

Samuel 25: An Odd Tale of Responsibility.

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Notes:

The Wilderness of Paran

The Wilderness or Desert of Paran is said to be the place where Hagar was sent into exile from Abraham's dwelling in Beersheba. (Genesis 21). Paran is later mentioned in Numbers 10:12 and 12:6 as the place where the Israelites temporarily settled during the Exodus. It's mentioned in Deuteronomy 1:1 and 2:2. *These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the desert beyond the Jordan--that is, in the Arabah--opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazereth and Dizahab. And, He said: *The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones, from his right hand went a fiery law for them.**

It looks to me like, in the Hebrew mind, it would be a place of exile, safety, and vision.

When I was reading the translator notes, it looked to me, no surprise, that there is still animated discussion about where exactly it is.

There also seems to be no agreement on the distance from Maon to Carmel either so I for sure don't know the distance of Nabal's work commute.

Name Etymology

Nabal - The name Nabal comes from the Hebrew word Nābhāl, which can mean "fool", "futile", "worthless", or "good-for-nothing". It can also figuratively mean being shamelessly acting with impropriety. I think this might be a name applied to him in adulthood because I cannot imagine a parent burden a child with that moniker.

Abigail - is a feminine given name. The name comes from the Biblical Hebrew name Hebrew: אַבְיָגַיִל / אַבְיָגַיִל 'Āvî-Ghayil, meaning "my father's joy" (alternatively "my father is exulted" or "my father is joyful", among others).

David - (Hebrew: דָּוִד, Modern: *David*, Tiberian: *Dāwîḏ*) means "beloved", derived from the root *dôwd* (דָּוָד), which originally meant "to boil", but survives in Biblical Hebrew only in the figurative usage "to love"; specifically, it is a term for an uncle or figuratively, a lover/beloved (it is used in this way in the Song of Songs: אָנִי לַדּוֹדִי וַדּוֹדִי לִי, "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me")

Ahinoam - Ahinoam (Hebrew: אֲחִינוֹאם 'āḥīnoam) is a Hebrew name literally meaning brother of pleasantness, or my brother is pleasant, thus meaning pleasant.

Names of God used in this text

The Lord - Yahweh – the personal God with Whom one has a covenant/ committed relationship.

God – lohim – Majesty. Plural in form, singular in meaning.

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I just **have** to tell you this. I confess, I cannot resist. When I was looking up Hebrew customs that might indicate a trade in food and water for security from bandits, the first article was entitled: **What the Mafia learned from God's Favorite King.**
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None the less, it does seem like it was within David's understanding of quid pro quo (well, not exactly since Latin didn't exist then) that it was culturally normative to pay, in barter of food and water, the people who protect your land. Self-serving idiots were not invented in the 21st Century. Added to this, we are talking about people of the desert who quite clearly understood the mandate of hospitality.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you think it was like for David that Samuel died?
2. What do you think it was like for Saul?
3. What do you think it was like for others in the country?
4. I wonder what you think was David's state of mind...and that of his support team...that they were both grieving Samuel and needing to avoid Saul.
5. Do you see similarities between Nabol and Saul?
6. 25: 4-8 – Why do you think David send his ambassadors with those words?
7. 25: 14-17 What does that way the servants talked with Abigail indicate about her relationship with them, their sense of her business acumen, and their sense of her courage and her care for her workers?
8. And her understanding of cis male reactions to disloyalty and unfairness. (if you want I can talk a bit about how understanding loyalty and fairness has played into research about boys who murder).
9. 25:20 – Why did she go “under the cover of the mountain”?
10. Her actions were designed to defuse a very angry, righteous man. What do you make of them.

11. 25:39 – Why did David ascribe the stroke to God’s vindication of him and his people?
12. Why do you think David asked Abigail to be his wife and didn’t just take her. This seems unusual for what we think of the time period.
13. 25:41 Why do you think Abigail replied to the proposal as she did?
14. What part of this story did you most like.

I look forward to our discussion.

I wish for you Gentle blessings.

Catherine