

1st Kings Chapter 21

- Ahab comes home victorious in battle, yet defeated spiritually because of his disobedience to God's word.
- Ahab should have killed Ben-hadad, but he let him live. Ahab should have protected Naboth, but instead he allows his wife to kill him.
- He did just the opposite of the things he should have done; that is what happens when you sell your soul to the Devil - very much like what we read in **Isaiah 5:20**

Isaiah 5:20 “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

- Ahab was calling evil good, and good evil.
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V: 1-3 (Map) Ahab also had a palace in Samaria which is about 20 miles from where this takes place in Jezreel. You can still see the ruins of his palace in Samaria.

- (Pictures) Jezreel is a beautiful location; looking from Mt. Tabor across the Jezreel Valley across to Mt. Carmel.
- Ahab sounds a little bit like David in that he already had plenty, yet he covets what someone else has.

- The last of the 10 commandments is “**thou shalt not covet**”.

Re-cap / repeat of the Law:

Deuteronomy 5:21 “Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.”

- Coveting is a insidious sin which leads to many other sins, as it does here for Ahab & Jezebel who murder Naboth to obtain his vineyard.
- One of the common lies that Satan uses all the time to ensnare his victims is “*we would be happy if we just had.....*”
- Maddison Avenue marketing techniques depend greatly on creating a perceived need, convincing us that we need certain things, then of course providing opportunity to fill that need - Satan uses the same technique - promoting covetousness.

1 Timothy 6:6 “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

- Naboth = fruit, or fruitful. We don't know anything about Naboth except he had a vineyard near to Ahab's palace, and that he wouldn't give it up for Ahab because it was his inheritance from the Lord.
- Naboth cites two reasons for not selling his property to Ahab.

1. It would be wrong before the Lord.

Leviticus 25:23 “²³The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me.”

- Naboth recognized that he was just a care taker, a steward - that he had a responsibility, and that the land truly belonged to the Lord.
- 2. It would be wrong before his fathers, he's considering generations past and generations future and their connection to the land as an inheritance.
- Land like this would have been passed down from generation to generation, this was considered a sacred trust, to be handed down to the next generation.
- From what little information we have, Naboth seems to be an upright guy, he's not caving into the king based on being obedient to the word of God. He doesn't do anything to bring this trouble upon himself, it just comes.

John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

- Naboth wasn't intimidated by the king, he held his ground. Naboth didn't fear the king because when you fear God, you don't need to fear anything else, including the king.

V: 4 Ahab probably gave his thumb a good sucking as well. In a kingly display of maturity Ahab goes into a childish pout.

- A man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. A man's life consists in his relationship with God.
- Covetousness make us miserable, just as it did Ahab who becomes sullen and angry - which sadly I can totally relate to.

V: 5-6 Jezebel asks a valid question: why are you sniveling and behaving in such a childish manner?

V: 7 Don't you reign in this land; aren't you the king?

- Ahab and Jezebel viewed leadership the same way, and exactly the opposite of God's perspective. They viewed leadership as an opportunity to be served, as

an opportunity to get what they want. God presents leadership as an opportunity to serve and to give.

- She in essence says not just that she can fix this for him, but she is really saying “put your hope, your trust in me...”

Revelation 2:20-23 “²⁰Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. ²¹And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. ²²Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. ²³And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

- The consideration here isn’t what is right or wrong, the only consideration is power, authority, force. Jezebel is asking “who’s the king?” She is saying “You can do whatever you want, you’re not accountable to anyone!”

V: 8-10 Jezebel usurps her husband’s authority - consistent with the enemy who is a usurper.

- Jezebel uses the guise of “religion” to commit murder, lets proclaim a fast, and get a couple of false witnesses to make false accusations, and summarily execute Naboth.

Deuteronomy 19:15 “One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

V: 11-14 You can blaspheme God directly, but to put God and the king at the same level, is blasphemous as well.

- Jezebel wrote the instructions in a letter and sent it to the elders and the nobles in the city who then made the arrangements and eventually reported back - kind of like an open secret, no attempt to conceal their activities or behavior.
- They were without shame, they certainly were not as described by Jezebel “nobles”, there was nothing noble about them if they would participate in this conspiracy and murder.
- Naboth is killed and his property seized; for doing what?
- Naboth seems to be an innocent victim; and God allowed it. A little reminiscent of Job - he hadn’t done anything wrong either.

John 9:1-3 “¹And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? ³Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

- Naboth didn't do anything wrong that we know of, but what we also don't know is how God would use this for his glory.

1 Corinthians 13:12 “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

- So often we see the wicked like Ahab seemingly prosper, and the righteous seemingly enduring such hardship - but we don't know the whole story.

Psalms 73:1-28 Turn to & read.

- It seems like they are getting away with it - but they're not, we have to see things in an eternal perspective.

V:15-16 Arise and take the vineyard... what about Naboth's wife and kids? Toss the widow out into the cold? They were murdered along with Naboth.

2 Kings 9:26 “Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this place, saith the Lord...”

- Ahab hears that Naboth and his heirs are dead and happily gets up to take possession of the vineyard.
- **Christmas thieves**: taking the tree, all the presents, and the decorations - home to their family and enjoying a nice Christmas celebration with no conscience.

V: 17-20 It has been 6 years since we've heard from Elijah, he had previously fled from the presence of Ahab, or actually from Jezebel.

Amos 3:7 “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.”

- Now, having been re-commissioned by God to anoint Ben-hadad's successor, he also boldly confronts Ahab as directed by the Lord.
- God was paying attention and he cared what happened to Naboth and his family.
- The message from God to Ahab through Elijah is that “you're a dead man!”

- When God speaks to Elijah He identifies the vineyard as belonging to Naboth, not Ahab.
- Ahab refers to Elijah as his “enemy” -something that Elijah seems to agree with.
- In actuality Elijah is being a friend to Ahab because he is speaking truth to Ahab. Elijah is speaking the Word of God to Ahab.

Proverbs 27:6 “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

- Also note that Ahab is being held responsible for Jezebel’s actions, because he is complicit in it and it happened under his watch.

V: 21-24 God makes all things right in His time:

Romans 12:19 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

- Like Jeroboam and Baasha before him, God will cut off all of Ahab’s descendants. The dogs and vultures will eventually eat them, and Jezebel is given specific mention - she will be eaten by the dogs at the walls of Jezreel.

V: 25-26 Ahab is described as the worst of the worst. He sold himself into harlotry, inspired and guided by his evil wife Jezebel following idols and behaving abominably like the Amorites.

V: 27 Ahab believed God, he believed that this judgment would certainly come to pass, which is why he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth, otherwise he would have ignored what he was told and gone about his business as if he never heard it.

- It would have been nice if Ahab would have believed God much earlier about all the other things God had said - but now he believes God - and God acknowledges that.

V: 28-29 God acknowledges this change in heart in Ahab, He acknowledges that Ahab has humbled himself before God - and is merciful to him, granting that this part of the judgment will not take place until after Ahab’s death.

- His death won’t be of old age, but he will not see the death of his wife & kids.

- The Lord didn't cancel His pronounced judgment upon Ahab, it was just mercifully postponed until after Ahab's death.
- According to **1 Kings 22:37-38** Ahab was killed in battle and the dogs licked his blood at the pool of Samaria.
- In an interesting irony, and fulfillment of God's word, we read in **2 Kings 9:14-37** that the dogs licked Joram's blood, the son of Ahab on Naboth's property.
- As much as Ahab's humility before the Lord is genuine at the moment we'll see that it is short lived, and there is no real repentance.
- **But there seems to be two things that truly touch and move God's heart: faith and in this case, humility.**
- The Lord responds to Ahab's humility:

Micah 6:8 "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

- As with the previous chapter we see that God is seemingly waiting in the wings to extend mercy and grace, even to Ahab. Ahab is again declared to be an evil man, above all the others - yet God is still trying to draw Ahab to himself - it is never too late to repent and get right with God.
- **In this chapter we also see that the ungodly want what the godly have, they just go about it the wrong way.**

John 4:13-14 "13Jesus answered and said unto her, whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

- The world is looking for hope, for peace & contentment.
- **So often the ungodly set aside that which will give them what they want.**

Jeremiah 2:13 "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living water, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

- But God is always there beckoning us, wooing us to Himself.

Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."