

Abigail's wisdom

• She makes amends for Nabal's rebuff

• She acknowledges that her husband was entirely wrong to oppose and disparage God's future king

• She puts her requests with reasoned arguments based on her faith

David

• David is raised to new heights of forgiveness and graciousness

• David is impressed and grateful

Abigail shows great skill in the use of her tongue. Like the rudder of a great ship, the tongue can steer us to where we truly ought to go¹. Abigail decides to do what she can to persuade David to relent². Her wisdom is striking. She acts speedily. Disaster could strike at any moment and she is gripped with a sense of urgency. Leaving broken and damaged relationships to some future time would be a mistake. While she is getting the provisions ready³, she lets David know she wants to talk to him⁴. She is ready to meet the practical needs of David. His men are lacking food; she takes the supplies they need⁵. Thus she makes amends for Nabal's rebuff. She shows great skill in her words but words alone will not be enough.

She and David meet at the very point where David is promising himself vengeance upon Nabal¹. Again we see Abigail's great wisdom and tactfulness. She treats David with great respect². She has no criticism of him whatsoever and takes all the blame upon herself. David could have been blamed for his vindictive spirit but Abigail has no desire to accuse David of any sin whatsoever³. She acknowledges that her husband was entirely wrong to oppose and disparage God's future king. David was entirely in the right in what had happened. Nabal's reaction was foolish. The Hebrew name means 'fool' and Nabal was living up to his name! If David's men had got to her first, the reception would have been entirely different⁴.

Then she puts her request¹. Her reasonings are the arguments of a woman who has faith in God and faith in David as the future king. By her arrival in time God has prevented David from violence². She implies that God is the true judge and is capable of dealing with someone as foolish as Nabal. David does not need to take vengeance because vengeance can be left to God³. She points to the gifts that have been brought, which fulfils David's original request for supplies⁴. She puts herself entirely in the wrong, asks David's forgiveness⁵ and expresses her confidence that God's will for David will be fulfilled without his taking matters into his own hands. His cause is entirely from God⁶. It would be better if his kingship did not have any evil in it in as would be the case if David kills Nabal⁷. God will keep him safe and overthrow his enemies without David's help⁸. If David refrains from killing Nabal he will have a good conscience when he becomes king⁹.

David is raised to new heights of forgiveness and graciousness. Abigail's entire plea has assured David that she sees him as God's future king. Everything she says shows a confidence that David will get to his kingdom without the need for bloodshed. It is a plea that generosity and forgiveness will be built into his kingdom in its earliest beginnings. She shows that she believes in God and she believes in David as the future king.

David is impressed and grateful. He immediately sees the truth of what she is saying, thanks God for her and expresses his gratitude to her¹.

1 see James 3:4
2 24:18-19

3 25:18
4 25:19a

5 25:18

1 25:20-22
2 25:23

3 25:24

4 25:25

1 25:24-31

2 25:26a

3 25:26b

4 25:27

5 25:28a

6 25:28b

7 25:28c

8 25:29

9 25:30-31

1 25:32-35

• David has learned a lesson that remained with him the rest of his life

It is another lesson in forgiveness and takes David higher in the life of forgiving graciousness than he had yet known. He now is encouraged to treat all his enemies in this way, trusting God for vindication and refusing to avenge himself. There is reason to think Abigail's influence remained with him the rest of his life. When he later shows great tolerance of Saul's family and the highly offensive Shimei¹, he is standing by the lesson he had learnt from Abigail^a.

¹ 2 Samuel 16:5-12; 19:16-23

• Vindication – Nabal dies

Soon the lesson Abigail taught him is proved and vindicated. Nabal gets to hear what had happened¹ and is so shocked he dies¹. Abigail's words about the Lord being able to handle David's cause have been proved correct, as David notices².

¹ 25:36-38

² 25:39a

• David marries Abigail

Immediate blessing and reward come to both David and Abigail. Abigail was a beautiful and intelligent woman, someone fit to be David's queen. She shared his faith, was convinced in God's purpose for his life and had already proved herself to be a spiritually valuable partner for him. David marries Abigail¹.

¹ 25:39-44

The happy ending spoiled

• By David's polygamy – earlier and premature marriages

There is one thing that spoils the happy ending. David became a polygamist. The spirituality of the people of God had not yet got to the level of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. Polygamy was tolerated on account of the hardness of the hearts of the men and women of those days. Life in the Holy Spirit outstrips the pre-Christian standards of Old Testament believers. In his youth David had married Saul's daughter. Saul had broken that marriage into pieces. Then David had married Ahinoam. David evidently felt polygamy was open to him as one who expected to be king of Israel. It was following the typical life of a king in the ancient world. If he had exercised patience and not rushed into early and premature marriages, and if there had been no Bathsheba in his life, the story of David and Abigail would have been one of the world's great romances. His learning the lesson of forgiveness was rewarded. But David had already spoiled the story by his impatience and his being too influenced by the pagan view of kingship. Later David's family life was ruined by his polygamy. But the son of Abigail gave him no problems; he had a wise mother.

Footnote

^a In 1 Kings 2, where David seems unforgiving, he is concerned about the stability of Solomon's new kingdom, not personal vindication.



slices.org.uk

Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible* (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

| Slices for the Nations | Slices for Sponsors | Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the Slices web site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the Slices web site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations |

To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk
 Details of the availability of *Preaching Through The Bible* books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk