mention the strange similarity in each. Some will tell you that they are the same story recorded by two different authors, one from Gad's remembrance, the other from Nathan's. Even though there are several times where the wording seems to be identical, there are enough differences in my mind to determine that these were two separate events, separated by David's marriage to Abigail, for which I believe was the true reason Saul decided to go to interrogate David. I also believe that Saul did not give David's wife, Michal, to Palti until he had heard that David had married Abigail. Saul possibly heard at the same time that David had also married Ahinoam. We will discuss the differences as this story is revealed. Chapter 26, verse 1.

"Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, 'Is not David hiding on the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?'"² So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having with him three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph. ³ Saul camped in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, beside the road, and David was staying in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, ⁴ David sent out spies, and he knew that Saul was definitely coming. ⁵ David then arose and came to the place where Saul had camped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army; and Saul was lying in the circle of the camp, and the people were camped around him." (26:1-5)

Who were the Ziphites? They were the inhabitants of the town of Ziph. Ziph sat about three miles south of Hebron. The wooded area in the hill country was called the *Wilderness of Ziph*. The tribal area of Judah had two towns named Ziph. The first was the one that we have mentioned. The other was mentioned in Joshua 15:24, but it was too far south and to the west to be considered in this story because it was a long way away from Hachilah, Carmel, Maon, Hebron, and Jeshimon. For some reason, the townsmen of Ziph told Saul where David was camping. Why? I suspect that along with telling Saul where David was living, they also delivered the message that David had married not one woman but two while he was away from Saul's daughter, Michal. It is also my suspicion that the report made Saul so mad at David that he avenged the wrong of David's marriages by giving Michal to Palti as a wife. This action he must have taken before he gathered his army and journeyed to camp near David with three thousand men.

You might ask why Saul traveled with such a large army when David had only six hundred men? The answer has nothing to do with David; it has everything to do with Saul. First, Saul was paranoid about everything, and he should have been. He had made many bad choices, evil choices. Second, because Samuel was dead, the Philistines were making new endeavors to encroach on the Promised Land. Saul did not know when he would come upon the Philistines. In addition, the homes of the Philistine nation were but fifteen miles away to the west of where Saul was going to meet David. My point here is this, Saul, when traveling, needed to be protected, and he also needed an army to fight the Philistines or any other enemy if he came upon them. Saul was going too near the enemy of Israel to be careless. He needed a large army with him at all times when he was away from the safety of his home.

Saul had his camp settled beside the road. We spoke about this road in past chapters. It was the road that Saul did not take when he captured Agag on his way from the Amalekite city back to Gibeah. The road went right through Hebron, Ramah, Jerusalem, and on to Gibeah. If you will remember, Saul took the long way around this road and went on a less traveled road through Carmel, where he set up a monument to his victory over the Amalekites. This time, Saul was on the main travel route.

Somehow, David learned that Saul was camped by the road. The somehow is actually not as difficult to determine as one might think. David had to have men out scouring for food every day. His men were going and coming from work as they were with Nabal. No doubt, one of David's men saw Saul's camp on the main trade route and reported it to David. David, being David, wanted to investigate, so he sent spies. What David saw disturbed David. Saul's circumstance was not good.

b) His Conflict (26:6-11)

From his circumstance, we come to his conflict. David needed to help Saul. Verse 6.

"Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, saying, 'Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?' And Abishai said, 'I will go down with you.'"⁷ So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him.⁸ Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time."⁹ But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be without guilt?"¹⁰ David also said, "As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish."¹¹ The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the jug of water from beside Saul's head, and they went away, but no one saw or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a sound sleep from the LORD had fallen on them." (26:6-12)

Here we hear the same wording that we heard when David was in the cave and Saul entered to relieve himself. Ahishai's heart was on ending the conflict with Saul by killing him. David's was not because David still knew that Saul was the LORD's anointed king of Israel. David did not listen to Abishai's plan but instigated his own plan. They would take Saul's personal spear and a jug of water.

c) His Communication (26:13-16)

It was time to wake the camp of Saul up. It was time to communicate to Saul the danger that his men had left him in while they slept by the side of the road. Verse 13.

"Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance with a large area between them. ¹⁴ David called to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, 'Will you not answer, Abner?' Then Abner replied, 'Who are you who calls to the king?' ¹⁵ So David said to Abner, 'Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came to destroy the king your lord. ¹⁶ This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, all of you must surely die, because you did not guard your lord, the LORD's anointed. And now, see where the king's spear is and the jug of water that was at his head.'"

David has laid it on thick. He has blamed Saul's uncle, who was Saul's commander, for putting Saul at risk of death. To prove the point, David held up Saul's personal spear and water jug.

d) His Conversation (26:17-20)

The writer tells us of the conversation that continued between Saul and David. Verse 17.

"Then Saul recognized David's voice and said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' And David said, 'It is my voice, my lord the king.' ¹⁸ He also said, 'Why then is my lord pursuing his servant? For what have I done? Or what evil is in my hand? ¹⁹ Now therefore, please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant. If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering; but if it is men, cursed are they before the LORD, for they have driven me out today so that I would have no attachment with the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' ²⁰ Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the LORD; for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.'" (26:17-20)

The sun was not up as yet when David called to Saul. Saul could not have seen David, at least not clearly, but Saul recognized the voice. He knew exactly who was calling him. This past week I was calling to schedule a doctor's appointment. To my surprise, after I simply asked for the scheduling agent, the receptionist said to me, "Dr. Hastings, how are you doing?" I asked who she was, and she told me. I asked how she knew it was me. She said, "I know your voice. I listen to every message you post." We can be identified by our voices. Saul recognized David's voice before he could see David.

The last time David was with Saul, all was well between the two of them. Therefore, David wonders why Saul has come with his army to the door of David's camp. David proposes two reasons. First, he proposes that the LORD has stirred Saul for this cause. Second, he proposes that some of Saul's faithful men have agitated Saul to pursue David. If it is the LORD's doing, then David proposes an offering to the LORD. We know, because we have studied, that an offering, where the fat of an animal was cooked on an altar, ascends as a sweet aroma acceptable to the LORD. David was not proposing that he present the offering, David was proposing that Saul present the offering. David knew that he had done nothing wrong. He knew that Saul was doing the wrong, if, in fact, Saul was pursuing David and not headed somewhere else.

It can make an interesting point here that few people like to consider, but it is true. In this passage, as well as 2 Samuel 16:10 and 2 Samuel 24:1, which all include David in the storyline, shows that when a sinner is in rebellion to the LORD, the LORD will allow that sinner to be tempted to sin against the LORD in public; therefore, manifesting the sinner's true heart of wickedness against the LORD in word and deed so that the sinner might be brought to repentance, or his heart is hardened all the more against the LORD making the sinner ripe for the judgment from the LORD.

David concludes that the LORD has done just this with Saul. Saul was influenced by his men to pursue David. Saul made the wrong choice. As such, Saul had displayed his wicked heart, and he found himself hearing the voice of David, who had spared his life, and it was time for Saul to repent or double down in the hardness of his heart.

If it was the men who persuaded Saul to do this thing, then David said, *“for they have driven me out today so that I would have no attachment with the inheritance of the LORD, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’”* David knew that he was to be the next king. Saul knew that David was to be the next king. Abigail knew that David was to be the next king. The people knew that David was to be the next king. Everyone knew that David was to be the next king. If the people did not want David to be the next king, David assumed that they were trying to detach him from the inheritance as king that had been promised by the LORD. Here, he infers that the people would rather him leave the country where he could serve another god in some other place. This interesting point is made because, even in the Promised Land, the Jews thought that the only place for the ultimate worship of the LORD was at the Tabernacle complex or one of the Levitical cities. In addition, they imply that the LORD can only be worshipped in the Promised Land and no other country. David was not making this up. It was a man-made belief developing among the Jews. What is disturbing about this thought is the fact that the Ark was in storage at Kiriath-jearim and had been for eleven years. It was not even in the Tabernacle complex, even though the daily worship was still perpetual and regular at the Brazen Altar. The Ark of the Covenant was not part of the required offering system except for one point. The LORD showed His presence in the Shekinah Glory above the Mercy Seat on the Ark. Still, no one could ever see that radiance from the Ark, coming over the Veil, except for the priests when they entered the tent to replace the oil in the menorah, replace the incense on the Altar of Incense, and replace the bread on the Table of Show Bread. One more time, the priests would enter, and that was to sprinkle blood on the Veil with certain offerings, but the non-Levites never entered the Tabernacle tent.

But David was not implying all this. David implied that the people wanted to cut him off from the inheritance which promised him to be the next king of Israel. David said *“Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the LORD.”* In other words, David was saying, “If I am to die today, don’t you do it, let the LORD do it to me. Let Him kill me.” Why? David admits that he is as harmless as a flea.

David alludes to himself being *“just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.”* The partridge is a strange bird because of the way it flees when it is afraid. Although it can fly, in fear it runs. It will run here and there until it is tired and the pursuer can strike it with a stick to kill it. That is what David is saying here. If Saul wants to kill David, David will run until he cannot run any longer and then he will be easily killed by Saul and is spear.