

Naboth the Jezreelite

(1 Kings 21)

- I. No study of the life and times of Elijah would be complete without considering the seizure of Naboth's vineyard by Ahab and Jezebel, for it was there that God again sent Elijah to challenge the king. **1KI 21 c/w PRO 1:17-19.**
- A. When Israel rashly desired a king like the nations, God warned them about things like this. **1SAM 8:14.**
 - B. One would think that someone with riches, prestige and power like Ahab would need no more, but man's nature is covetous. **PRO 27:20; ECC 5:10.**
 - C. Ahab had an eye for Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth resisted his desire. **1KI 21:1-4.**
 - 1. Property rights and inheritance in Israel were to be defended. **LEV 25:23; NUM 36:7; EZE 46:18.**
 - 2. Blessings bestowed should not be lightly forsaken. **NUM 18:7 c/w 16:8-11; 17:10; ROM 11:13; HEB 2:1-3; 10:35; 2JO 1:8; REV 3:11.**
 - 3. "...nor be deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."
(U.S. Constitution, Amendment V)
 - D. Jezebel was not about to let law and justice stand in the way of the king's pleasure, so she conspired to eliminate the proper heir of the vineyard and thus take possession. **1KI 21:5-10 c/w MAT 21:38-41.**
 - 1. Here was a case of an unauthorized person using a weak leader's official power in his name.
 - 2. There is nothing new under the sun. **ECC 1:9.**
 - E. Jezebel's method of gaining a vineyard hardly qualified her to be a virtuous woman. **PRO 31:16.**
 - F. Ahab did not dissuade his wife from this venture. He had recently been incensed against Benhadad for his attempted seizure of Ahab's property (**1KI 20:6-7**) and now he was about to do the very same thing to Naboth. **ROM 2:1-3, 21.**
 - 1. The early Jerusalem church had a corrupt, covetous husband-wife team also. **ACT 5:1-2.**
 - 2. The Jewish saints at times had power-hungry, ruthless "worshippers" in their assemblies. **JAM 2:1-5; 5:1-6.**
 - 3. Ruthless avarice is not limited to the powerful.
- II. Jezebel made sure that her actions had the semblance of legality, but just because something is legal doesn't necessarily mean that it's moral. **1KI 21:10-14 c/w DEU 19:15; LEV 24:16.**
- A. Naboth's sons were also executed. **2KI 9:26 c/w DEU 24:16.**
 - 1. The sons were natural heirs, so their elimination was needful.
 - 2. What nobody else might have seen, God saw. **PRO 15:3; HEB 4:13.**
 - B. Such a perversion of justice tends to enrage the righteous, but caution must be exercised. **PSA 37:1, 7-9.**
 - C. Wickedness such as this is not overlooked forever. **ECC 5:8; PSA 94:20-23.**
 - D. Authority comes from God and is not to be abused. Abuses such as this have bitter rewards. **2SAM 23:3 c/w MIC 2:1-3.**
 - E. The elders of Jezreel had agreed to Jezebel's bloody demands from Samaria. **1KI 21:8-11.**
 - 1. When the pendulum swung back, it swung very hard.
 - 2. King Jehu later wrote letters from Jezreel to the elders of Samaria making bloody demands of them for Ahab's sons. **2KI 10:6-7, 11.**

- III. Elijah was once again perceived to be Ahab's enemy. **1KI 21:17-26 c/w 1KI 18:17.**
- A. So it is with those who bear witness of the truth to those who prefer the cover of darkness and deception. **JOH 8:39-40; GAL 4:16; PRO 29:10, 27.**
 - B. Man by nature is *sold under sin*. **ROM 7:14.**
 - 1. But Ahab had *sold himself to work wickedness*. **1KI 21:25.**
 - 2. What Adam had done as his federal head explained his *inherent nature*, but Ahab had himself made wickedness his *second nature*.
 - 3. His conscience had been so often wounded that it no longer felt the pain.
c/w **EPH 4:19.**
- IV. Elijah's rebuke had a positive effect on Ahab, which God honored. **1KI 21:27-29.**
- A. God even extends mercies to the wicked by deferring their punishment if they will humble themselves. c/w **DAN 4:27; MAT 11:23 c/w JUDE 1:7.**
 - B. There is no better thing for sinners than to repent. **ACT 17:30.**
- V. As abhorrent as Ahab and Jezebel's crime was, it was little different from that which David had done in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. **2SAM 11:14-24.**
- A. What David had done was described as an unjust taking of property. **2SAM 12:1-5.**
 - B. The potential for any form of wickedness dwells in all, children of God included, and is just cause for humility. **ROM 7:8; EPH 2:1-3.**
 - C. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall" (**1CO 10:12**).