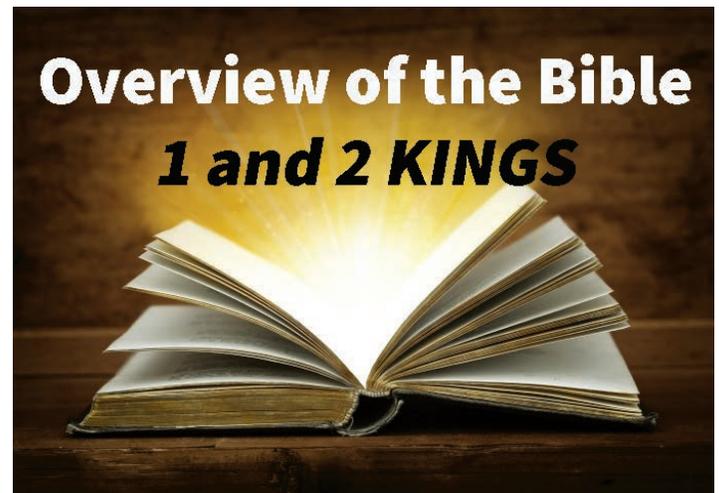


1 Kings 21
**THE MURDEROUS PLOT
TO KILL NABOTH**
Lesson 104

Wednesday, October 5, 2022



INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

Last week we reviewed Ahab's last chance for salvation, his attempt to save himself by political compromise and reviewed God's amazing mercy and grace demonstrated to Ahab and his followers who willingly defied/denied the **one true God, Jehovah, Yahweh.**

As you recall, Ahab was rebuked for sparing Ben-hadad, he was contacted by "a certain man of the sons of the prophets," and basically entered into a conversation with that "prophet" in which he passed judgment on himself. As you recall, we suggested that Ahab could have changed the course of history for Israel if only he had been obedient to God. There is no way to account for Ahab's attitude, except sin in the world. Because Ahab chose to "do his own thing," depend upon his own "wisdom," deny his need for the power of God in his life, and continually do evil in the sight of the Lord, he and his wife, Jezebel, were doomed, and the people he was supposed to be looking out for/taking care of as their king, suffered because of the sins of their leader.

In spite of Ahab's rejection of God, God continually extended to Ahab an opportunity for salvation because of God's unending love, mercy, and grace. However, last week's lesson ended with the King of Israel, Ahab, "going to his house, resentful and displeased, pouting like a little child." Ahab ultimately left Samaria and went to his second palace in Jezreel, where he lived when not in the capital at Samaria. That is where our lesson tonight begins.

TODAY'S LESSON

Let's read our Bible lesson in 1 Kings 21:1-29, and then we will come back and look at these scriptures verse by verse.

Chapter 21:1: "(1) And it came to pass" - the time between the end of Chapter 20 and the beginning of Chapter 21 is not specific. Apparently, there was some period of peace after Ahab's second Syrian campaign and he got over his "temper tantrum" so he took a trip to Jezreel.

"Naboth, the Jezreelite" -Naboth is nowhere else referred to in the Bible except in this chapter. He was apparently a God-fearing Jew, possessor of a vineyard in Jezreel which adjoined the winter palace of King Ahab. Notice, that he owned a **vineyard.**

VERSE 2: "Garden of herbs" -Ahab apparently coveted Naboth's land, not necessarily his vineyard, but the land that was close to his palace. Naboth wanted to turn the vineyard into a "garden of herbs." He offered to buy the land or, to trade Naboth other land which may have been even better land for his vineyard.

VERSE 3: "The Lord forbid me" -Naboth answered Ahab and told him that he would not and could not give his inheritance to King Ahab because it was against God's law. Everything that was done in biblical times seem to have some spiritual significance, especially to a devout Jew. Turn in your Bible to Numbers 36:7-9, which provides:

"(7) So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel move/remove from tribe to tribe; for everyone of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. (8) And every daughter, who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. (9) Neither shall the inheritance be transferred from one tribe to another tribe, but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance. ---(13) These are the commandments and the judgments/ordinances **which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses** unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan near Jericho."

So, Naboth denied a transfer of his property to King Ahab. Some theologians believe there is even a deeper meaning to this passage. Naboth the Jezreelite had the property planted as a vineyard. In both the Old and New Testament, Israel is sometimes portrayed and spoken of in terms of being a vine under special care of God. There is a passage in John's gospel in Chapter 15 with which we are familiar where Jesus is teaching and he says, "(1) I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser/husbandman. (2) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (3) Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. (4) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (5) I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Here, Ahab wanted to turn the **vineyard** into a vegetable garden. The vineyard was a symbol of the permanence of the blessings of **Yahweh** upon his people. But Ahab wanted to turn it into a vegetable garden, a symbol of Egypt, of transients. Some scholars suggest this is an indication of the intent of Ahab to make an effort to turn the Promise Land into a wasteland. Ahab was stupid, henpecked, and disobedient, but he was not dumb! He knew about and had head of knowledge about God. But if he could destroy the vineyard, Ahab would not have to look out at the vineyard and be reminded on a daily basis that God is in control and that "he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

VERSE 4: Ahab again pouted, became sullen and displeased because Naboth would not give him his way and agree to give away the inheritance of his fathers. Many Jews believed that God owned everything and that their inheritance was a gift from God, and to give away, trade away, or sell a gift from God would be a direct insult and a sin before Almighty God.

VERSES 5-12: Here we see Jezebel, the strong personality in this family, observing her husband the King displeased and in a sullen, childish mood, deciding that she "would handle the problem." Jezebel spoke harshly and in a condescending way to Ahab and basically told him, "don't worry about it, I'll take care of it" and "I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." She devised a scheme by which she would write letters over Ahab's signature, seal them with his seal, and send the letters to the elders and the nobles in the area who were familiar with Naboth. She basically set up a trap for Naboth based upon a pretended acknowledgment of Naboth. When we look at Verse 9, we see that the letters which allegedly came from Ahab proclaimed a fast and "set Naboth on high among the people." To call an assembly for solemn fasting implied that a disaster threatened the people that could only be averted if they would humble themselves before the Lord and remove any person whose sin had brought God's judgment upon them. There are several passages of scripture in the Old Testament confirming a fast as a way to "get God's

attention.” (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:5-6; 2 Chronicles 20:2-4) So, if the king proclaimed a fast, he must have a good reason for doing that and the people and leaders who received the letter complied with Jezebel’s plan. Jezebel proposed to put Naboth in a position of acknowledgment before the people and get two men who were identified as “worthless fellows” / sons of Belial, to lie and bear false witness against Naboth saying that Naboth blasphemed God and King Ahab. Apparently, those two witnesses were enough to “carry the day” in terms of guilt or innocence and the people were then instructed to take Naboth out of the city and stone him until he was dead. Blaspheming God and the king had a death penalty attached to that particular crime.

VERSE 13: The people hypocritically climaxed their violent murder by killing Naboth, an innocent man according to Mosaic law. (Leviticus 24:14; Numbers 15:35-36) If we look over at 2 Kings 9:26, we see this passage:

“(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 plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.”

So, not only was Naboth killed, but his sons were killed with him eliminating all possible heirs of Naboth.

VERSE 14: When the evil deed was done, Jezebel was told. Notice that neither Jezebel nor Ahab were actually involved in the killing of Naboth and his sons.

VERSES 15-16: Jezebel told Ahab (neither of whom were at the fast) that Naboth had been stoned and was dead and told Ahab to take illegally, criminally, and unceremoniously Naboth’s vineyard, and he did so.

VERSES 17-19: “Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite” -We are not told how Elijah got the word from God, but it is significant that God chose Elijah, rather than a lesser prophet, to go directly to Ahab and pronounce judgment on Ahab who was actually, at the time, in Naboth’s vineyard. Notice that in Verse 19, God blamed Ahab just as if he had been the instrument that did the killing, even though it was Jezebel’s idea and Ahab simply acquiesced in it. There is a lesson for us here, that is that if we acquiesce, stand by, allow sin and sinfulness to take place around us by those over whom we should and could exercise authority, or have a positive influence, we are as guilty of that sin as the one who actually committed the sin. Elijah delivered the message of God that “in the place where dogs lick the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.” We will see in later passages that Ahab’s blood was licked up by dogs at the pool in Samaria after Ahab’s death.

VERSE 20: “Have you found me, O my enemy?” -We see in this passage that Ahab revealed his dismay at being found out. A lesson here for us is that there is nothing done by us. That is unknown. We cannot sin in secret because, God knows everything that we do, everything that we say, everything that we think, and the Bible says He will “put a light” on those sins. Psalms 90:8 says, “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” Here, in Verse 20, Elijah apparently confirms what we suggested last week that God gave Ahab up to a reprobate mine when he said, “And he answered, I have found thee; because **thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.**”

VERSE 21-24: This is Elijah’s second announcement of judgment upon Ahab and his household. This judgment is virtually identical with one made to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 14:10-11, and similar to one made to Baasha in 1 Kings 16:3-4. It is also interesting to note in Verse 23 the judgment of God concerning Jezebel where He said, “The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the Wall of Jezreel.” We will see the fulfillment of that prophecy in 2 Kings 9:10; 30-37. Many theologians believe that Jezebel was

singled out for judgment because, in addition to all the meanness and the killing of the prophets that she was involved in, she was primarily responsible for the promotion of the worship of Baal and the blaspheming of **the one true God, Jehovah, Yahweh.**

VERSES 25-26: In these verses, the Bible again describes Ahab as being wicked beyond belief. He **“sold himself to wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife had stirred him up.”** And, he **“behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done.”** There is a lesson here for us, that we should and must be careful about our associations, our friendships, and the influences we allow others to have upon us. - - Comment re: law school - -

VERSES 27-28: The Bible says that when Ahab heard the judgment that Elijah spoke unto him, he “tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about mourning.” The tearing of garments was a common expression of grief and repentance in the Old Testament. Many of the theologians I studied for this lesson seem to think that Ahab’s repentance was legitimate and real. I’m not sure I agree with that. I’m sure Ahab was upset that he had been caught and that he was having to pay for Jezebel’s sin, but, we shall see in concluding chapters that this repentance and apparent brokenheartedness over what he had done was simply temporary and a token. It is interesting to note that Jezebel showed no sign of any kind of repentance or any sorrow for what she had done. The sentence of judgment against Ahab could not be revoked, but its execution could be suspended and was, in fact, suspended and ultimately experienced by his sons. God, in effect, was giving even this mean man another chance to be saved. But we will see in the final chapters of 1 Kings that Ahab did not change his ways. True repentance which leads to salvation requires a **metanoia**, which means a change in one’s life resulting from penitence or spiritual conversion, a complete change of heart. Ahab did not have that and, likely is not in Heaven today.

Because Ahab humbled himself, however, his judgment was delayed and visited upon his sons. There is a lesson here for us, that is, we can not sin in a vacuum. Our sin will not only affect us and our relationship to the Lord, but it will affect those who look at us and judge us by our actions.

We should live our lives in such a way that those of our friends and acquaintances who do not know God, can come to know God, because they know us.

Respectfully,



Jim W. Lee

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