

**Biblical Blueprint for Idumuje Ugboko Women for peace Building for Progress and Stability: from the Narrative Ricochet of Abigail's Intervention in 1 Samuel 25:26-30**

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**Abstract**

The need for peace that makes for progress and stability in every society is priceless and cannot be overemphasized. Women from ages past have been agents of peace, progress and stability by the nature of their God-given gifts. Abigail, the focus of the research uses her feminine endowments to broker peace between King David and her husband Nabal. The narrative teaches that women can position their womanly traits to bring about peace in time of crisis in their homes or organizations. Abigail's peace initiative can provide, in concrete ways solutions to the crisis that has for long ravaged Idumuje Ugboko society in Aniocha North local government area of Delta State. Very many peace moves to reconcile the warring parties have not yielded much success, and Abigail's Biblical solution for the crisis has not been sought, hence the focal point of the research. The research shows that Abigail's theological stand point through narrative Criticism model can be deployed by Delta state Idumuje Ugboko women as peace blueprint to achieve peace, progress and stability in the community and the entire state, more so as they are Christians that believe the Bible contains prescriptions for practical living. It is discovered that Abigail's timely intervention, fear of God and other feminine moral features are appropriate theological tools for Idumuje-Ugboko Christian women to be used for resolving the age long crisis in the area. Finally, the Abigail research study showcases and distinguishes wealth of character in peace making from the other three riches intrinsic in making peace: riches in what one has, what one knows and what one does. Wealth of character, otherwise called riches in what one is remains the best form of peace making.

**Keywords:** Biblical, Peace, Blueprint, Progress and Narrative

**Introduction**

Women in some parts of the world at different times before now were never considered as powerful agents of peace initiation. They were often considered docile, inactive and sometimes worth low in most societies of the world. In a typical African society, women then were expected only to raise children, provide emotional support for their husbands, be passive, submissive, dependent, and silent (Adebayoo, 2001,pp.12-19; Olujinmi, 2009,pp.68-92).They are often excluded from sensitive issues, energy-requiring jobs or subjects that require special abilities. These assumptions inform the segregation of women from participating in most socio-economic and political activities in most countries of the world.

However, few women in the Bible lived beyond what is described above. For instance, efforts of Deborah in the Bible (Judges 4 and 5) who went to war with men and when her men became vegetables in the face of confrontation cannot be overlooked. Without Deborah at the war front with the leaders of Israel led by Barrak, Barrak would have gone to sleep and jeopardized the nation's security and growth of Israel as a nation. The activities of Queen Esther in the land of the enemy can also come readily to the fore. Esther as a queen mother and daughter of Israel laid down her life against all odds to save her nation. Prior to Esther's intervention the conflict between Haman and Modecai had assumed a national dimension, the death warrant had been written, sealed and was waiting execution. It was a time bomb waiting to tickle to zero to annihilate and bring to extinction the nation called Israel. Esther's swift reaction and move against the whirlwind set in motion by Haman saved the situation. As a beautiful queen she used her intellect,

female powers and captivating beauty to assuage the rage and up-turn the death verdict. Esther's intervention was the saving grace of Israel's nation from woe and calamity.

Abigail, the focus of this paper was not different. The narrative teaches that women can be proactive and turn into peace makers and workers who can bring peace in their society in times of crisis in their homes or organizations. Abigail's intervention narrative can provide in concrete ways, solutions to the crisis that has for long ravaged Idumuje Ugboko in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State thereby enhancing peace, progress and stability in the area and the entire Delta state.

Very many peace moves to reconcile the warring parties have not yielded much success. It is believed that the biblical Abigail theological standpoints can be deployed by Idumuje Ugboko women as peace blue print to achieve progress and stability in the state, more so as they are Christians that believe the Bible to contain prescriptions for practical living. How can the biblical Abigail's intervention and interpretation of the biblio-theological text be deployed and appropriated by the Idumuje Ugboko women as a blue print to achieve peace, progress and stability in the Delta State? The virtues of Abigail are typical qualities imbedded in every woman irrespective of class and location. Appraising and interpreting these narrative-virtues and developing them by each woman as an individual and women as a group can tremendously build and nurture peace in every society

One of the reasons why holy books, scriptures or sacred writs are used as standards for behavior is that the people in the religious narratives look like people of today. The prescriptions given to them by God, which guided and directed them, are still very vital for the direction of the modern man. This is true to the extent that people pattern all aspects of their lives and behaviours after their sacred writings. Belonging to associations, selecting what to eat or drink, fighting and ceasing to fight etc are all determined by what the scripture says.

Old Testament part of the Bible remains a vital part of the Christian holy writ that has been used to make peace and save crises situations from worse deterioration in many societies. Many attempts have been made to settle the Idumuje Ugboko (Delta state) crisis to no avail. The text of 1Samuel 25:26-30 under discussion has never been exploited and deployed for the settlement of the age-long Idumuje Ugboko crisis. This alongside the fact that Idumuje Ugboko Christian women have not taken advantage of the behavioural-narrative virtues of Abigail, the dramatis personae of the narrative, to sue for peace, progress and stability in Delta state, form the focal problem of this research.

The purpose of this paper generally is to address the issue of Idumuje Ugboko crisis from the perspective of Abigail's intervention to save Nabal, her husband from deathly crisis.

Specifically the paper aims to

- (a) Criticize the study text through exegesis of the verses.
- (2) Examine the Idumuje Ugboko crisis situation
- (3) Contextualize the text on Idumuje Ugboko women as a blueprint for peace, progress and stability in Delta state

### **Brief Survey of the Study Area and the Crisis**

The study area is Idumuje Ugboko in Aniocha North local Government area of Delta state. The rural town of Idumuje- Ugboko is situated in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State-Nigeria with a land mass of over nine square miles, and the geographic coordinates of 6° 21' 0" N, 6° 24' 0" E, it is boarded on the Eastern side by Idumuje Unor, Onicha-Ugbo to the South; Igbodo to the West North -East by Ohodua; Ewohumi to the North and Epkon or Akpu to the North-West. Unified under a hereditary monarchy, Idumuje- Ugboko is a close knit, homogenous group of four villages. The four villages whose founding fathers and early settlers are reputed to have migrated from the various towns and kingdoms in

around and beyond the present day state of Delta and Edo are Atuma, Ogbe-Obi, Ogbe-Ofu and Onicha - Ukwu

The Idumuje Ugboko had been a peaceful village for years with no major crises until land dispute between two factions reared its ugly head up. One faction, backed by the onetime king of the community claimed the ownership of almost the entire village land. But another faction with the support of the current king is seriously contesting this claim. Physical fighting between youths of the two factions had claimed not less than sixty lives, the injured ones are uncountable, and many are still languishing in police detention and intermittent fights and arrests happen regularly. All efforts made to reconcile the two factions have failed. The Anioma traditional rulers Council, Delta State Traditional Rulers Council, and even Court Resolutions have failed. Delta State Alternative Conflict Resolution Committee all failed to bring peace to the village. The destabilizing impact of the crisis is taking an adverse toll on virtually everything in the community.

In consideration of the fact that the faction heads and their foot soldiers are married to women and have daughters who are all Christians, it is expected that Christian approach to provide a solution to the problem is possible. Individually and collectively as Christian wives, daughters and groups they can talk their warring husbands, brothers, friends and families out of the fight and the entire crisis.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were generated by conducting interviews and administering copies of research questionnaires where respondents were expected to provide answers that suit their opinions on any item on the list of questionnaire. On the other hand, structured intended questions were asked and interviewees expressed their views on any question raised on the subject matter. Both questionnaire and interview question enabled the study to answer the paper question, thereby addressing the purpose of the study.

Secondary data from books, articles in journals, book chapters, theses, dissertation internet source and media sources on the subject matter were integrated into the body of the research in order to authenticate claims and research findings. To interpret the passage *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), the Bible (Raised Standard vision), the Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB) were used to explain the texts; NRSV and NAB were used for cross checking of texts. Intercultural and Narrative Critical methods were used in finding meaning and values between Judean and African world views to execute the passage in Delta environment. Exegesis is the interpretation of a text by way of a thorough analysis of its contents in order to clarify its meaning. Exegesis is to discover the original intended meaning of a given text through careful, systematic study. It is the process of examining a text to ascertain what its first readers would have understood it to mean. Exegesis is an effort at reading back into history to the original author and audience. Exegesis of the passage I Samuel 25:1-35 in BHS were used to discover the intention of the author and meaning of the text to the original audience.

Frequency and percentages were used to analyze the information. To answer the research question simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were also used together. The formula is  $\text{Mean } (x) = \frac{\sum X}{N}$

### **Exegesis of the Passage**

The book of Samuel where the passage belongs falls within the deuteronomic history. The book of 1 Samuel recounts the ministry of the prophet Samuel, who restored law and order and regular religious worship in the land after the Israelites had forgotten the Lord and worshipped unknown gods many times throughout the reign of the judges. It is uncertain who wrote the book of Samuel as well as when and where the book was written. The two books of Samuel initially existed as one book until the time of the Greek translation of the Hebrew scripture where each of the books was written on different scrolls.

One of the important themes of 1 Samuel is the issue of honoring God in keeping with the deuteronomic law which constantly and unequivocally states that obedience to God leads to blessing while disobedience brings about punishment. The other significant theme that concerns this study directly is that of reparation or restoration. Abigail resolves a life threatening crisis by dressing a major reproach in a courteous exchange of ideas. David himself was prevented from committing further murder while Nabal himself who was already destined to death was restored to life.

**The Hebrew Passage**

rmo=ale ~yrIß[<sup>1</sup>N>h;me dx<sup>2</sup>a,-r[;n:) dyGIôhi lb'ên" tv,aeä 'lyIg:'ybia]l;w><sup>14</sup>  
j[;Y"iw: WnynEßdoal]-ta, %rEib'l. rB"±d>Mih;me( ~ykiôa'l.m; dwI"D" •xl;v' hNEâhi  
`~h,(B'  
Wnd>q:âp'-al }w> 'Wnm.l;'k.h' al{Ûw> dao+m. Wnl'P ~ybiîjo ~yviên"a]h'äw><sup>15</sup>  
`hd<(F'B; WntePÄyh.Bi( ~T'êai Wnk.L;âh;t.hi 'ymey>-IK' hm'Waêm.  
~M'P[i WnteÄyh/ yme<sup>2</sup>y>-IK' ~m'\_Ay--G: hl'y>l:ß--G: Wnyleêl' Wyæh' 'hm'Ax<sup>16</sup>  
`!aCo)h; ~y[iïro  
WnynEßdoal]-la, h[<sup>2</sup>r" h' ht'ól.k'-yKi( yfiê[]T;-hm;( 'yair>W y[iÛD> hT<sup>a</sup>];w><sup>17</sup>  
`wyl'(ae rBEßD:mi l[;Y:ëliB.-!B, 'aWhw> At=yBe-!K' l[;äw>  
~yIn:äv.W ~x,l,ø ~ylt;'am' •xQ;Tiw: ÎlyIg:'ybia]Ð çlyIg:Aba]À rhEâm;T.w:<sup>18</sup>  
yliêq' ~yais. vmeÛx'w> Î'tyOWf[]Ð çtAwf[]À !acoÛ vme'x'w> !yIy:©-yleb.nl  
`~yrI)mox]h;-l[; ~f,T'Pw: ~yli\_beD> ~yIt:âam'W ~yqIßMuci ha'imeW  
Hv'iyail.W ha'\_B' ~k,äyrEx]a; ynIßn>hi yn:ëp'l. Wrâb.[i 'h'yr<'[n>li rm,aToÛw:<sup>19</sup>  
`hd"yGI)hi al{i lb'Pn"  
hNEÛhiw> rh'êh' rt,seäB. 'td<r<'yOw> rAm<sup>a</sup>x]h;-l[;( tb,k,âro ayhiä hy"ùh'w><sup>20</sup>  
`~t'(ao vGOâp.Tiw: Ht' ar"q.li ~ydIPr>yO wyv'ên"a]w: 'dwId"  
rB'êd>MiB; 'hz<l' rv<Ûa]-!K'-ta,( yTir>m;øv' rq,V,'l; •%a; rm;'a' dwIâd"w><sup>21</sup>  
`hb'(A] tx;T;î h[ 'Pr" yliî-bv,Y")w: hm'Wa+m. Alß-rv,a]-!K'mi dq:ïp.nI-al{ w>  
ryaióv.a;~ai @ysi\_yO hkoâw> dwIßd" ybeîy>aol. ~yhi<sup>2</sup>{a/ hf,ó[]y:-hKo<sup>22</sup>  
`ryqI)B. !yTiîv.m; rq,Boßh;-d[; Al±-rv,a]-!K'mi  
lPouTiw: rAm=x]h; l[;âme dr<TePw: rheßm;T.w: dwIëD"-ta, 'lyIg:'ybia] ar<TeÛw:<sup>23</sup>  
`#r<a( WxT;Pv.Tiw: h'yn<ëP'-l[; 'dwId" yPeÛa;l.  
an"Û-rB,d:t.Wÿ !wO=[h,( ynIßdoal] ynIia]-yBi rm,aToßw: wyl'êg>r:-l[; 'lPoTiw:<sup>24</sup>  
`^t<)m'a] yrEib.DI taeP [m;ßv.W ^yn<ëz>a'B. ^t.m'(a]  
hZ<÷h; l[;Y:'liB.h; •vyai-la, AB‡li-ta, ynIâdoal] ~yfiäy" an"â-la;<sup>25</sup>  
'ynl]a]w:ÿ AM=[i hl'Pb'n>W Amêv. lb'ân" aWhê-!K, 'Amv.ki yKiÛ lb<sup>a</sup>n"-l[;  
`T'x.l'(v' rv<iâ] ynIßdoal] yrEî[]n:-ta, ytiyai<sup>2</sup>r" al{i ^êt.m'âa]  
aABâmi 'hw"hy> ^Û[]n"m. rv,'a' ^v.p.n:-yxe(w> hw"Ûhy>-yx; ynI©doal] hT"ä[]w><sup>26</sup>  
^yb,êy>ao 'lb'n" k. WyÝh.yI) hT<sup>a</sup>];w> %l"+ ^ßd>y" [;veîAhw> ~ymiêd"b.  
`h['(r" ynIßdoal]-la, ~yviîq.b;m.h;(w>  
`hn" T.nIw> ynI+doal;( ^ßt.x'p.vi aybiîhe-rv,a] taZOëh; hk'är"B.h; 'hT'[]w><sup>27</sup>  
`ynI)doal] yleîg>r:B. ~ykiPL.h;t.Mi(h; ~yrlê[<sup>1</sup>N>l;  
tyIB:â ynI+doal;( hw""hy> •hf,[]y:-hfo)[' yKiä ^t<+m'a] [v;p,äl. an"ß afî<sup>28</sup>  
^ßb. aceîM'ti-al{ h[<sup>2</sup>r" w> ~x'êl.nI ynIâdoal] 'hw"hy> tAmÛx]l.mi-yKi !m<sup>a</sup>a/n<  
`^ym,(Y"mi  
ynI+doal] vp,n< "•ht'y>h'w>) ^v<+p.n:-ta, vQEßb;l.W ^êp.d'r>li '~d"a' ~q'Y"Ûw:<sup>29</sup>  
`^yb,'y>ao vp,n<Û tae'w> ^yh,êl{a/ hw"âhy> tae... ~yYI©x;h; rAræc.Bi hr"äWrc.  
`[;Q")h; @K:î %AtßB. hN"[,êL.q;y>  
hb'PAJh;-ta, rB<iDI-rv,a] lko±K. ynIëdoal;( 'hw"hy> hf,Û[]y:-yKi( hy"©h'w><sup>30</sup>  
`lae(r"f.yI-l[; dygißn"l. ^iW>ciw> ^yl,[\_'

### English Translation (RSV) of the Passage

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed at them. <sup>15</sup> 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; <sup>16</sup> they were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. <sup>17</sup> Now therefore know this and consider what you should do; for evil is determined against our master and against his entire house, and he is so ill-natured that one cannot speak to him." <sup>18</sup> Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two skins of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched grain, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. <sup>19</sup> And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. <sup>20</sup> And as she rode on the ass, and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her; and she met them. <sup>21</sup> 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? <sup>22</sup> God do so to David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him." <sup>23</sup> When Abigail saw David, she made haste, and alighted from the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed to the ground. <sup>24</sup> She fell at his feet and said, "Upon me alone, my lord, be the guilt; pray let your handmaid speak in your ears, and hear the words of your handmaid. <sup>25</sup> Let not my lord regard this ill-natured fellow, Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but I your handmaid did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. <sup>26</sup> Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, seeing the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt, and from taking vengeance with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. <sup>27</sup> And now let this present which your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. <sup>28</sup> Pray forgive the trespass of your handmaid; 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> 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,

The story of Abigail and David begins by introducing Abigail's husband, Nabal, a "very powerful"  $Al\pm w > dao\hat{e}m. lAd\hat{a}G_$  ('iš gādōl mē'ōd) Calebite from Maon who is shearing his three thousand sheep in Carmel (1 Sam 25:2). Both Maon and Carmel are cities South of Hebron in Judah, an area controlled by the Calebites (Josh 14:13-15; Judges 1:10-20). Jon and Bunch (1990) said that Hebron is a significant location for David since this is where he is first elected king and is also his first capital city. The narrative next describes Nabal and his wife Abigail in opposing terms (1 Sam 25:3): Abigail is "intelligent and beautiful"  $\text{tp; ywI\hat{a} 'lk, f, 'tb; Aj}$  (tōbat-šekel wiypat tō'ar), but Nabal is "abrasive and contemptible" (qāšeh wēra' ma'ālālīm). In fact, his very name,  $lb'Pn$  (nābāl,) means "fool," as Abigail makes clear in 1 Samuel 25:25, discussed below.

However, as Jon (1978) has pointed out, the type of "fool" Nabal represents is not "a harmless simpleton, but rather a vicious, materialistic, and egocentric misfit, "so perhaps a better modern translation would be "churl." As has been recognized, Abigail and her husband Nabal in 1 Samuel 25 are both "type" characters; that is, both represent "exaggerated stereotypes" (Berlin (1988). When David hears that Nabal is shearing his sheep, he sends ten of his men to ask Nabal to give David and his band a share in the feast in exchange for the (unsolicited) protection they have provided for Nabal's men and sheep (1 Sam 25:4-8), as David and his men "did not harm them and nothing of theirs was missing all the time they were in Carmel" (lō' heklamnūm wēlō' -nipqad lāhem mē'ūmā kol-yēmē hēyōtām bakkarmel).

McKenie (1991) pointed out that, although he is essentially running a protection racket, David's request to Nabal is culturally appropriate in its polite diplomacy. In 1 Samuel 25:6 David instructs his men to greet Nabal with an expression of good wishes: "peace be to you, peace be to your house, and peace be to all you have"

^Bl.-rv,a] lkoīw> ~Alēv' ^ât.ybeW ' ~Alv' hT'Ūa;w> yx'\_1, hKob ~T,îr>m;a]w:~Al)v' ( 'attâ šālôm ûbêtēkâ šālôm wēkōl 'āšer-lēkâ šālôm). Also, David refers to himself as Nabal's "son"

^βn>bil.W(binkā), which is conventional diplomatic language to a superior diplomatic partner, and in his message, he asks Nabal to look favorably on those giving his message (wēyimšē'û hannē'ārīm hēn bē'ênēkâ), (Willian, 1982).

George (1970) said Nabal, however, answers David with invective, saying (1 Sam 25:10-11):

Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? Today there are many servants who break away from their masters! Shall I then take my bread and my wine and the meat I have butchered for my sheepshearers and give them to men who come from I know not where? mî dāwid ûmî ben-yišāy hayyôm rabbû 'ābādîm hammitpārēšîm 'iš mippēnē 'ādōnāw wēlāqahtî 'et-laḥmî wē't-yênîwē'ēt ṭibhātî 'āšer tābahtî lēgōzēzāy wēnātattî la'ānošîm 'āšer lō' yāda'tî 'ê mizzeh hēmmâ

Michael (1987) says that David's request is assiduously courteous; Nabal's response is overtly rude and derogatory. Nabal's questioning of David's identity ("who is David?") is a refusal of recognition intended as an insult (cf. Judges 9:38; 1 Sam 17:26; Ex 5:2). Nabal also shows that he has some knowledge about David's situation with Saul, but he alludes to this in a deprecating way, saying that David is nothing but a run-away servant. This not only puts the fault on David, but also says his situation is commonplace. Nabal also questions the origin of David's men, a derogatory snub against this group of disenfranchised individuals.

Ultimately, according to Micheal (1987) Nabal refuses to provide hospitality for David and rejecting this offer of diplomatic friendship opens the door for hostilities. Hospitality is an important theme in the Hebrew Bible, and within biblical narrative, a violation of hospitality often foreshadows something ominous, particularly for the violator(s). Wright (1989) said from Nabal's words alone, one might assume he is trying to provoke David to fight, though in the rest of the narrative, "fool" that he is, he seems unprepared for any retaliation and oblivious to the potential damage his harm statement could bring.

Not surprisingly, when David's men inform him of Nabal's response, David wants vengeance. He takes his four hundred men, all armed, to seek redress for Nabal's insults and swears to kill all male members of Nabal's line (1 Sam 25:13; 22). It is then fortunate—or providential—that it is Abigail, a woman, who intercedes for Nabal. After David's messengers leave, one of Nabal's servants tells Abigail what has transpired. Even Nabal's servant does not respect him, calling him a "good-for-nothing" (ben-bēliyya'al) and saying that no one can reason with Nabal, which is why he instead informs Abigail of the precarious situation (1 Sam 20:17). The servant verifies what David's men had said about protecting Nabal's sheep (1 Sam 30:15-16) and astutely predicts that David will retaliate for the insult (1 Sam 30:17). Without telling her husband, Abigail rushes to send her servants with the provisions her husband has refused David and also rides out to meet David herself (1 Sam 30:18-19).

When Abigail sees David, she falls prostrate before him and exclaims: Let the guilt be mine, my lord! Let your maidservant speak to you—hear what your maidservant has to say: Let my lord pay no attention to that good-for-nothing! For as his name is, so is he: his name is "Churl" and churlishness is with him. As for me, your maidservant, I never saw the young men you sent.... So now, let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who go about at my lord's heels. (1 Sam 25:24-25; 27)

lb<sup>a</sup>n"-l[; hZ<=:h; l[;Y:“liB.h; •vyai-la, AB‡li-ta, ynIádo] ~yfiäy" an"â-la; al {î ^êt.m'ää} ‘ynIa]w:¥ AM=[i hl'Pb'n>W Amêv. lb'ân" aWhê-!K, ‘Amv.ki yKiÛ hw"Ühy>-yx; ynI©do] hT'ä[;w> <sup>26</sup>T'x.l'(v' rv<ia) ynIßdo] yrEi[[]n:-ta, ytiyai?r" %l"+ ^bd>y" [;veiAhw> ~ymiêd"b. aABâmi ‘hw"hy> ^Ü[[]n"m. rv,'a) ^v.p.n:-yxe(w> `h['(r" ynIßdo]la, ~yviîq.b;m.h;(w> ^yb,êy>ao 'lb'n"K. WyÝh.yI) hT'ä[;w> `hn"t.nIw> ynI+doal;( ^bt.x'p.vi aybiîhe-rv,a] taZOëh; hk'är"B.h; ‘hT'[];w> <sup>27</sup> `ynI)do] yleîg>r:B. ~ykiPL.h;t.Mi(h; ~yrlê[‘N>l;

bî-’ânî ’ädônî he’âwôn ûtêdabber-nâ’ ’âmâtkā bē’âzēnēkâ ûšma’ ’ēt dibrê ’āmātekā ’al-nā’ yāšiyim ’ädônî ’et-libbô ’el-’iš habbēliyya’al hazzeh ’al-nābāl kî kišmô ken-hû’ nābāl šēmô ûnēbālâ ’immô wa’ânî ’âmâtkā lō’ rā’îti ’et-na’ârê ’ädônî ’āšer šālāhtî wē’attâ habbērākâ hazzō’t ’āšer-hēbî’ šiphātka la’dōnî wnittēnâ lannē’ārîm hammithallēkîm bēraglê ’ädônî

From her opening words, Abigail already seems better matched with David than Nabal. Like David’s gracious request to Nabal, Abigail’s speech is meticulously diplomatic. Before she speaks, Abigail “fell upon her face before David and bowed down to the ground”

Úa;l. IPOúTiw: rAm=x]h; l[;äme dr<TePw; (wattippol lē’appê dāwid ‘al-pānēhā wattištaḥû ’āreš) and also “fell at his [David’s] feet” (wattippol ‘al-raglāyw) (1 Sam 25:23b-24a), (McCarter1980,p.123).

Moreover, throughout her speech Abigail refers to herself as David’s “maidservant”

^êt.m'ää]\_ (’āmātekā) and calls David “my lord”ynIßdo] (’ädônî), standard diplomatic language.

Since she is seeking redress for Nabal’s offense, Abigail’s utilization of diplomatic speech is appropriate, and in her exchange with David she proves herself to be an astute and effective diplomat. (P.304). One particularly striking component of Abigail’s speech, however, is the way in which she describes her husband Nabal. Like her servant, Abigail also calls Nabal “that good-for-nothing”lb<sup>a</sup>n"-l[; hZ<=:h; l[;Y:“liB.h; (’iš habbēliyya’al hazzeh) and further disparages her husband by etymologizing his name, engaging in word play with Nabal and nābāl “churl.” While at first glance it seems surprising for a biblical woman to speak of her husband in such a manner.

Jon (1980) has pointed out the rhetorical mastery of Abigail’s speech given the circumstances of the story:

Abigail...has to be careful neither to exculpate Nabal nor to appear disloyal to him. To deny her husband’s guilt is to sink to his level, earning the undying enmity of David. To ‘call a spade a spade’ is to break faith with her husband and thus to prove herself unfit for the wifely role....Abigail devises the perfect solution to the dilemma: she intercedes in behalf of Nabal (1 Sam 25:24), although conceding that he has no case and no hope of survival (vv 25-26).

Abigail’s rhetorical strategy is to minimize Nabal’s importance in the hope that this will make his infraction easier to pardon. She asks David not to “set his heart”

AB‡li-ta, (√šym with lēb) on Nabal’s insult, that is not to pay attention to him. A similar phrase is used in 2 Samuel 13:20 when Absalom dissuades his sister Tamar from bringing their brother Amnon to justice after he has raped her. Absalom also tells Tamar not to “set” her “heart”

%BEßli-ta, (√šyt with lēb) on the matter, and he eventually Absalom kills Amnon in revenge. (Bledstein, 2000, p.209).

Since Nabal’s offense lies chiefly in insulting David, it is rhetorically fitting that Abigail disparages her husband to diminish the significance of his insult against David. Abigail continues speaking, though now her focus turns toward the future (1 Sam 25:28-31). She recognizes that David, as Yahweh’s chosen, will become king and speaks of Yahweh’s making David “a secure house” (bayit ne’ēmān). This phrase is strikingly similar to Nathan’s promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:16: “your house and your kingship will be secure forever before you (*lpny*); your throne shall be established forever” (wēne’man bêtēkâ

ûmamlaktĕkâ ‘ad-‘ôlām lĕpānĕkâ kis’ākâ yihyeh nākôn ‘ad-‘ôlām). While Abigail predicts David’s successful kingship, Nathan’s oracle focuses on David’s lasting dynasty and thus Nathan expands upon the term “secure” (√n’m) by twice including “forever” (‘ôlām). It is remarkable that the author puts this speech on the lips of Abigail prior to Nathan’s oracle, and this placement highlights the prominence of Abigail within the David Narrative.

Though she is not called a prophetess as Nathan is (example 2 Sam 7:2), Abigail functions in a similarly prophetic manner within the narrative. Already depicted as an eloquently-spoken character, with these additions to Abigail’s speech, especially in language similar to Nathan’s prophecy, Abigail appears to utter words of divine provenance. Nathan’s oracle in 2 Samuel 7 is a critical moment for the Davidic royal ideology presented in Samuel-Kings; however, it is Abigail who first alludes to a Davidic dynasty with the phrase bayīt ne’ēmān. Thus Abigail’s prognostication of the establishment of David’s dynasty actually foreshadows Nathan’s prophecy of an “everlasting” dynasty. Abigail’s assurance of David’s kingship comes at an important point in the David Narrative, when David is a fugitive from Saul and his ascent to power seems the least Likely (Stone 2010, p .208). Her prediction of Davidic kingship is the third and final such prediction during the wilderness, the other two spoken by Jonathan (1 Sam 23:17) and Saul (1 Sam 24:21).

These assertions are brief and in the mouths of the ultimately-doomed Saulides. Dennis (1994) chooses to place the most embellished prediction of David’s kingship on the lips of Abigail, a remarkable choice. Abigail’s main argument can be found in 1 Samuel 25:30-31: that vengeance on Nabal’s house would become “an obstacle or a stumbling block” (lĕpûqâ ûlĕmikšôl lĕb) once Yahweh sets David as “ruler over Israel” (lĕnāgîd ‘al-yiśrā’ēl). David would have “shed blood in vain” (lišpok-dām ĥinnām) and taken vengeance himself (ûlĕhōšîa’ ‘ādōnî lô) rather than relying solely upon Yahweh. According to Abigail’s reasoning, killing Nabal and all of his male family members would incur bloodguilt, a theme seen elsewhere in the David Narrative. In 1 Samuel 19:5 Jonathan convinces Saul not to kill David by warning him that, unless he has just cause, he will incur bloodguilt: “do not sin Against innocent blood by killing David without cause” (lāmmâ teĥĕtâ’ bĕdām nāqî lĕhāmîṭ ‘et-dāwid ĥinnām). Also, Shimei, a Saulide, calls David a “man of blood” (‘îš dāmîm) and accuses David of bloodguilt for the decimation of the house of Saul, saying that Absalom’s revolt is Yahweh’s recompense (2 Sam 16:6-7) (P.309).

The issue of bloodguilt is also significant within the immediate context of 1 Samuel 25. The story of David’s encounter with Abigail comes in between the two episodes in which David spares Saul’s life. While David’s reasoning for sparing Saul is that, as king, he is Yahweh’s anointed (limšîaĥ YHWH 1 Sam 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11), this would be a particularly significant type of bloodguilt and so is parallel to Abigail’s warning to David in 1 Samuel 25. In 1 Samuel 24 and 26, David is encouraged by his followers to do away with Saul but does not, to the shock and admiration of Saul. In 1 Samuel 25, however, the inverse situation occurs—David declares vengeance on Nabal and all male members of his family but Abigail exhorts him not to take this course of action since it will create problems for his future kingship. Abigail ends her lengthy speech to David by saying, “When Yahweh has done well by my lord, remember your maidservant!” (wĕĥĕyṭib YHWH la’dōnî wĕzākartâ ‘et-‘āmātekâ).(Gunn 1980, pp.100-110)

David will indeed remember Abigail quite soon. For the meantime, however, he gives her a blessing wherein he praises her astute advice, and expressly admits that Abigail has prevented him from incurring bloodguilt and gaining victory without Yahweh (1 Sam 25:32-34). Besides 2 Samuel 12:13, this is the only other instance in which David makes an admission of guilt, though in this case, the guilt is purely hypothetical since David does not carry out vengeance against Nabal and his household. Finally, David accepts the provisions Abigail has brought with her and then sends her home in peace (1 Sam 25:35).(McKenize 1991,p.67).



**Researcher Questionnaires, Presentation of Data Analysis  
Views of Respondents on the Passage and Peace Blueprint**

	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1. Do you agreed that the words of God is contained in the Holy Bible is for leaning and correction	100 9.9%	904 89.1%	10 1%	0 0%	1014 100%
2. Do members in your church sees the study of Holy Bible as Divine Instruction from God to the church members	150 14.8%	800 78.9%	3 0.30%	61 6,0%	1014
3. Can we live with one and another without peace?	9 0.9%	93 9.2%	200 19.7%	712 70.2%	1014 100%
4 Do you believe in Abigail's beauty and intelligences move on peace ?	185 18.2%	800 78.9%	20 2.0%	9 0.9%	1014 100%
5 Do you like the methods Abigail used in her husband and David's misunderstanding	120 11.8%	120 11.8%	5 0.5%	2 0.2%	1014 100%
6 Can you as an Idumuje Ugboko woman takes Abigail's method as your peace blueprint to create peace , progress and stability in the community?	150 14.8%	860 84.8%	3 0.3%	1 0.15	1014 100%
7 How can Abigail's communication power, humility and politeness help you to solve the crisis in Idumuje Ugboko?	100 9.9%	907 89.4%	5 0.5%	2 0.2%	1014 100%
8 Can this passage be of benefit in crisis control to other Christian women in Nigerian communities	120 11.8%	890 87.8%	3 0.3%	1 0.1%	1014 100%
9 How can you quickly act like Abigail in crisis control in a proactive sense	130 12.8%	869 85.7%	10 1.0%	5 0.5%	1014 100%

**Progress in the Community from Idumuje Ugboko women peace Blueprint**

	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
10 Abigail knew Nabal her husband could have been killed, in the same way Idumuje Ugboko crisis threatens not only families but the whole community	115 11.3%	896 88.4%	2 0.2%	1 0.1%	1014 100%
11 Idumuje Ugbokomothers, sisters and wives can act like Abigail to save themselves from crisis that could occasion sexual violation and rape.	120 11.8%	887 87.5%	5 0.5%	2 0.2%	1014 100%

12 Women in the community can act like Abigail to avert uncontrolled conception and birth of children without legitimate fathers as obtained during crisis and war	150 14.8%	860 84.8%	3 0.3%	1 0.1%	1014 100%
13 Women have the tool to communicate like Abigail to stem the tide of hostility in communities	125 12.3%	664 87.25	2 0.0%	3 0.3%	1014 100%
14 Like Abigail, every woman is weak, fragile and more susceptible to danger and therefore should be in the forefront of peace initiative	130 12.8%	876 86.4%	5 0.5%	3 0.3%	1014 100%
15 Abigail in the Bible is a peace maker and she is not different from other women	157 15.5%	827 81.5%	10 1.01%	20 2.0%	1014 100%
16 Abigail in the Bible had achieved Peace Promotion to save and secure her husband, Nabal and their entire family	160 15.8%	846 83.4%	5 0.5%	3 0.3%	1014 100%
17 Abigail as a wife did not support the evil actions of her husband but the truth	169 16.7%	829 81.7	10 1.0%	6 0.6%	1014 1005
18 Abigail as a God fearing woman charged forward to face the wrath on behalf of sinners and trouble makers	149 14.7%	820 80.9%	15 1.5%	30 2.9%	1014 100%
19 Abigail as a woman or wife that needs peace in the community did not elevate her husband's status before his opponent, instead she humbled herself	180 17.7%	809 79.8%	15 1.5%	10 1.0%	1014 100%

**Stability in Idumuje Ugboko From Idumuje Ugboko women Peace BluePrint**

	A	SA	D	SD	TOTAL
20 The Idumuje Ugboko community people had left the community to take refuge and become salves in other community because of war	157 15.5%	836 82.4%	6 0.6%	15 1.5%	1014 100%
21 A community that is full of war and crises cannot be stabile attract progress from the government	156 15.4%	853 84.1%	3 0.3%	2 0.2%	1014 100%
22 Government cannot afford to mobilize contractors and security to a warring community	167 16.5%	844 83.2%	2 0.2%	1 0.1%	1014 100%
23 No individual, private sectors and cooperate organization entered into agreement to develop a project or establish a business in a community that is not stables.	160 15.8%	850 83.8%	3 0.3%	1 0.1%	1014 100%

### **Nabal and Idumuje Ugbokofor Peace, Progress and Stability**

The results of data or information from the two tables show that the people of IdumujeUgboko are like Nabal. One may ask or wonder how? Nabal from the exegetical study was from the descendant of Caleb, so he is a Calibite, as such he understands the law of Moses which insisted that some of the crops should be set aside for strangers, the poor, and widows (Deut 15:17,11;24: 19-22, Proverb 19:17). At harvest time, any one passing through the land of Israel should be given food. By refusing David's request, Nabal was showing that he did not obey God's laws.

Nabal did not show brotherhood to David as Israelites do. Even when David greeted him as his kinsman, Nabal shows that he was just a hearer of the word and not a doer. He failed the hospitality law of Israel. From the research Idumuje Ugboko women affirmed to be different from Nabal. Eight nine percent (89.1%) of them strongly agree on the Holy Bible being for instructions correction and reproof. A total number of hundred (100) of the total respondents of the agreed and (9.9%). One thousand and four (1004) of respondents of the strongly agreed with 89.1% representing the respondents. Therefore the total sum of Nine Hundred and Eight Five (985) respondents with 99.0% of the sum of the strongly agreed respondents answered in affirmative, then Ten (10) the total sum of respondent of the disagreed with 1.0% respondent, zero (0) of strongly disagreed respondents with 0.0% respondents. The total sum of Ten (10) respondents of the negative or disagreed people with a 1.0% of respondents. Therefore the agreed and strongly agreed in the assertion shows that the word of God has power of changing life and behavioural attitude. Nabal was a descendant of Caleb, a man who whole heartedly followed the Lord (Deut. 1:36, Joshua 14:12-14). But Nabal was not like his ancestor. He was rich in cattle and goats, but not in grace and faith (1Samuel 25:2-3). Nabal's self-centeredness was clearly evident in the string of "I's and "My's that follows: why should I take my bread, water, and the meat I have slaughter for my shearers (1 Samuel 25). He claimed total ownership of all that God had graciously blessed him with and did not acknowledge that it was a gift from God. He was like the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21. Not surprisingly his own servants regarded Nabal as a wicked man with whom no one could reason (1 Samuel25:17).He would not listen to advice or godly counsel, but acted arbitrarily without much thought.

### **Abigail's Timely Intervention Method**

Abigail demonstrated the intelligent referred to in 1 Samuel 25:3 in many ways; she resembled the woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31. Though married to a fool, she maintained her personal character and remained approachable even by the servant. Despite her wealth, she was humble enough to listen to them. 1 Samuel 25:14. Though beautiful, she was not too proud to kneel down and plead with David 1 Samuel 25:23 she was also a generous woman. Who horrified by her husband's meanness and hastened to make up for it by providing a large quantity of food. She must have been hard working and organized to be able to do all this without the support of her husband.

A quick thinker, Abigail recognized the likely consequence of her husband's behaviour and sprang into action to avert the danger that now threatened her entire household. It was night, but she did not let darkness disturb her from doing the right things at the right time. She also knew that this was not the right time to speak to her unreasonable husband 1 Samuel 25:19 she knew him well enough to be able to put up with his foolishness without having to quarrel with him incessantly. What a lesson that the Idumuje Ugboko women and other women should be employed in peace intervention programme. Also a lesson for many wives whose husbands are not believers. The characters that Abigail displayed showthat she was good women and a God fearing person. Therefore, the paper, encourage the women and wives of Idumuje- Ugboko to also look at the role that Abigail played to save her husband and her household. The researcher also let the women of Idumuje Ugboko to act on time that Abigail was acted timely without making trouble with her unreasonable husband that could have deterred her movement.

Abigail's Personality is that of an approachable and reasonable woman as shown in the Bible unlike her husband who was hostile and Miserly. Her wealth, Position and beauty did not alienate her from her servants. The Idumuje Ugboko women are to learn from her that life saving information from people in lower ranks may become life savers, if not neglected. Abigail's household was saved because she did not count foolish the words and voice of the young shepherd. In communication Parlance, the shepherd was the stimulus that provoked the progressive brilliant communication process that followed.

Abigail evaluated and understood the situation correctly and acted accordingly to save her household from disaster. Abigail thus becomes a commendable sender or encoder. She realized the importance of time and information, a very important factor in communication situation, she acted fast in a reasonable manner too. Had she waited for David's arrival, it would have been too late. Most women/wives in Idumuje Ugboko are often unapproachable and unreasonable in their actions. The waves of crisis which swept across Idumuje Ugboko could have been avoided, if the women/ wives of the people reasonable like Abigail. But today is still early for them to act like Abigail.

**Abigail's Gift Items with Politeness and Beauty** In question numbers 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the assertions strongly agreed the percentage of the respondents from the above questioners show that women in Idumuje Ugboko have agreed with the steps Abigail took to save her house hold. Therefore, if women and children were the victim of war and community crisis, then women of Idumuje Ugboko should key with Abigail's gift items, politeness and beauty as a peace blueprint to avert wars and crisis in the society.

Abigail intercepted David as he was coming down from the mountain of holiness (1 Samuel 25:20). It was a timely intervention as David himself confessed (1Samuel25:32-34).When Abigail saw David she dismounted from her donkey and bowed before him. Despite being a strong and competent woman, she knew how to submit. Humility and politeness were the tools that gave her victory, just as they had given David victory over Saul in 1 Samuel 24:8. Yet Abigail submission to David meant that she was not submitting to her like her husband. Her example shows that women are to submit to their husband to save or build up their families. But when submission will harm the family, a wife may have to take the lead for the sake of everyone else in the family including the unreasonable husband.

Abigail interceded passionately for her husband and her entire household. She needed to do this, for David was engaged and she had to find some way to make him stop and think. She addressed him as my Lord, not simply to flatter him, but also because she recognized the grace of God in his life. Her next words revealed her to be a true intercessor ready to take the punishment of the one whom she intercedes for, she says let the blame be on me alone (1 Samuel 25:24).Her plea that Nabal's behavior be ignored because he is foolish and cannot act otherwise reminds us of Lord's Prayer on the cross and Stephen's prayer just before he was martyred (1 Samuel 25:25; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60). Abigail wanted David to see Nabal as a fool who was not worth being noticed by someone as wise as David. Her words could be paraphrased like this "my husband is not as wise as people think. His name has actually followed him, folly is with him. He is not just being foolish now; he wakes up and sleeps with folly every day. We cannot expect him to be able to make wise decision. I did not see the young men, whom you sent, if I had, I would have taken them aside and handled the matter without him knowing about it. It was my entire fault because I failed to intercept the young men". Abigail's final point was much more spiritual than the first two. She pointed out that David should not seek vengeance himself, but, should let the Lord deal with David's enemy as he saw fit.

If David did not do this, his conscience would forever be burdened by this rash action.She noted that it was the Lord who had prevented him from taking revenge in the past. At this stage in her speech Abigail was not standing in the gap for her husband but for David and was protecting him from sinning against the Lord who said "You should not revenge (Lev 19:18, Deut 32:35,35, Roman 12:11-20). Abigail

begged David to let the Lord handle Nabal as he had handled all David's other enemies. The woman of Idumuje Ugbokocan work strongly in peace progress and stability as Abigail did; gifts, politeness beauty and humility, also possessed by Ugboko women, were her tools that she used to create and sustain peace in her society

Abigail did not present the gift of food as if this was David's main concern. She only presented it when she saw that he was seeing the spiritual reasons why Nabal's misbehavior should not be allowed to damage his walk with the Lord. In presenting it, she made light of all she had brought, as if it were only good enough for the young men who followed David. Her repeated plea for forgiveness suggested that she was giving a trespass offering, and not something that David should be indebted to her for, unlike her husband. Abigail recognized that God was working in David's life. She noted that David had been fighting the Lord's battles. David's response to Abigail's plea was a shout of praise. He saw the Lord at work again, using his servant Abigail to guide him in the right path. He gratefully acknowledges the wisdom of her words that had stopped him from committing murder. Then he accepted her gift and told her that she could go home in peace.

The offering was a peace offering. Abigail's intercession had saved her own life and the lives of her family and employees and had also saved David from committing mass murder. Nabal and Abigail are the opposite of themselves just like crisis and peace are opposite of themselves but God provides salvation for all. Even Nabal who was destined to die received God's salvation through Abigail. Idumuje Igboke women, from the perspective of Abigail peace work, through God, the ultimate provider of salvation, can replicate the spiritual peace achievement in their society with reference to the crisis being discussed.

### **Conclusion**

This deuteronomic narrative of Abigail is remarkable because this time around, God bypassed the Hebraic male dominated culture to use a woman, Abigail to do the spiritual assignment of making peace in the society. It is clear that participation and performance in the divine industry is not limited to the men folk alone, Africans, whose cultural worldview is similar to the Jews, have a lot to learn from this. It is a potent break in tradition that stimulates and empowers the Christian women of Idumuje Igboke to champion the course of peace by actively engaging the parties and people directly involved in the crisis.

Material things caused the crisis between David and Nabal, the same material property is at the center of Idumuje Ugboko crisis. Riches exist in many forms: riches in what one has, riches in what one does, riches in what one knows and riches in what one is. Nabal was rich in what he has; the lowest form of riches, hence the meaning of the name 'fool, miser or niggardly man'. Being rich only in what one has can only lead to crisis. Abigail was rich in what she is, the riches of character; the highest form of riches, hence the meaning of the name 'my father's joy or my father is exulted or my father is joyful'. Being rich in character can only lead to peace and joy; it creates and builds peace by the virtue of its nature. It takes one person's idea to plunge the people into crisis; it also takes one person's idea to rescue the people from crisis. But it takes God to provide a meeting point for the two as he did with Abigail. Biblical theology in a nutshell means using all of the Bible messages as guideposts for practical living. Idumuje Ugboko women as Christians are certainly using Abigail's case to redress the crisis in their community.

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