

Nabal is a wealthy man. He has three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, tended by numerous herdsmen. His wife is beautiful and intelligent.

But Nabal is a lout, crude and ungenerous. See how his fate is foretold in these and other scriptures:

“Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf” (Prov. 11:28).

“The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly” (Prov. 18:23); a perfect description of Nabal’s reply to David’s men.

And this from the New Testament: “Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat

your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you” (James 5:1-6).

What a warning to those whom God has given wealth to pay heed to the poor, not to scorn and disparage them as Nabal does.

Notes

25:2 This Carmel is a city in the south of Judah, not the mountain made famous by Elijah’s triumph over the prophets of Baal.

Questions for study and discussion:

1. What is the significance to Israel of Samuel’s death?
2. What claims do David’s men make on Nabal’s generosity? How are they substantiated by Nabal’s own men?
3. What is the lesson here regarding the importance of listening to others?

4. In the last chapter, David spared Saul's life. Here, he eventually spares Nabal's life. What is the difference?
5. Does Abigail show disloyalty to her husband when she goes to David?
6. How does Nabal deserve his fate?
7. What arguments does Abigail make for David to spare Nabal?
8. This story ends like a fairy tale, with Abigail marrying the future king. Does she live happily ever after?