

1  **The Conniving Queen and her Canine Conclusion**

1 Kings 21

2  **Review**

- In the Divided Kingdom period, there is almost no other king given as much attention as Ahab.
- He was the wickedest of the kings of Israel to this point:
 - He married Jezebel
 - He brought idolatry into the land
 - He would not keep the charges that God entrusted to him

3  **Review**

- The story in 1 Kings 20-21 gives us an in-depth look at the palace life there in Jezreel.
- We see five things here in the story of Naboth's vineyard:
 - A Covetous King
 - A Conscientious Cultivator
 - A Conniving Queen
 - A Kangaroo Court
 - A Canine Conclusion

4  **1. A covetous king**

- Ahab has recently returned from defeating Ben-Hadad (Hadadezer), the king of Syria (Aram-Damascus), for the second time.
- God has given Ahab victory over the Syrians not once, but twice.
- Despite this, Ahab chooses to disobey God and spare Ben-Hadad instead of destroying God's enemies as commanded.

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5  **Ahab's fatal mistake**

- Instead of destroying the enemy of Israel and of God, Ahab spares him in return for the return of a few cities.
- Because he failed to be faithful in what God had charged him, God pronounced a death sentence upon him – a life for a life.

6  **Naboth's vineyard**

- Ahab returns home to his palace at Jezreel in Samaria to sulk.
- When he gets home he does what many of us will do to console ourselves – he sees something and decides he wants to buy it.
- In this case, it is the vineyard of Naboth.
- While there is nothing wrong with seeing something and wanting to buy it, we will quickly see that Ahab's desire goes far beyond this.

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7  **2. The conscientious cultivator**

- Scripture doesn't tell us a whole lot about Naboth, but we are given some clues to the kind of person he might have been.
 - The location where his vineyard was (the hill of Jezreel, in Samaria) indicates that he was probably of the nobility – or at least wealthy.
 - The word "Naboth" actually means "vines." So it is possible that his name was actually derived from his vineyards, and that people literally knew him as the "vineyard guy."

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8  **Ahab's offer**

- In any case, whatever Ahab's motivations, he *wants* Naboth's vineyard and so it is Naboth's vineyard that he must have.
- So Ahab makes an offer to Naboth that seems on the surface to be fair and even equitable: the offer of a parcel of land of equal or greater value, or the value of the land in gold.
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9  **Naboth's refusal**

- Naboth refuses. On the surface, it might seem like he is being stingy in refusing such a reasonable offer.
- In fact, Naboth was obeying the command of God to not let the heritage of the Lord pass out of his family.
- The Israelites were tenants in Palestine, and Naboth was justly carrying out the command of the Lord not to sell land outside of his family.

10  **Ahab sulks some more**

- Ahab is even more infuriated by this response and refuses to eat.
- In so doing Ahab has now becoming guilty of the sin of coveting – desiring that which God has not intended for us to have.
- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."* (Exo 20:17)
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11  **Contrasts: the king and the cultivator**

- ¹ • Ahab – Entrusted with the spiritual and physical well-being of the nation of Israel. Fails by allowing Baal-worship.
 - Fails again by not destroying God's enemies.
- ² • Naboth – Entrusted with the preservation of his family's identity and heritage.
 - He keeps the law of God by keeping that which was entrusted to him in the family.

12  **This week**

- This week we will see how Ahab's failure to follow God's calling upon his life as a man effected and damaged those under his authority.
 - Jezebel, the conniving queen who held the real authority in Jezreel
 - The elders of Samaria, who should have been godly servant leaders but instead became Jezebel's pawns
 - Ahab's children, who would inherit both his destructive legacy and the judgment that came with it

13  **This week**

- The goal of this week's lesson is not to focus on how Jezebel is an example of femininity out of control.
- Rather, we want to look at the calling that is incumbent upon all men and the damage that results when it is rejected.

14  **Not by accident**

- "Men do not stumble upon integrity or accidentally find themselves being faithful to God. Passivity merely leads to futility.

A man cannot be passive about what Scripture tells him to do for his family and expect to be found faithful to God in the end. He must see with spiritual eyes and realize that future generations are directly impacted by his daily decisions."

15  **3. The conniving queen**

- Ahab goes back home sulking *again*.
- We see Ahab's true character – he is a spineless whiner who lacks initiative, and lacks the ability to "take it on the chin."
- *And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food. (1Ki 21:4)*

16  **Palace life**

- Ahab's story is proof that a man's marriage can either make him or break him.
- In Jezebel's case, she was the arrogant, self-centered, aggressive woman who not only ran the palace – she essentially ran the country.

17  **Profile**

- Jezebel is the daughter of king Ethbaal of Sidon.
- She married Ahab and was the one originally responsible for introducing Baal worship to Israel.
- Ahab's marriage to Jezebel was probably originally one of political convenience. However, it was forbidden by the Law of Moses.

18  **Jezebel**

- Jezebel is an illustration of an important fact:
 - When a man fails to be the leader in his home, very often his wife will be the one to step in and fill the gap.
- We've already seen that Ahab was unfaithful with what had been entrusted to him regarding the nation of Israel.
- We now see that he has been equally unfaithful within his own home.

19  **Jezebel's scheme**

- *And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the leaders who lived with Naboth in his city. And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the head of the people. And set two worthless men opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death." (1Ki 21:7-10)*
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20  **The pattern of misdirected leadership**

- Jezebel's actions:
 - She mocks her husband's manhood
 - She takes matters into her own hands
 - In the end, her plans are much more destructive than her husband's would have been
- When we look elsewhere in Scripture we see that this is not the first time Jezebel has done something like this – it is a reoccurring pattern.

21  **His manhood mocked**

- *And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let*

your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." (1Ki 21:7)

- Literally "are you the king, or aren't you?". "Are you a man or a mouse?"
- It is important that our sense of validation as men comes in turn from another masculine source, not a feminine one. Masculinity can only be bestowed by other masculinity.

22  **Masculinity bestowed**

- Masculinity can only be bestowed by other masculinity.
- Thus, a man is only as good as the kind of men with which he surrounds himself.
- Vain, flippant, worldly friends will produce a man unable to be mature.
- If he surrounds himself only with people who always agree with his opinions, then he will become arrogant and conceited.

23  **4. A kangaroo court**

- *So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the leaders who lived with Naboth in his city. And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the head of the people. And set two worthless men opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death."*

24  **4. A kangaroo court**

- *And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, they proclaimed a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people.*

25  **4. A kangaroo court**

- A "Kangaroo Court" refers to a mock-trial, or a trial for the sake of appearances. Typically the trial proceeds by "leaps."
- The concept generally indicates a trial in which there is no real justice – certain rights of the alleged criminal have been waved in the name of expediency.
- The outcome is always determined in advance.

26  **A travesty of justice**

- Jezebel, using the authority of the kingship, has false witnesses set up to condemn Naboth of "blaspheming God and the king."
 - This would be the equivalent in Communist Russia of being declared an "enemy of the state."
- At no point is Naboth given the opportunity to say a word in his own defense; he was clearly someone the king wanted dead, and the elders of the city weren't going to cross Ahab (not to mention Jezebel!)

27  **Responsibility shirked**

- By shirking his responsibility to be a leader among his people, Ahab set a precedent that would make the elders of Israel responsible for the murder of an innocent man.
- Whenever a man in a position of authority fails to keep their charge faithfully, those beneath them suffer.

28  **Who's in charge?**

- Note verse 14: "Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead."
- Notice that they didn't report the deed to Ahab – they reported it to Jezebel.
- It seems it was no secret who really ran the palace or the nation.

29  **5. The canine conclusion**

- *As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead." And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.*

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30  **5. The canine conclusion**

- *Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you killed and also taken possession?"' And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood."'" (1Ki 21:15-19)*

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31  **Enter Elijah**

- It is now that Elijah appears upon the scene, to speak the judgment of God to this irresponsible king and his wicked queen.
- *Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. (1Ki 21:20)*

32  **Fourfold judgment**

- Elijah proceeds to pronounce the following judgment on Ahab:
 - Ahab himself will be killed and the dogs will lick up his blood in the same place that they currently lick up the blood of Naboth.
 - Ahab's "seed" (his children) will be completely cut off. Every male descendant of Ahab will be slain.
 - Jezebel's body will be eaten by dogs after his death.
 - No-one who follows Ahab will receive a proper burial.

33  **Why dogs?**

- Dogs were not only unclean, they were considered (along with other carrion animals) to be the lowest of the low and completely undeserving of any respect.
- For nobility, to be eaten by carrion animals instead of embalmed and buried in the usual fashion is the worst fate imaginable – their bodies would be desecrated forever.

34  **Children**

- One interesting part of this prophecy is that, among other punishments, Ahab will lose his family:
 - To lose your children, and ESPECIALLY, all of your sons, was considered one of the worst tragedies that could befall a family.
 - It meant that you had no link to the future – that there would be no one to remember your name or carry on your legacy.


35  **Ahab's failure**

- In the end, Ahab failed on three different levels:
 - On a personal level
 - On a family level
 - On a national level

- This is the same progression we see in America today.

36  **On a personal level**

- Ahab's failure to be a man and have a right relationship with God led to his making the poorest of choices in his married life.
- Ahab was a spineless whiner for the rest of his life – his opinion could always be turned by the last person he talked to.
- When we fail in our devotional life, we have already lost the battle everywhere else.

37  **On a family level**


- Ahab utterly failed to be a spiritual leader for his family by allowing his pagan wife to introduce her own false religion and convert not only her family, but the nation as well.
- Ultimately, his failure as a father would inevitably hurt his children the most (verse 29).

38  **On a national level**

- Ahab failed to give the nation of Israel the kind of moral and spiritual leadership that it needed.
- As a result they experienced 3 ½ years of famine and drought.
- As a result the leadership of Israel was equally spineless and godless.
- He failed to remove both physical threats and harmful influences – thereby sealing his own doom and that of Israel.
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39  **When men aren't men**

- When men refuse to be men and take responsibility for themselves, their wives, and their children, God's natural order is disrupted.
- This results in a destructive pattern that hurts the marriage, hurts the children, and ultimately leaves a legacy of failure rather than a legacy of victory.

40  **The pattern of abandoned manhood**

- 1) A man fails to carry out the calling God has given him
- 2) The woman assumes a position of leadership
- 3) The children (or those under authority) reject God and become worse than their fathers
- 4) The cycle perpetuates itself until:
 - Interrupted by godly repentance
 - Ended by God's judgment

41  **The contrast with Naboth**

- ¹ • Ahab –
 - Failed in keeping the law by marrying a pagan wife.
 - Would eventually lose his entire family.
 - Could not take a stand for anything – always tossed about by the latest change in the wind.
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- ² • Naboth –
 - Kept the Law of God even when it was not enforced.
 - Preserved and treasured the heritage of his family.
 - Took a stand for right against the most powerful people in the land.

42  **Application**

- If we are to turn this nation around, we cannot expect it to come merely through elections: we need men to stand up and be men.

- Will you be like Ahab, and abandon your post when your family, your church, and you country need you? Will you reject God's calling on your life?
- Will you be like Naboth's fathers, and leave a heritage and a legacy that is worth dying for?