

# Elijah

## God's man to a nation in crisis

### Your sin will find you out!

#### Lesson 8

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1 KINGS 21:2-3 KJV "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. AND NABOTH SAID TO AHAB, THE LORD FORBID IT ME, THAT I SHOULD GIVE THE INHERITANCE OF MY FATHERS UNTO THEE."

1 Kings 21

Elijah has left the wilderness in order to do what the Lord commanded. In the mean time, King Ahab is at his summer palace in Jezreel. While he is there, he looks out and sees a garden that is close by.

## I. Desire and planning leads to treachery and murder

### A. Desire Stage

#### 1. Ahab's request

1 Kings 21:1-2 KJV "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. 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."

King Ahab sees a garden that is close to his summer palace. He wanted to have it for his own so he would not have to travel in order to get his herbs. He begins to think about all that he could do if he owned that garden. So, he makes an offer the owner of the garden to replace the garden with a better one or to pay for it. From an economic viewpoint, this would seem like a fair thing to do. He is willing to give Naboth a better place or to pay him a fair price for his garden.

#### 2. Naboth's Refusal

1 Kings 21:3 KJV "And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

King Ahab offered a generous option for the garden from an economic standpoint. If Naboth was willing, he could have more land, better piece of fertile ground, or the money for his garden. But, Naboth gave his answer not based on economics but rather on religion. The land that he owned was passed down through his family's generations to him. The Lord gave it to his family

as an inheritance. So the land meant more to him than just the financial aspect, it was the land of this father to be passed on to his children. From this viewpoint, he refused to sell or trade the land to King Ahab.

Based upon the response of Naboth, one can conclude that he was a worshipper of Jehovah, not of Baal because he saw the importance of the inheritance that Jehovah gave to the people of Israel.

Leviticus 25:23 KJV "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."

Ahab's response

1 Kings 21:4 KJV "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."

When King Ahab could not convince Naboth to sell his inheritance, he went back to the place, mad, upset, and agitated. He was not happy that he could not get his way. When he entered into his palace, he put on a show for everyone there. He pouted like a spoiled brat. He refused to eat. He refused to speak. He laid down on the couch and turn away from everyone. All of his ploys were to arouse someone to get him what he wanted, which was Naboth's vineyard.

King Ahab's response is the response of a selfish individual who only wants what is best for them regardless of how it affects others. King Ahab was not concerned with Naboth or his family. A selfish individual is only concerned about himself or herself.

## B. Planning stage

### 1. Jezebel's treachery

1 Kings 21:5-10 KJV "But Jezebel

his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? 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. 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. 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. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: 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."

When Queen Jezebel hears what has happened, she goes to see her husband. The statement that she makes in the very beginning is important. She asked Ahab if he was the king over the nation of Israel. She means that since he is the king, he should use his power and position to take the land. Jezebel did not worship Jehovah but Baal. The worship of Baal included a practice that later became known as the "divine rights of kings." This was the idea that there was a difference between royalty and the common man. The divine rights of kings believed that the royal power was greater than any hereditary rights of the common man. This position was very prevalent in the European countries during the dark ages.

Jezebel told King Ahab not to worry about this because she would take care of the situation. She sat down and wrote out a plot to have Naboth killed. She sent letters to

the officials of the area that Naboth lived. The plot was to have a fast proclaimed that implied there was serious incident that happened in the area. There were to have two men who were to testify against Naboth that he blasphemed God and the king.

Jezebel knew the laws of the land. She knew how to use the laws to accomplish her will. Her treachery knows no limits in that she was willing to have an innocent man condemned for something he did not do in order to gain what he possessed.

**Deuteronomy 17:6-7 KJV** "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you."

**Leviticus 24:16 KJV** "And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death."

## 2. Officials' cowardice

**1 Kings 21:11-14 KJV** "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. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. 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. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead."

A person high in the government can always find wicked men to do their evil bidding. The men of the city were weak and cowards. They did not question the reason for the treachery but they blindly followed the plan. They are just as guilty as Queen Jezebel for allowing it to take place. This is what happens when evil men run the government and the lower government is run by fear. These officials were afraid to stand up to the king and queen. They probably thought, "better Naboth than me." Or, these men saw an opportunity for themselves if they do the king's bidding.

So Naboth was plotted against, tried, convicted, and murdered over a piece of ground. When Naboth was killed, it included his entire family. They had to kill his family because the inheritance would pass down to his sons.

## 3. Ahab's theft

**1 Kings 21:15-16 KJV** "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. 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."

What a sad state! When King Ahab heard about the death of Naboth, he did not care how he had died only that he got the garden. Since there are no living heirs, the land goes to the crown.

Here King Ahab is pictured walking in the garden making plans for what he is going to do. There is no sadness or sorrow that Naboth's family had been destroyed to fulfill his covetousness.

**Exodus 20:17 KJV** "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."

King Ahab had broken the 10th commandment while his wife had broken the 6th and 9th commandment.

10th Commandment: Exodus 20:17 KJV "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."

9th Commandment: Exodus 20:16 KJV "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

6th Commandment: Exodus 20:13 KJV "Thou shalt not kill."

## II. Treachery and murder leads to judgment from God

### A. Judgment given

1 Kings 21:17-24 KJV "And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 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. 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. 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. 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,

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. And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. 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."

King Ahab is walking around the garden of Naboth probably beaming with pride and making great plans for the garden. In this time of joy comes the stark reality that the judgment for his sin has come when he sees Elijah walking toward him in the garden.

God knows what is going to happen before it ever happens. So, the Lord sends Elijah to meet King Ahab in Naboth's garden to pronounce judgment on him.

When King Ahab sees Elijah, notice that he addresses Elijah as his enemy. This is often the case when one speaks the judgment of God and calls a nation back to repentance that those who live ungodly see the man of God as an enemy.

God's judgment include several parts:

- King Ahab was going to die for his sin
- Queen Jezebel was going to die for her sin.
- King Ahab's lineage was going to end.

1 Kings 21:25-26 KJV "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. 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."

### B. Judgment delayed

1 Kings 21:27-29 KJV "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. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 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."

When a person is faced with the reality of the judgment that is coming as a result of his sin, it brings him back to reality for what he has done. When King Ahab was faced with his sin and the judgment that was to follow, he humbled himself, put on the clothes of mourning, fasted, and walked lightly before the Lord because he saw himself as a man in deep trouble. For a period of time, King Ahab repented of his sins.

Since he humbled himself before the Lord and repented, the Lord delayed his judgment on his family until after King Ahab died. Judgment was coming, but judgment was delayed because King Ahab repented.

### III. Lessons

#### A. Sin is only enjoyed for a season and then judgment

King Ahab was so thrilled that he finally obtained the garden that he wanted. He did not care that a man and his family was wrongly killed. He only cared that he got to possess what he thought would bring him some happiness. Sin brings temporary happiness, but it is followed by judgment.

Hebrews 11:24-26 KJV "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

#### B. Sin will blind a person to who is the enemy and who is the friend

Sin will cause a person to think that the enemy is the one who is telling him the truth. King Ahab thought that Elijah was the enemy because he brought the message of judgment. Elijah was not the enemy of King Ahab or Israel because he wanted them to repent and be restored.

#### C. Sin of covetousness leads to discontentment

The sin of covetousness is a sin that leads a person down a pathway to destruction. It is a sin of being discontent with one's life. It is a sin of wanting what God has blessed someone else with. It is a sin of selfishness that can lead to tragedy if un-repented.

Philippians 4:11 KJV "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

#### D. Sin is not hidden, but open to the eyes of the Lord

King Ahab and Queen Jezebel thought they were above the laws of the Lord. They thought they were exempt because of their royal position but God is no respecter of persons.

Hebrews 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.