

I SAMUEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Samuel chapter 24 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we have seen, David is now on the run from king Saul, not because David did anything wrong, but Saul sees David as trying to usurp his rule in Israel. Yes, David was to be the king in Israel but he was not trying to usurp that position, he served Saul faithfully and yet, Saul saw the hand of God upon David's life and was threatened by it. Thus, Saul is trying to kill David!

Last week we saw Saul corner David in the Wilderness of Maon and as Saul's men were closing in upon him, as they drew the circle around David and his men tighter, we see that God intervenes and we are told, "**But a messenger came to Saul, saying, 'Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!' Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.**" I Samuel 23:27-29. That is where we will pick up our study this evening, beginning in I Samuel chapter 24, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

I SAMUEL 24**VERSES 1-2**

1. As I said last week, En Gedi is a beautiful oasis in the desert, located on the western shores of the Dead Sea. This area has waterfalls and springs, it is lush with vegetation, and it is hard to imagine a place like this when there is desert all around it, but this is where David and his men were hiding out, in the many caves that were in the canyon walls. It is also called the Rocks of the Wild Goats because the area has many Ibex there, which are also called wild goats. (See pictures at end of study of En Gedi and Ibex along with the caves where you could hide in). And Saul's detour, one that God put in place so David could escape is over. He is done following after the Philistines who had invaded Israel and he is back in pursuit of David, wanting to kill him! And Saul takes 3,000 men to go after David in En Gedi, which seems like overkill but Saul does want David dead, he does not want him to escape again!

VERSE 3

1. When the king needs to stop to take care of business, they stop. And what are the chances that the exact cave where David and his 600 men are hiding out in is the place where Saul goes to relieve himself in? Think about it, the very moment that Saul has to attend to his personal needs he is passing by this cave where David and his men are located. And keep in mind that this cave was very large and dark and thus, Saul came in from the bright sun, his eyes did not adjust yet, and he could not see David and his men, but they could see Saul. Saul thought he was alone, no bodyguards needed here nor did him want them around as he was taking care of business. But God arranges all this, as we will see.

VERSE 4

1. As David's men see what is happening, that Saul is all alone, there is no one there to protect him in this cave, they come to the conclusion that this is of the Lord and thus, David needs to rise up and kill the king! But instead of killing Saul he cuts off a piece of the hem of his garment, which was a sign of disrespect. That means that Saul had taken his robe off while he was attending to his needs. I find this interesting because David had a sword and he could have killed Saul, but somewhere in his heart he knew it was wrong and yet, he still cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's garment. It is as Meyer wrote, "We win most when we appear to have yielded most, and gain advantages by refusing to take them wrongfully. The man who can wait for God is a man of power." What a lesson and yet, David did get caught up in all this excitement and disrespected the king and the Lord is going to deal with him regarding this issue.

VERSES 5-7

1. As the Lord convicted David he not only listened to what the Lord was telling him, but he obeyed by showing his men that he had sinned by dishonoring the king. Just because the king was wrong it did not give David the right to kill him, the Lord would deal with Saul, David just needed to walk by faith and obey the Lord. Now regarding David's men, they did not feel the same way that David felt. You see, the Hebrew is implying that David had to literally restrain his men from killing Saul. They wanted him dead, but David would not allow it. In fact, David feels bad that he cut off the piece of Saul's robe. Imagine all that was going on and Saul is unaware. Saul finishes his business and grabs his robe and heads out of the cave, totally unaware of what David has done and that there are 601 men in the cave with him. And the Lord is not done with David yet. He needs to confront the man he dishonored!

VERSE 8

1. Not only did David have to humble himself and admit his wrong before his men, but now he would have to step out of the safety of this cave and repent before the king, before Saul. David bows before the king and he could have just rationalized in his head, "Hey, I am the king, God anointed me and I am not going to bow before this fool!" But that was not David, he had a humble heart and was willing to lay his life down, empty himself of what God had for him before the king of Israel and we see that in Jesus as He humbled Himself, empty Himself of His godly attributes and it was the Father that lifted Him up when the work was finished!

2. We often hear today, “It is my right . . .” and you can fill in whatever you want to that sentence. Folk’s, as Christians we are slaves of Christ and we have no rights. We have laid them down and now we serve our Master, Jesus! The world can fight and claw after what they feel is theirs, but we deserve nothing, may we live like that and in the end, it will be the Lord who will lift us up!

VERSES 9-15

1. Why does David blame the men of Saul for leading him astray when it was Saul himself who was coming against David? I think David wanted to give Saul an out, for it would have been easier for him to say, “They were wrong” than “I was wrong.” Do you realize that this is a New Testament principle? In I Peter 4:8 we are told, “**And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’**”

When Peter tells us that we are to have “**fervent love for one another**” he uses the Greek word EKTENES, (k-ten-ace’), which is the word “**fervent**” and it speaks of a love that is without ceasing. It carries with it the idea of a muscle that is stretched to the limit. That is the kind of love we are to have and it is this love that covers a multitude of sins, of what others have done to us. That is what David was doing I believe!

In regards to our love covering a multitude of sins, Grudem tells us: “Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offences, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound – to Satan’s perverse delight.”

Now I said that this was a New Testament idea but actually, Peter is quoting out of Proverbs 10:12 which says, **“Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.”** In other words, David was showing mercy to Saul and I believe the Lord wants us to show mercy to others. I realize that can be difficult, but look at the mercy that God has shown you and you don’t deserve it, I don’t deserve it!

2. Did David have the right, from a human perspective to kill king Saul? Yes, but again, David wants Saul to know that he spared his life. Yes, wickedness proceeds from the wicked, but David was not wicked and he did not kill Saul. David wants Saul to see that he is not after him with the hope of restoring Saul. Many times we as Christians are in the business of destruction and demolition but God is in the business of restoration. And by being good, by doing good to someone, you may see their hearts turn.

That is what Paul is saying Romans 12:19-21, **“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

Paul is saying that if someone does you wrong, don't pay them back by doing something evil to them. God will take care of their actions. Our responsibility is to treat them kindly. The heaping of coals of fire on a person's head was not an act of vengeance but a kindly gesture. You see, they would carry containers of charcoal on their heads and this charcoal was used to start the fires in their homes. And sometimes they would have to travel some distance to get these live coals and so if you would come by and give them some you would be doing them a favor. And in so doing you may turn their evil hearts to good. It is hard to be mean to someone who is treating you kindly and that is why Paul said, **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with Good.”** You see, restoration.

3. Now there is one more issue I would like to touch on here and that is this phrase, “do not touch the Lord's anointed.” Some have taken that to mean you can't say anything against a servant of God, even if they are teaching heresy because then you would be touching the Lord's anointed! But this is not what David did here. David was not going to kill Saul but he did rebuke his sin. Leaders are to be accountable, their teachings, their lifestyles should be evaluated. If they are in sin they need to be called on it just as David called Saul. And yes, David tried to let Saul see his error but if Saul refused, then the Lord would take care of it and that is a great place to rest.

VERSES 16-19

1. Some see the response of Saul as good, that he really did receive, in a sense the heaping of coals upon his head, and reached out in love towards David. I don't really see it that way. Saul was very unstable and his actions changed as quickly as the seasons here in Wisconsin! One minute he wants to kill David and then he is weeping for his son-in-law and how he was treating him and then he is going to want to kill David again. Yes, he did recognize that David could have killed him and he didn't and thus, he was not really his enemy. But the reality was, that was not the reason Saul wanted David dead. Saul was trying to hold onto something that did not belong to him anymore, the kingdom and to do that he would have to kill David. That is like the tossing and turning of a wicked man, he will not find rest as Saul is finding out!

VERSES 20-22

1. Saul is striving with his Maker and, as Isaiah 45:9 tells us, “**Woe to him who strives with his Maker! . . .**” And yes, Saul recognizes that David will be king one day but that is not going to stop him from trying to kill David. What a futile effort, what a waste of time, you can’t fight against God and win and even if you could, you would lose! It is as Redpath wrote, “What a miserable picture Saul is! What is the use of saying, ‘I have played the fool,’ if he goes on playing the fool? What use are his tears and confession before David if he doesn’t act upon his remorse?” He also wrote, “If a man is emotionally upset, as Saul was, and awakens to his condition, but only weeps about it and still doesn’t obey God, his second state is a thousand times worse than the first. Emotion that does not lead to action only leads deeper into sin and rebellion.” That was Saul in a nutshell and it is any person who may have an outward emotional response but there is no inward change and that will be evident in his outward actions, the things that he will do and say in time!

2. I don’t believe that David trusted Saul, even with this weeping and carrying on, saying that he was sorry. How do I know that? Because we see that Saul went home and David heads to the stronghold for safety from Saul. I think there is a lesson for us here. No matter how much the enemy may flatter us, how sorry they have been for treating us a certain way, we must not return home with them, in a sense, but return to the stronghold of God. We must rest in Him just as David was doing!

I SAMUEL 25**VERSE 1**

1. Here we see the death of Samuel, a great man of God. And with the death of Samuel we see the end of this period known as the Judges, as Samuel was the last Judge in Israel as they moved from a theocracy to a monarchy under Saul. Why did this great man of God die? Because he was a descendant of Adam and death reigns through Adam and thus, all his descendants will die.

2. Now let me share with you how God viewed Samuel, because all we see here is that he died. No fanfare, no exaltation, just that he died. Why is that? Because he was a servant of God and you don't exalt the servant, you exalt the master. And in this case, you exalt God! Listen to the people that are associated with Samuel, he is among good company. In Psalm 99:6 we are told, "**Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called upon His name; They called upon the Lord, and He answered them.**" Also, in Jeremiah 15:1 we are told, "**Then the Lord said to me, 'Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.'**"

And in Hebrews 11:32-34 we see where God puts Samuel, in this great “Hall of Faith” as we are told, **“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”**

Now Samuel is dead but God’s work does not come to an end because the work of God is never dependant upon only man. Samuel died but David was raised up or as we are told, **“David arose.”** The focus will be upon the life of this man of God and what God will do in him and through him! If you ever come to the point that you think, “What would God do without me?” you are on shaky ground. God doesn’t need you but He will use you if you are willing to surrender and serve Him!

3. After the death of Samuel David heads to the Wilderness of Paran or the Wilderness of Maon, which is about 7 miles south of Hebron, in the southern part of Israel, west of the Dead Sea.

VERSES 2-3

1. Now the story shifts to this man, Nabal, who lived in Maon. He was a very wealthy man in the physical sense, but spiritually speaking, he was dead. His name means, “fool” and you usually got the name because of who you were and I think that is the case here with Nabal.

Nabal lived in Maon, in Carmel and please understand that this was not the Carmel in the northern part of Israel, the place where Elijah would defeat the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. This Carmel was located southeast of Hebron about 7 miles or so. And it was sheep shearing time, kind of like harvest time for the crops, only this is with sheep! It was a difficult job, it was not easy, the sheep did not like it nor did the shearers because not only would the sheep fight against you, but their wool was foul smelling, it had a lot of dust on it, bur's, ticks, dung and other debris. But, when the work was completed, then there was a time of celebration, just as with the harvest of grain!

2. As I have said, Nabal's name means, "fool" and he was married to Abigail, who was beautiful and her name means, "joy of the father." How in the world did this beautiful woman marry a fool? It happens all the time but back then marriages were pre-arranged and maybe because he was wealthy her family thought this would be a good investment. Then why didn't she divorce him? Because she not only was the joy of her earthly father but also her heavenly Father, she was a godly woman.

Today the divorce rate among Christians is basically the same as that for non-Christians. Why is that? Because we are more interested in being happy than holy, we are more interested in pleasing ourselves than God. Peter reminds us, **“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”** I Peter 3:1-9. You see, we may be married to a fool, and if so, then let your conduct win them over to Christ and that goes for both women and men!

It is as Meyer wrote, “A woman may still find herself in Abigail’s pitiful plight. To such a one there is but one advice - you must stay where you are. The dissimilarity in taste and temperament does not constitute a sufficient reason for leaving your husband to drift. You must believe that God has permitted you to enter on this awful heritage, partly because this fiery ordeal was required by your character, and partly that you might act as a counteractive influence. You must stay as you are. It may be that some day your opportunity will come, as it came to Abigail. In the meantime do not allow your purer nature to be bespotted or besmeared. You can always keep the soul clean and pure.”

And Redpath wrote, “May I say to you lovingly, but firmly, if such a circumstance has befallen you, that is no reason for you to invoke the law of the country to get out of the entanglement. Perhaps God knew that you needed the fiery trial to humble you and make you a testimony to your partner. The Bible says you must stay as you are. Maybe there will come to you one day, as there came to Abigail, a new opportunity; but until then, it is for you to prove the grace and power of the Lord in your heart to strengthen you and keep you pure.” I think these are very wise words for us today!

VERSES 4-9

1. David and his men were hungry and he thought that Nabal would repay the kindness that David’s men showed Nabal by watching over his sheep and not taking anything from him. You see, the Philistines loved to come and raid the flocks and the grain and David’s men were protecting what was Nabal’s. He did not demand payment or food but just asked as he sends 10 of his men to Nabal. He just wanted some food for him and his men.

VERSES 10-12

1. Remember, his name means fool and he is acting very foolish here. And please understand that Nabal knew very well who David was, he was insulting David and basically saying, “Who dose he think he is?” Thus, Nabal refuses to give anything to David and his men and David’s men returned to David and told him all that Nabal said. How will David respond to this? Let’s read on and see.

VERSE 13

1. To say that David is not happy with the response of Nabal is to put it mildly. He is so mad that he gathers up 400 of his men, 200 will stay behind and watch the camp, the supplies, and he is going to kill this fool. He is basically telling his men, “Lock and load” or “Saddle up boys!” I find that interesting because it only took one man to bring a giant down and now David is bringing with him 400 men to go after one fool! I don’t think his walk is right at this point and we will see that as we move on.

2. I hate to say this, but many times, when someone comes against us, we are ready to “Lock and load” and destroy them, maybe not physically, but with our words. And yet, Jesus tells us, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”** Matthew 5:38-48. Thus, when we are insulted, when people come against us, bear it in love and shower them with kindness, repaying their evil with good!

VERSES 14-17

1. Nabal's men knew that he was a fool, that he was irrational, that he was hot-tempered and they appeal to Nabal's wife, Abigail to do something because David's men are coming to kill Nabal and them! And they knew that David's men were good, they were a blessing to them, protecting them from those that would come to steal the sheep. And Nabal has played the fool. It is as Proverbs 17:12 tells us, "**Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly.**" How true that is and these men understood that!

VERSES 18-20

1. How many of you have 200 loaves of bread in your homes? None of you do and yet, Abigail had this plus. How can that be? First of all it was a time of celebration as they had finished shearing the sheep and there was much food prepared for this, and secondly, Nabal was very rich. Thus, to give David and his men some food would have been easy and that which Nabal refused to do, Abigail is doing and quickly because David and his men are coming after them!

VERSES 21-22

1. Isn't it amazing how quickly David moved from walking in the Spirit and sparing Saul's life to walking in the flesh and ready to destroy Nabal and kill all the males that were in his household, all those working for him! That is how the flesh manifests itself, with **REVENGE!** Redpath made these interesting remarks, "Does it not show beyond all possible doubt that I cannot stand against the enemy of my soul unless the Lord upholds me moment by moment? This story tells me that however long I may have been on the Christian path, however often I may have overcome one temptation or another, however many times I have defeated sin in one area, it can strike in another and crush me in a moment." How true that is!

2. Do you ever feel like David did here, that the kindness you showed to another has gone unnoticed, un-rewarded? If you do, you are wrong just as David was wrong here because Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:58, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord], knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose].**"

VERSES 23-31

1. What a remarkable woman Abigail is. She is married to this man who is a fool, and most likely unloving, uncaring towards her and she is interceding for his life. In our society she would be encouraged to get out of that marriage, but not this woman and what an example, as I have said earlier, she is! And as she sees David she bows before him, showing him respect. And keep in mind David's men are taking this all in. It is going to be hard for him to do anything evil when she is showing him such respect, especially in front of his men!

2. Abigail tells David that a man has risen up against him, maybe speaking of Saul and she tells David that he will not prevail because the Lord is with David. Not only that but also that David will be king! That is a remarkable statement from this woman and very true. I believe the Lord has given her these words to say to David and she did not just think them up on her own! And her plea to David is this. He may have the right to kill Nabal and his men, but when he comes to the throne, this baggage will come with him, it will never leave his side!

What wise words. Don't do something in the heat of anger that you will regret later on in life, like in a few minutes after you say those words that are like a knife in the back to your spouse or whatever! What a great lesson for us to follow after, let it go, give it to God before it is too late and we regret what we have done!

3. How is David going to respond to these wise words from Abigail? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 32-35

1. David heeded the words of Abigail and he receives the gift of food that she brought him and let her return home in peace. You see, David saw that it was the hand of God upon his life and thus, God will take care of his battles for him, he just needed to trust in the Lord and not try to fight these battles in the flesh! David saw that Abigail was sent by God to stop him from acting foolishly and truly acting like Nabal, a man driven by emotion and not lead by the Lord! It is as Baldwin wrote, "It was a major lesson in David's training for kingship, and one that he was going to need to keep before him at future crises. The implication is that violence breed's violence, whereas restraint makes way for a peaceful solution. This he knows with his head, but he may fail to remember it when his blood is roused."

2. Now there are those today who have a hard time taking advise from a woman, they feel they can't learn anything from women and sorry, you are a fool! Yes, the Bible tells us that a woman is not to be a leader in the church but it does not say we can't learn from them! I am so thankful for the godly wife that I do have who has saved me many times from making foolish decisions that I would regret latter on. Look at David and learn the lesson, he took advise from a godly woman and it spared him from doing something foolish!

VERSES 36-38

1. When Abigail returned home she found her husband drunk from all the celebrating he was doing and thus, she waits till morning to tell Nabal what she had done. And when she tells him what she told David he either has a heart attack or a stroke, which causes him to go into a coma for 10 days, and then he dies! And how many people today let anger grow and grow and grow until it finally destroys their life. What a sad state to be in.

2. There is an interesting picture that is being painted here for us. Nabal is like a sinner who rejects God, who rejects God's coming judgment and he will party hardy; eat, drink and be merry living like the devil and in the end, their hearts will be hard, cold, like a stone and they will die in their sins as God's judgment comes upon them. What is the solution? To be open to the refreshing and softening waters of God's Spirit so that you may receive from Him, so that you may repent of your sins and turn to Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Nabal could have received the counsel of his wife, but he rejected it, became hardened to it and died!

VERSE 39

1. What a lesson this was for David as he saw first hand that God will take care of those situations, he did not have to repay evil with evil as Proverbs 20:22 tells us, "**Do not say, 'I will recompense evil'; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you.**" What a lesson for us to learn also!

VERSES 40-41

1. How far are these actions of Abigail from the feminist women of today, who seek to satisfy self, and they refuse to take anything from anyone? Abigail's hearts desire was to be a servant first to her husband, and now, after her husbands death, to David - what humility. Yes Abigail was beautiful outwardly but I believe that this outward beauty was a product of the inward beauty she had with the Lord. Think about it, there are some women and men that are very beautiful but you talk with them or see them on television and they are obnoxious, rude, and-so-on. That beauty is only skin deep and God gives people a beauty that is far deeper and richer than that superficial beauty that is only temporary. That was Abigail!

VERSES 42-44

1. So not only does David take as his wife Abigail, but also Ahinoam. His wife Michal, Saul's daughter was given to Palti by her father Saul since David was on the run from him. Now some argue that David is not really doing wrong here because God did not specifically say that it was one woman to one man. I guess I disagree with that because in the book of beginnings, Genesis, God shows us the ideal, the pattern for marriage and it is one man and one woman joined together. And since many disregarded this and multiplied wives, we see the destruction it brought to the family unit just as divorce does! You see, Ahinoam is the mother of Amnon, who would later rape his sister and destroy David's family!

2. Let me leave you with this to think about. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled as we see here with Nabal, who was killed by God. On the other end of the spectrum we see that the person who humbles themselves will be exalted, as we see Abigail as she became the wife of the soon to be king, David! It is as James tells us to “**Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**” James 4:10. May we not forget that!

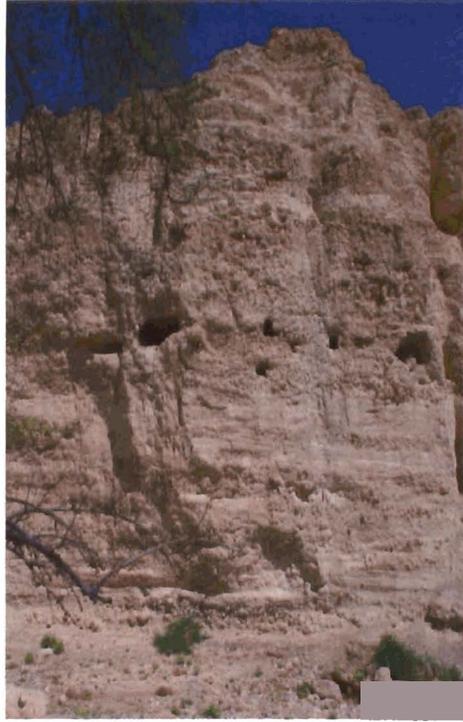
PICTURES OF EN GEDI AND IBEX



WATERFALL AT EN GEDI



Even though there are many springs around the Dead Sea, most of them have a high salt content. En Gedi is one of only two fresh water springs located on the western shore of the Dead Sea and, because of the greater availability of land for agriculture at En Gedi, it is the best spring by which to settle.



CAVES AT EN GEDI



MORE CAVES AT EN GEDI



MORE CAVES AT EN GEDI



IBEX OR WILD GOATS AT EN GEDI



MORE IBEX OR WILD GOATS AT EN GEDI



MORE IBEX OR WILD GOATS AT EN GEDI