

1 SAMUEL 25:36-38

MEN WHOM GOD KILLED: THE HIGH COST OF ARROGANCE!

“Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And about ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.”¹

Did you ever wonder how a particular woman came to be married to a certain man? It is said that opposites attract, but, sometimes the difference is so great that you wonder how they ever became a couple. That could have been the situation when you saw Nabal and Abigail. Perhaps they were a good-looking couple, but they were certainly different when it came to temperament and to their interactions with the world about them.

In economic terms, Nabal must have looked like a good catch. His wealth was about all that made him attractive. I suggest that it is significant that the writer introduces this man by first taking note of his wealth. The writer introduces the man by observing, “There was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats” [1 SAMUEL 25:2]. Only after telling us of his riches does the writer tell us his name. Wealth was how Nabal chose to define his life. His possessions preceded his person; Nabal lived to defend his property. Then, he died following an orgy that would rival the feast of any oriental king intent on boasting of his wealth.

Jesus told a parable concerning how a person can define life by the wealth possessed. Jesus said, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” [LUKE 12:16-21]. The Master easily could have had this man in view when He told that parable.

INSULTING A FUTURE KING — How did David, a poor shepherd when we first meet him, become an outlaw? He was the champion of Israel, the one who defeated the Philistine champion. He is the one of whom the women of Israel sang:

“Saul has struck down his thousands,
and David his ten thousands.”

[1 SAMUEL 18:7]

This is the son-in-law of the King, the leader of the Jewish forces who delivered the nation in repeated battles. Now, we see him as a bandit, always one step ahead of a vengeful king.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The preceding chapters and those which follow helps us to understand the transformation of the young shepherd into a brigand so notorious that the king leads three thousand chosen warriors, to pursue the younger man through the Judean wilderness [see 1 SAMUEL 24:2; 26:2]. David was appointed by Samuel to be the King of Israel [see 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13]; Samuel took this action at God's direction. Saul was driven by jealousy to attempt to kill David. It did not matter to the enraged king that David repeatedly bested the enemies of the land and that he was loyal to Saul—Saul would not tolerate the thought that the women of Israel praised David more highly than they praised him [see 1 SAMUEL 18:8, 9]!

When Saul sent assassins to kill David in his bed, Michal, David's wife and the daughter of the king, warned David of what was taking place. David fled for his life; from that time until the death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines, David was compelled to live as an outlaw. Finally, the danger became so great that David fled to the Philistines [see 1 SAMUEL 27:1-12].

At the time the events described in the text were taking place, David was still running from Saul. The young man had gathered about him a large following of outcasts from Israel. The Bible describes them in the following terms—"everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul" [1 SAMUEL 22:2]. Some would describe them as "losers." Be careful about tossing out labels in a casual fashion. These men who allied themselves to David would become a kingdom of warriors and winners. When God is pleased to bless a people, they excel at whatever they put their hands to.

It was during this time that David was near to the region in which Nabal pastured his flocks. Though reputed to be a brigand and with a price on his head, David was careful not to do any harm to the flocks near his men. It was shearing time when he sent a delegation to request supplies from Nabal. This was the message he gave ten men whom he sent in his name. "Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. And thus you shall greet him: 'Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore, let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David'" [1 SAMUEL 25:4-8].

David's claim to have protected Nabal's flocks was not mere braggadocio, the nearby Philistines posed a genuine threat. Only recently, David had fought against the Philistines when they were raiding Keilah and robbing the threshing floors [see 1 SAMUEL 23:1-5]. These expeditions had exposed David to capture by Saul; still, he had been willing for the sake of his own people to risk his life and the lives of his followers to deliver a city in Israel. This was no extortion racket—it was a true statement of protection while David was in the region. His request was humble; and it was based on real protection from Philistine raiders. Though David and his band were reputed to be bandits, they had not acted as bandits; they respected Nabal and his goods, protecting him and sparing him harm. Nabal was of the lineage of Caleb, noted in history for godliness and faith. David had every expectation of a kind and generous response.

When David's men presented their request, Nabal responded in an arrogant, disrespectful manner. Nabal's answer was curt, dismissive, mean-spirited. "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where" [1 SAMUEL 25:10, 11]? Nabal was a little big man in Israel. A couple of sheep and some provisions would never have been missed. However, he was so focused on himself that he failed to see the dangerous situation he had just created.

“Nabal”— translated into English, the name means “Fool.” Isaiah describes the *nabal*.

“The fool [*nabal*] speaks folly,
and his heart is busy with iniquity,
to practise ungodliness,
to utter error concerning the LORD,
to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied,
and to deprive the thirsty of drink.”

[ISAIAH 32:6]

A fool may be one who is ill-mannered, thick-headed, a social disaster; certainly, Nabal exhibited an overabundance of these precise characteristics. The passage cited from Isaiah informs us that “the fool” [Heb. *nabal*] is unaware of his responsibility before God; he is so focused on fulfilling his own desire that whether unconscious of the opportunity to do good or unwilling to honour God, he fails miserably the test of even approaching any action that would approximate the will of God.

Nabal bore a name in keeping with his attitude. David became an enemy because of the fool’s caustic dismissal of the request delivered by David’s men. Nabal’s own servants thought poorly of him. After he had rejected the request for food, one of the young men who cared for the flocks and who had been present reported the incident to Abigail. “Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him” [1 SAMUEL 25:14-17].

Imagine! One of his own hired hands spoke of him as “a worthless man” to whom no one could speak! His own wife would represent him in negative tones to David. Abigail would say, “Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him” [1 SAMUEL 25:25a]. Even his wife confesses that he is a fool.

Nabal wasn’t a fool because he had no business sense—he appears to have been quite successful as a farmer. Nabal had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, not an inconsequential number of livestock. He wasn’t a fool because he wasted his wealth on riotous living—every indication is that he was somewhat fiscally conservative. This man isn’t called a “fool” because he didn’t do well on college entrance exams or because he did not pass an exam in school—he appears to have been reasonably bright, even if he didn’t really understand the times and how he should live in such times. Nevertheless, in moral judgement and in ethics, Nabal was revealed to have been a fool. This is most clearly seen in his arrogance, prominently displayed on this occasion when David, leading a band of rowdy renegades and brigands, requested consideration from the wealthy farmer.

Nabal thought only of “my bread,” “my water,” “my meat.” Rather than seeing himself as an administrator of the grace of God, he was certain that his hand had acquired everything he possessed. Moreover, he was assured that everything that he possessed was for his own pleasure. There was no consideration that the strength he enjoyed was a gift from God, that the abilities he employed were divinely given or that the opportunities that came to him were permitted by the LORD—Nabal was the centre of his universe.

In his attitude, Nabal was not unlike many in this present day who would never consider the need to be generous toward others, much less generous toward the work of God. Raised to believe that we deserve all that we have, we allow ourselves to become unconscious of the opportunity to glorify God through a gracious and a generous spirit.

Nabal did have one great thing going for him, and he was clue-free about that one great thing. Nabal had married a woman of character, a woman who was distinguished both for her discernment as much as for her beauty. In fact, it is Abigail's discernment that enhanced her beauty. What is tragic about Nabal's dismissive attitude is that it likely led him to take his wife for granted, just as he did every other aspect of his life. Nabal's attitude concerning his wife is especially unfortunate in that it is unlikely that he chose her to be his wife. In that culture, a wife was chosen by the parents of a young man. Parents would arrange for the bride, negotiating with her family to form a union for the couple. Therefore, Nabal couldn't even take credit for the wife who enriched his life. We are left to conclude that he was thoughtless toward her, just as he was thoughtless toward all mankind.

When we think of Abigail, we should remember the caution against being so infatuated with beauty that we miss what is truly important in a spouse. The unmarried need to take to heart the words of the Wise Man. Solomon cautions against allowing beauty to blind us to what is truly important in a union, and especially in how we should see women, when he writes,

“Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout
is a beautiful woman without discretion.”

[PROVERBS 11:22]

Elsewhere, the Wise Man will instruct those who are willing to receive it,

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.”

[PROVERBS 31:30]

Thus, when Abigail is introduced, she is described as “discerning and beautiful” [1 SAMUEL 25:3]; her character is assuredly enhanced when contrasted to the character of her husband, of whom it is said, “The man was harsh and badly behaved.” This couple is a study in contrasts. Now, we must focus on Nabal, the fool. We will focus on him so that we can be warned against acting like a fool in our own lives.

HIS NAME IS “FOOL!” Though we may search the divine record, we do not find anyone noted as speaking favourably of Nabal. David is prepared to kill him because of his foolish actions. Abigail confesses that he is a fool. Even those who are paid by Nabal recognise that he is a fool.

I need to emphasise what has already been stated concerning the fool. Citing Isaiah, I noted that the fool is unaware of his responsibility before God. From the text, I observed that Nabal revealed himself to be ill-mannered, thick-headed and a social disaster. The fool is unconscious of any responsibility before God. He is unwilling to do what is good, or even to honour God because he is so focused on fulfilling his own desire. He has become the centre of his own universe, leaving no room for God. Heaven can wait, in the estimate of the fool.

Underlying all these dark characteristics is another, dreadful predisposition that marks the life of the fool in the eyes of God. David writes,

“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds;
there is none who does good.”

[PSALM 14:1]

People often fail to understand that this is not a description of the professing atheist to the exclusion of all others. To be certain, an atheist says that she does not believe there is a god; however, the Hebrew is more pointed. David has written, “The fool says in his heart, ‘No God!’” This is not a statement of belief; it is an utter rejection of all accountability before God! It could well encompass the practical atheist, the church member that adheres to religious devotions without submitting to the reign of the Master over his life.

Though we cannot say that Nabal had openly rejected the LORD, his actions definitely are not those of a man who is seeking to honour God. He rebuffed the request David had sent. Nabal; Mr. Money was careful to ensure that those seeking his help would know that he was the owner of all things. Not content with holding onto what he could, he dismissed David as an escaped slave. It is perhaps interesting to note that both Nabal and David identify the young man as a servant. Nabal speaks of David as a disobedient and runaway slave of Saul; David identifies himself as a slave of the LORD [see **1 SAMUEL 25:39**]. David was slave to no man, but he willingly made himself a slave to the LORD. As one who learned to serve, David would serve the nation, always remembered as the servant king who advanced the cause of the nation.

Let me step aside for a moment to address this matter in pointed fashion. Among the churches, there are always many who aspire to rule among the churches. The pastorate in this day has been reduced to a job for which anyone can prepare through time in the classroom. When I survey the accounts of those who were used greatly by the Master, I note that they first learned to serve. Jesus challenged the spirit of this dying age when He said, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all” [**MARK 9:35**].

As He approached the cross, Jesus witnessed the disciples arguing about which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. Imagine that! Jesus is moving deliberately toward His passion and these men are arguing as to which of them is the most important to Christ’s work. The Master rebuked them, saying, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves” [**LUKE 22:25-27**].

This wasn’t the first time these men had had this identical argument! It appears to have been an ongoing point of contention. Earlier in Luke’s Gospel, we read, “An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, ‘Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great’” [**LUKE 9:46-48**].

Even a mother of two disciples got into the act. “The mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, ‘What do you want?’ She said to him, ‘Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom’” [**MATTHEW 20:20, 21**]. The disciples were just like us! Self-promotion took precedence over serving others.

Jesus was teaching that there were no shortcuts to effective service in overseeing the affairs of a congregation. Everyone who will be useful in that service must learn to serve. The churches of our Lord do not need rulers so much as they need servants. Consequently, many who promote themselves into positions as rulers—whether giving themselves ostentatious titles such as bishop, cardinal or prophet or merely wanting to pull the strings from a dark corner—are harmful to the work of the Lord. Nabal was consumed with self-promotion; thus, he was incapable of seeing what God was doing in his world.

For three and one-half years, Peter, James, John and the others would learn in Christ's school. Jesus was often pulling back on the reins as they attempted to rush into matters. Paul would be compelled to spend time in Arabia before returning to Judea [see GALATIANS 1:17, 18]. These whom we call great in the Faith first learned to serve before they could be used. Elisha the son of Shaphat was known as the one who poured water on the hands of Elijah [see 2 KINGS 3:11] before he began his own service. It breaks my heart when I see young men insisting on promoting themselves, demanding respect from congregants, though they have not yet learned to serve. It is heart-wrenching primarily because I know the assemblies must wait until these men have learned to serve or they shall become detrimental to the work of the Lord Christ. It is equally tragic to watch those chosen to serve pushing themselves forward to take control. Such actions betray the spirit of Nabal who thought of himself as someone great.

Focus once more on the text. David was not attempting to coerce Nabal into paying for protection. He had been in the area for some time. The hired hands who watched the flocks were aware that their job was much easier because of the presence of David and his men. When Abigail was told of what had happened, the young man relating the incident commented, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep" [1 SAMUEL 25:14b-16].

David had made a gift of protecting Nabal's flocks. His men were brigands. Their actions in various raids left no doubt as to their ability to be ruthless if they felt the need. Listen to this account of David and his men while they were hiding in Gath. "David and his men went up and made raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt. And David would strike the land and would leave neither man nor woman alive, but would take away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the garments, and come back to Achish. When Achish asked, 'Where have you made a raid today?' David would say, 'Against the Negeb of Judah,' or, 'Against the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites,' or, 'Against the Negeb of the Kenites.' And David would leave neither man nor woman alive to bring news to Gath, thinking, 'lest they should tell about us and say, "So David has done."' Such was his custom all the while he lived in the country of the Philistines" [1 SAMUEL 27:8-11]. If these men had wanted to be sheep rustlers, there is no doubt they could have done so.

David had restrained his men, no doubt with the expectation that because they had acted with restraint that they could anticipate meat at the time of the celebration. In other words, there was an expectation of reciprocal exchange. David had given the gift of good behaviour; Nabal had refused to exchange the gift of meat, which was in itself a calculated insult. However, he had exaggerated that insult by speaking ill of David. In acting as he did, Nabal had exalted himself over David. It meant that he considered himself superior in every way to David, a situation that could not be ignored.

GOD DEALS WITH THE ARROGANT — David was determined to avenge the disrespect to which Nabal had subjected him. David revealed that he was at best a man, and when he took his eyes off the LORD who guided him, he was capable of the most wicked actions imaginable. Nabal's arrogance was about to catch up to him. The Word reveals the dark heart of evil that seized David. "David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this. And David said to his men, 'Every man strap on his sword!' And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage" [1 SAMUEL 25:12, 13].

Like a proud king boasting, "Is not this the great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" Nabal had exalted himself in his own eyes. Now, a violent storm was about to break over Nabal's head—a storm that would destroy him, those whom he had hired and anyone near him. All that kept this storm from breaking was providence in the person of his intelligent and gracious wife.

When Abigail is told of the events that had taken place out of her sight, she acted with haste. Remember, Abigail is introduced to us as a discerning woman. This lady is able to take in what is happening, process the issues and come up with a plan to avert disaster. Therefore, we read, "Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. And she said to her young men, 'Go on before me; behold, I come after you.' But she did not tell her husband Nabal" [1 SAMUEL 25:18, 19].

Meanwhile, David is seething. The divine author lets us peek into what is happening a short distance from where Abigail is gathering her gifts and urging the young men along. "As she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. Now David had said, 'Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him'" [1 SAMUEL 25:20-22].

At last, Abigail meets David and pleads for the life of her husband. "When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, 'On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the LORD your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant'" [1 SAMUEL 25:23-31].

Throughout Abigail's speech, she focuses on David and the LORD; her focus is not on David and Nabal. Had we been speaking, we might have spoken of the conflict and how David needed to forgive Nabal. Abigail appeals to David's relationship with God. She points to the LORD, urging David to think of how his actions reflect on God. If God is truly in charge of life, then let Him have control.

Abigail is circumspect in her speech. As she speaks, she states that she is bringing a "blessing." The word is translated "present" in my Bible and translated as "gift" in other Bibles, but the Hebrew word is the word that means "blessing." Abigail says she has brought a "blessing" in the form of food and drink. Surely we recognise that the gifts we receive are blessings delivered by those who wish to show us kindness. Moreover, Abigail states that the "blessing" is for the men, and not for David. She is as concerned for his men as is David!

This gives us insight into David's mind. David had not requested anything for himself; David was seeking recompense for his men. The men had been restrained by the king during the time they were in the vicinity of Nabal's flocks. Nabal was too obtuse to realise what was being asked of him, but Abigail realised instantly what was taking place. Abigail recognises David is king, though he does not wear the crown at this point. Therefore, she is asking him to act like a king. David needed this reminder. The weeks and months of being on the run, of living just one step ahead of death, has taken its toll. The king needed to be reminded that he was king, that his times were in God's hand. God was using this gracious woman to accomplish His will and prepare His man for ascension to the throne. Abigail's intelligence rather than special revelation enables her to sense the movement of history. Understanding what is taking place, she acts.

When the divine writer pens the account of those who came to David while he was at Hebron, among the people described are men of Issachar. Describing the various contingents that assembled to the king, he wrote, "Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do..." [1 CHRONICLES 12:32]. This is one of the powerful statements of those who moved to support the king. Of the other warriors provided, the writer speaks of numbers and of their prowess; of Issachar, he writes of their ability to understand the times. These men are not numbered; however, the implication is that their understanding had an impact out of proportion to their numbers on the other tribes. Surely, that is the need of any congregation—men who understand the times, who know what should be done.

David confesses that Abigail had been moved by God's own intervention to keep him from revenge on Nabal. The Word records what was said, noting, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! For as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.' Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, 'Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition'" [1 SAMUEL 25:32-35].

Abigail had acted with discretion and David had demonstrated sensitivity to the Spirit of God. David had been in greater danger at this moment than the danger he had faced as he was pursued by Saul. Had David slaughtered Nabal and seized all that belonged to him, he would have demonstrated that he was as wicked as Saul who had slaughtered the priests at Nob when he first began pursuing David [see 1 SAMUEL 22:11-19]. Saul, who was rejected as king may practise butchery, but the chosen king must not descend to such vile depths. God preserved David, doing so through the wisdom of this gracious, intelligent woman.

For her service, all that Abigail asked was that David remember her. Her plea to David concludes with her saying, “When the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant” [1 SAMUEL 25:31]. And David would remember her in due time. Abigail returned home. Nabal was enjoying a feast described as being “like the feast of a king” [1 SAMUEL 25:36]; on top of that, he was drunk. He was Mr. Money; he could afford to feast and drink. Abigail wisely left him alone and went to bed. Nabal eventually went to bed, unaware of all that had taken place.

Abigail “told [Nabal] nothing at all until the morning light. In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things” [1 SAMUEL 25:37a]. Perhaps it was at breakfast, Nabal nursing a headache and feeling as though an opossum had slept in his mouth all night when Abigail told him of her encounter with the next king of Israel. The knowledge that his arrogance had brought him to the brink of disaster, that David and his men were still in the vicinity, struck his heart with terror. The Bible says that “his heart died within him, and he became as a stone” [1 SAMUEL 25:37b]. I will speculate at this point, for the wording of the text leads me to wonder if Nabal suffered a stroke, or perhaps a brain aneurysm. Whatever the medical event, the divine text reads that, “about ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died” [1 SAMUEL 25:38].

David, persuaded by Abigail’s wise plea, had refrained from taking judgement into his own hands. God is the judge of mankind; and in His time, He does judge wickedness. Nabal had lived without thought of responsibility before God, and God had at last called the fool to account. Each Christian must bear in mind that we are not to judge any individual. Judgement lies within the purview of God, not man.

Just as God called the rich man to account in the parable Jesus told [see LUKE 12:16-21], so each individual must one day give an account to the Living God. The Apostle instruct believers, “We must all appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ [2 CORINTHIANS 5:10a]. Jesus cautions all mankind in sobering words that must be taken to heart. Jesus cautioned, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done” [MATTHEW 16:25-27].

The account before us, then, is a call for each Christian to remember that his life, that her life, reveals our understanding of God Himself. Whether we are responsible with what He has entrusted to our oversight or whether we consume all that we have on ourselves, speaks of our relationship to the Living God.

Again, the account is a strong reminder for followers of the Lord God to invest time in understanding the times. We see a world spinning out of control as populations divide into tribes that oppose one another. We are no longer Canadians, we identify on other criteria, demanding that everyone acknowledge our tribe as the epitome of propriety. This holds throughout society, save for Christians, who are despised well nigh universally. If we are followers of the Risen Son of God, we must strive to understand the times and know what to do.

At last, the account before us to rest in the Lord. The temptation is for each of us to take matters into our own hands when we feel slighted, when we feel that our abilities are not recognised, when we imagine that we are not receiving the recognition we think we deserve. We have been trained by the world to conduct our lives according to how we feel. However, we must never forget that “we walk by faith, not by sight” [2 CORINTHIANS 5:7]. Our feelings are not dependable; the Word of God is our guide on which we can rest securely.

1 SAMUEL 25:36-38

MEN WHOM GOD KILLED: THE HIGH COST OF ARROGANCE!

The message is directed to those who follow Christ the Lord. Undoubtedly, there are some who listen who have never put faith in the Risen Son of God. You are unable to act with discretion when pressed by the world because you have no strength to stand firm. That power to stand firm is offered to any who are willing to receive it, however. This power is offered in Christ Jesus as He becomes Master over life. He gave His life as a sacrifice because of sin. He was buried and then broke the bonds of death by rising from the dead.

Now, the offer is made for all who will receive it, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. It is with the heart that one believes and is made right with the Faith; and with the mouth that one confesses and is set free." That passage concludes by testifying, "Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved" [see **ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**]. That is our prayer for you. Believe the message of life and be saved. Amen.