

**1 Samuel 24, Annette DiMarco:**

[Recording starts at 1:30; first part of the recording is very quiet and best heard with earphones.]

Saul was a man obsessed with hatred for David. Instead of returning home after his battle with the Philistines, he goes on to continue to pursue David. Saul had become a slave of his hatred for David.

***Ten Lessons from 1 Samuel 24:***

1. Who or What rules us? If it is sin, then how can we avoid its mastery over us? 1 Sam 24:1-2.
  - a. Be open, transparent before God. Psalm 139—"O LORD, You have searched me and known me. . . ."
  - b. Confess our sin and repent of it.
  - c. Ask God's forgiveness.
  - d. Submit our will to Christ.
  - e. Accept His grace.
2. What men interpret as God's will is often man's will. 1 Sam 24:4—David's men looked at the opportunity to kill Saul to be God's will for David to avenge himself.
3. Do we rationalize the "little sins"? 1 Sam 24:5—David's conscience bothered him after he cut off the corner of Saul's robe.
4. Do we respect those in authority? 1 Sam 24:6-8—David recognized that he had lifted his hand against the Lord's anointed (Saul). Romans 13:1-7—God has placed the government in power. One exception to our obedience would be that we should never allow a government to cause us to do something that would be against God's laws.
5. Do we communicate the truth effectively? Are our lives a testimony to the truth? 1 Sam 24:9-10—David asked Saul why he was listening to false reports about David.
6. Evil men do evil things. Do our actions correspond to what is in our hearts and minds? 1 Sam 24:11-13—Saul's actions were unjustly cruel against an innocent man.
7. God is our refuge and strength in time of trouble. If men wrong us, God will right us. God is our Judge and will vindicate the innocent (1 Sam 24:12-15).
8. Evil men don't usually see themselves as evil. 1 Sam 24:17—Saul said that David was more righteous than he was, but Saul should have recognized that he was not righteous at all.
9. Remorse must be accompanied by repentance for our character to change. 1 Sam 24:16—An evil doer may show grief at his evil, but this is not true repentance (example Judas).
10. Be innocent as doves, but wise as serpents. 1 Sam 24:22—David remained very cautious about Saul's supposed "change."

*See next page for the skit.*

**1 Samuel 25, Skit by Karen Davis:**

[Begins at 20:00 after a pause]

***Abigail enters (played by Karen Davis)***

Greetings. I am Ah-vee-guy-eel (Abigail).

Perhaps you know something of my story. I was born in Carmel in the district of Maon. This is not the same thing as Mt Carmel, in the north by the Sea. Carmel in Maon is a mountainous territory of Judah about 9 miles SE of Hebron. It is still called Kermel today.

My name is Abigail, which means “my father is rejoicing.” Perhaps I was named this because it was many years before my mother had a child.

I grew up in Carmel in the days of Samuel. **Saul** was King. Only once, as a child, did I myself see Saul. Perhaps (you, who know your Bibles) remember when Saul came to Carmel. I am told that he had just fought in a battle with the Amalekites. When the war was over, he came to Carmel and put up a statue of himself. We thought that was very exciting. But then word reached us that the prophet Samuel was angry because King Saul had not really killed ALL the Amalekites. So, we never did think much of the statue after that.

I grew to age 15 and was said to be beautiful. My family was not wealthy, but we had a neighbor who was. His name was Nabal.

Nabal was very rich. He had 3000 sheep and all that pastureland, as well as 1000 goats! He was from the Calebite clan, which is a very esteemed family in Judah, the founders of Bethlehem. My parents arranged my marriage to him, but he was very old.

His name, Nabal, means the worst kind of fool! There are many Hebrew words for “fool,” some meaning naïve, or teenage foolishness, or stubborn fool, but his name was not any of these. He never said why his father named him this, but it fit him. Nabal was harsh and cruel; when he drank too much, it was not safe to be around him.

Of course, I knew who David was. As a young bride I had heard of David. He was a hero, a famous warrior who had killed the giant Goliath. Rumors had reached our village that Saul was angry with David, but we did not understand why. Many thought David would be the next king.

I knew nothing of David being in our district until Ben-ari, a trusted servant, one who sheared the sheep, came running to me. His face was white as parchment. I thought, “Oh no! What has happened? Have the Bedouins attacked our sheep again? Will there be terrible losses that will make Nabal angry and hateful?” You see, it was the time of year when we shear the sheep, a time when enemies often attacked and stole our animals.

But Ben-ari, the servant, gave news that was even worse: David had sent messengers from the wilderness to greet the Master Nabal and request hospitality, but Nabal had scorned and insulted them. Nabal said, “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?” As if he didn’t know! Why, Nabal and David were even related! His obligations for hospitality were great, yet he refused to even give WATER, let alone food to David’s men!—even though sheep-shearing was a time of festivity and generosity.

Ben-ari went on to explain: David's men were very good to us; they stole nothing, but were a wall of protection to us so that we did not have the losses that came so often at shearing time. And now, David is marching this way with 400 men, so angry that he has vowed to kill every male in Nabal's household. And our master is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him.

Quickly, I ran to the servants and enlisted their help! We loaded several donkeys with 200 loaves of bread, roasted grain, figs, raisins, prepared meat of sheep, and jugs of wine. I sent the servants on ahead as soon as possible, then followed on my own donkey.

There was a frightening moment. I came around the bend of the mountain and there, a short distance away, were David and his men, coming with great speed. His face was angry like a thunder cloud! I quickly dismounted and bowed with my face to the ground with fear in my heart, and my heart pounding. It is hard to remember all that I said, but I am told that my speech was the longest speech given by a woman in the Old Testament part of your Bible.

I said, "Oh, my lord, let all the blame for what has happened fall upon me alone. Please listen to the words of your maidservant. Please do not listen to the words of this worthless man, Nabal. He is what his name implies. Folly is part of his character. But I, your maidservant, did not know of the request brought by your young men."

I appealed to him, reminding him of the Lord God whom we both served. I said, "As the LORD Jehovah lives, and as your soul lives, since Jehovah God has restrained you from shedding blood and avenging yourself, may your enemies and those who seek evil against you be as Nabal, a man whom others oppose and dislike."

I hardly knew how prophetic my words were. They seemed to pour out from within me. I said, "The LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD." And I told him that his life would be **"bound up in the bundle of the living with the LORD God."** Perhaps you do not know what that expression means. It is an expression of great security, that God would protect him and keep him in safety.

I told him that all the good that God had spoken about him would come to pass, that he would be ruler over Israel, and that he would not want grief and a troubled conscience because he had shed blood in anger.

David seemed amazed at my speaking. His face had softened. And finally he spoke: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel who sent you this day to meet me. And blessed be your discernment, and blessed be YOU, who have kept me from shedding blood in anger and avenging myself. If you had not come, by morning there would not have remained one male in Nabal's household." He accepted the gifts of food, granted my request, and sent me to my house in peace.

When I returned to the house, it was the feast time, and Nabal was drunk, so I knew it was not wise to talk to him. But in the morning, when he learned what had happened, the shock caused his body to become stiff like a stone. The LORD had struck Nabal, and 10 days later he died.

I was not sad that Nabal was dead. But what would happen to me? I had no son. And Nabal was old, so he had no living brothers to marry me and raise up seed to inherit the property of Nabal. Who would act as my kinsman-redeemer?

How happy I was to receive messengers from David proposing to take me as his wife. David was a kinsman. And he was a man who honored God. And he was indeed handsome! His proposal was an act of great kindness.

I spoke the words of humility that needed to be said for such an honor, that “I would be a maid to wash the feet of my lord’s servants.” And so I arose, rode on a donkey with 5 maidens attending me, and followed the messengers to become David’s wife.

David already had a wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, but she had been taken from him illegally and given to another. She had no children. David also had a wife named Ahinoam, and she and I were often together. She bore David’s first son, Amnon. I bore his second son, Chileab, who is sometimes called Daniel. People often wonder what happened to Chileab....

Of course, we continued to have many adventures, first hiding in the wilderness, then living in the Philistine territory of Gath and Ziklag for a year and 4 months. It was at Ziklag that Ahinoam and I were captured by the Amalekites, but we were rescued by David and survived to enter Hebron with David and be present at his coronation as King.

But I get ahead of my story. Today you must think about the goodness of God who acts to keep us from doing wrong. We must listen when God’s Spirit whispers in our ear, “Don’t take your own revenge.”

Some blame me for going behind my husband’s back. But I think the words of David recorded in your Bible tell the true story: “**Baruch, Adonai elohay Yisrael**: Blessed be the LORD God of Israel who sent you this day to meet me.”

You will have to make up your own mind about me. Shalom.