

November 1

Scriptures: Read 1 Samuel 25

Key Verse: “And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.”
(1 Samuel 25:33)

Overview

During the period of David’s hiding in the wilderness, Samuel died. All Israel was saddened and mourned the passing of this great man of God. Surely there were delegates from Dan to Beersheba present at his burial, because he had been accepted as the spiritual leader of the nation (3:20). He helped to unify the nation and bring religious reformation. In the history of Israel, Samuel is one of the most honoured men, after Moses. He had a noble character and pure heart. From his childhood he had learned to love and fear God. He grew to be a man of prayer and great faith. He declared the words of the Lord fearlessly and wisely administered justice. He was zealous to always glorify the Lord and be obedient to Him. Samuel anointed the first two kings of Israel, and God used him in a tremendous way to bring Israel further along the path in God’s plan of salvation and redemption.

David, though a fugitive with a band of men, was unlike the other leaders of bands that would roam about in the wilderness regions, often raiding and stealing. He gave protection from raiders to the shepherds and livestock of the wealthy farmer Nabal and did not take any of his livestock while they were grazing in the same territory. Considering his kind service, which should have been greatly appreciated and rewarded, it was natural for David to expect that Nabal would be glad to provide them food for the feast. But Nabal refused to give them anything and even showed contempt for David.

The Hebrew name Nabal, translated “fool”, denotes not only stupidity but moral perversity and irreligiousness; it is also descriptive of a rude, stingy person. Nabal’s beautiful wife Abigail, however, was just the opposite. She was wise, intelligent, and tactful, as well as gracious and generous. She was also a godly woman who had great respect for David and the calling of God upon his life, which she knew to be eventual kingship. Her quick thinking saved her household from David’s wrath, and she was used of the Lord to prevent David from sinning against God and his people.

Abigail’s wisely chosen words calmed David’s anger and made him realize that any revenge should be done by the hand of the Lord and not his own (25:33). If David had carried out his violent plans on the household of Nabal, innocent people would have been killed and a blood feud would have begun among the clans of his own tribe of Judah, thus weakening his support, which mainly came from that tribe. Abigail also reasoned that David’s own conscience would suffer greatly if he did such a thing. David’s response shows he agreed with her and was grateful for her intercession. He was so impressed with her that, after he heard she was widowed, he wanted her for his wife. Abigail honoured God, and thus God honoured her.

God's judgment upon Nabal came when he heard about the actions of his wife which had turned away David's wrath. He may have realized that his selfishness and foolishness nearly cost him all he had, and because of the shock he likely suffered a stroke or heart attack which proved to be fatal. This incident shows how serious it was to treat the Lord's chosen and anointed king with contempt. Even more so, it is serious to reject the Anointed One, the King of kings, Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord God, keep us from foolish acts or acts of revenge. Help us to forgive as You have forgiven us. Grant that we may not hinder Your plan for our lives by selfishness.