

1 Kings Chapter 21 Commentary

1Ki 21:1 ¶ "And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. 3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

After the Lord saved Samaria and overcame the Syrians, Ahab decides he wants the vineyard of Naboth. This vineyard is very near the palace of king Ahab. Ahab requests that Naboth swap or sell the vineyard to him so he can make a garden of it. Naboth reminds Ahab; it is against the rules that God has established and would be a sin against me, before God, if I sold my inheritance from the Lord to you.

The Israelites were told in Leviticus chapter 25 that they were to never sell any of the land of promise that God had given unto them. They were also specifically instructed, in **Nu 36:7** "*So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.*" that the specific portions of land given to each family were to remain in the ownership of that family and not to be sold to even another tribe.

What a warning, to us, that we be aware of, and obey, the laws of God. We know we cannot lose our eternal life in Christ. However, we can sell out to the devil, and our inherited sin nature, and lose our place in the fellowship of the New Testament Church.

4 "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. 5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? 6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. 7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

Ahab is offended that Naboth will not part with his vineyard. He goes to bed and will not eat. Notice he is not fasting, he is pouting. We see that Ahab is guilty of the tenth commandment seen in **Ex 20:17** "*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*"

When Jezebel inquires what is wrong, he tells her the situation, not including that it was the land of Naboth's inheritance. She reminds him that he is king and tells him to rise up and eat. She declares to Ahab that she will get the vineyard for Ahab. We have been speaking of how Jezebel was the one who lorded it over her husband, and how wicked she was. We are going to see the devil in her at work in this event. Remember that we have been saying that it was Jezebel that ruled the roost, not Ahab? We see that on display in these verses. Ahab pouting like a spoiled child, and Jezebel taking charge to please her spoiled brat of a husband.

8 "So, she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. 9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: 10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. 11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. 12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. 13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead."

"Proclaim a fast," How many times has false religion been used as a cloak for sin? As we see manifested in this scene. In actuality, which is all that false religion is, a cloak for sin against God. Notice that these men had no quarrel with carrying out these orders knowing it is all a big lie. False religion does not care who it destroys, as long as it gets its desires in the end. We see this picture of false religion in **Ec 3:16 ¶ "And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there."**

If you remember we said in a previous study that Jezebel was a picture of the city Babylon in Revelation? **Re 18:7 "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."** Here, we see Jezebel playing the part and acting on the behalf of her husband. She uses his authority to send out letters and proclaim a fast. She instructs that they be sure Naboth is present, and that they set two false witnesses before him, accusing him of blaspheming God and the king. The people carried out Jezebel's orders, and they took Naboth out of the city and stoned him. When all is completed, they inform Jezebel that the orders are completed.

How many people have fallen under the guises of Jezebels in life's journey. Satan is always about the work of beguilement, especially against the children of God. We have before us a man falsely martyred for obeying God's commandment. Since they used false witnesses against Naboth, this tells us that the character of Naboth was without blemish. Jezebel and Ahab could not find a legal reason to kill him.

They used this same principle of false witnesses against our Saviour and Lord to crucify him. Why? Because Jesus had no sin in his life, and there was nothing for them to legally accuse him. You are hereby warned: Satan will use the same principles against God's people, who are living as God commanded, except the power of God in us, and The Holy Ghost restrain the devil and his workers.

Remember the scripture in **1Pe 3:14-17; 14 "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 ¶ Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."** Let us live lives like Jesus, and Naboth, lives that cannot accuse us rightly of evil doing. Lives that if we are accused of wrongdoing, it will be a false accusation.

15 "And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. 16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it."

After getting confirmation that the scheme for killing Naboth had worked and was completed, Jezebel tells Ahab to go take possession of the vineyard for Naboth has died. We notice that Ahab does not inquire how his death came about, because now he doesn't even have to pay for it. He only has to go take possession of it. This reminds us of the scripture **1Ti 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."** We shall see this evil of Jezebel, unquestioned by her husband, shall reap many sorrows for both of them.

There is another scripture we are reminded of in **Hab 2:12 "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!"** This is the exact circumstance of Ahab, and he shall surely reap for his sin against God. Job tells us in **Job 31:39 "If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:"**

17 ¶ "And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. 19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. 21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against

the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, 22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. 23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. 24 Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat."

God sends Elijah to meet Ahab in his stolen vineyard, which he is gone down to take possession of what is not rightfully his. Tell Ahab that God knows what you have done to kill, by false accusation, and take possession of what is not yours. "*Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.*" We see this fulfilled in *1Ki 22:34-38; 34 "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel (Ahab) between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. 35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. 36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. 37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. 38 And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.*" Therefore, we understand that this is where they stoned Naboth and his sons.

Notice, Ahab says that Elijah is his enemy, therefore, God is Ahab's enemy, because Elijah is just doing the commandment of God. We are told of this in the New Testament in *Ga 4:16 "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"* Many people will call you their enemy when you tell them the truth. The warning to us is from the word of God: *Nu 32:23 "and be sure your sin will find you out."* You cannot hide sin from God. God knows the thoughts and intents of your heart.

Notice, Ahab is charged with the guilt of all that has transpired, even though Ahab did not personally commit the sins, he is charged with guilt because he goes to take possession. We understand that Ahab knew what was going on, because Jezebel sealed the letters with the king's seal, which was a ring that he wore on his finger. The reason Ahab knew was Ahab had to take it off and give it to Jezebel for her to use it.

"23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." This was fulfilled in *2Ki 9:31-37; 31 "And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? 32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. 33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. 34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. 35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. 36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: 37 And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel."*

Notice how far these sins will reach. They will bring evil upon Ahab. They will take away his posterity. They will make the house of Ahab cease to exist. They will make Jezebel, his wife whom he obeyed, to be eaten by dogs by the wall of Jezreel. The dogs shall eat those of Ahab who die in the city, and the fowls shall eat those who die outside the city. None of those who die for this sin of Jezebel and Ahab shall be buried. They shall all be devoured by animals, for that is the kind of life they lived.

25 "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. 26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. 28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."

The bible tells us that there was none like Ahab, who listened to the instructions of his wife, who did more wickedness and lived more abominably. Remember how sin entered the world in the beginning? Eve. Being beguiled by the serpent, the devil, ate the forbidden fruit and she gave to her husband, the first man Adam, and he did eat. The only indication that the word of God had any impact in Ahab's life is that upon hearing the sentence pronounced upon him and his family, his heart was humbled before God, and he wept and fasted. God sees this and tells Elijah: because Ahab has humbled himself before me, I will not bring this to pass in his life, but in the life of his son who shall follow him as king.

This is the only indication we get from scripture, which gives us any inclination to believe that Ahab may have been a child of God. However, we point out: the word of God does not say that Ahab repented of his sin, he is humbled because of the harsh judicial judgment pronounced upon him and his family. We are not told that Ahab prayed to God for forgiveness. We are not told that Ahab renounced his life of idolatry, and evil. We are told in scripture in *Lu 13:1-5; 1 ¶ "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* There is no mention of repentance in Ahab's life.

It appears that Naboth, and all the males of the family of Naboth, were stoned to death, from the scripture in *2Ki 9:24-26; 24 "And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. 25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; 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."* This is Jehoram, Ahab's son, who is cast into the plat of land stolen by Ahab, which fulfills God's word. How? Remember Ahab humbled himself after hearing his punishment, and God told him he would bring it to fruition through his son, which we see fulfilled in these verses.

Notice also in the reference verse that not only did they kill Ahab, but they also killed his sons so that none could dispute the king's title to the stolen land. This is a warning to us that the devil does not only want to destroy us, but he wants to devour our families also. This should behoove us to cling more closely to God and godliness.

This scene is a reminder to us of the warning given in scripture in *Heb 3:12-19; 12 "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."*

We learn from this chapter the Naboth was a true man of God who stood firm in the faith. For standing firm in the truth and the word of God, Naboth was killed by false accusation. The same is true in the life of a child of God. We are to be sure we are standing firm in the word of God, though satanic men may falsely accuse us, and may take our natural life, they shall reap their reward as we see in this chapter. We are even told in *Mt 10:27-28; 27 "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. 28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Certainly, this is a picture of what happened in Naboth's life. May God help us to never lose sight of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and turn to idolatry, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ! Amen!