

Who was Ahinoam of Jezreel?

Ahinoam of Jezreel was a wife of King David. She was the wife he married after his wife Michal was given to another man and sometime before he met Abigail. Ahinoam was the mother of David's oldest son, Amnon (2 Samuel 3:2). Jezreel refers to the city of that name in northern Israel and the area surrounding it, including Lower Galilee, Mt. Carmel, and Mt. Tabor. Jezreel was the place where Ahinoam was from originally.

David met Ahinoam during his fugitive years as he was fleeing from King Saul. Saul also had a wife named Ahinoam (1 Samuel 14:49-50), and some speculate that Saul's Ahinoam and David's Ahinoam were the same person. While this is technically possible, it is extremely unlikely. King Saul was still alive when David married Ahinoam.

Ahinoam was with David during some of the hardest times of his life, when he was constantly on the move, fighting battles, and struggling just to stay alive. In his attempts to elude Saul, David took refuge in Philistine territory. David, his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, and 600 of his men were welcomed by King Achish of Gath (1 Samuel 27:1-3). Later, David asked for a country town where he and his men could dwell with their families, and "on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months" (1 Samuel 27:6-7).

Then tragedy struck. While David and his fighting men were traveling north with the Philistines on a military assignment, Amalekite raiders attacked Ziklag. They burned the town and took captive "the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way" (1 Samuel 30:1-2). Ahinoam and Abigail were among those captured. When David and his men returned to Ziklag

and saw the carnage, David's men thought of stoning him, because "each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God" (1 Samuel 30:6).

With God's guidance, David caught up with the Amalekite raiders. "David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day. . . . David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back" (1 Samuel 30:17-19). Ahinoam was safe again.

After Saul's death, David inquired of the Lord what to do, and the Lord instructed him to go to Hebron. "David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns. Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the tribe of Judah" (2 Samuel 2:2-4). On that day, Ahinoam of Jezreel became Queen Ahinoam of Judah. Her son Amnon was later born in Hebron.