

1Kings 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.

1Kings 21:2 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.

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

Now we meet Naboth the Jezreelite who owned a vineyard in Jezreel that was right next to Ahab's palace. The IVP Commentary notes that the remains of the palace at Jezreel was excavated in the early 1990s and that it is about 23 miles from Samaria.

Ahab asked Naboth to sell him his vineyard so that he could plant a vegetable garden since it was such a convenient location. He offered to pay him for what it was worth. Naboth refused the king explaining that the LORD forbade him from giving away his inheritance. Naboth was familiar with the commands of God as written in the Torah.

Numbers 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."

There appears to be a discrepancy between verses 1 and 18 regarding the location of the vineyard. Gill reasons that Ahab went to Jezreel to talk to Naboth about his vineyard in Samaria. Others assume that thought Ahab was in Samaria when he received the news about Naboth's death, Elijah caught up with him in Jezreel at the sight of the vineyard. This is one of those minor details that in no way affects the point of the narrative.

1Kings 21:4 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.

1Kings 21:5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

1Kings 21:6 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.

Ahab went back home ill-tempered and displeased because Naboth had refused him. He lay down on his bed and refused to eat—just like a spoiled kid that does not get his way.

Jezebel came to ask him why he was so sad and refusing to eat. Ahab told her it was because Naboth refused to sell him his vineyard. He even refused to accept

a better vineyard in exchange for it. He left out the fact that Naboth's decision was rooted in the law of the LORD, probably because he knew that Jezebel did not respect that law.

1Kings 21:7 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.

1Kings 21:8 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.

1Kings 21:9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

1Kings 21:10 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.

Jezebel basically said, "Quit pouting and get up and act like a king." Implied— You can have whatever you want. She promised to get the vineyard for him.

Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal. She sent the letters to the elders and nobles of the city that were neighbors of Naboth. In the letters she called for them to proclaim a fast and place Naboth in a seat of honor among the people. They were also to arrange for two wicked men to testify publicly that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king. They were then to take him outside and stone him to death.

I liked the way Deffinbaugh summarized the situation: "This is the way it was supposed to work. When there was a time of national disaster, the nation would fast, and God's will would be sought. The leaders of Jezreel pretended to be concerned about a most serious matter and then had two worthless men bear false testimony against Naboth, giving them a pretext for killing this innocent man, and thus making his property available to the king. Jezebel's instructions make it appear that men are genuinely concerned about sin in the nation, and that there is a resolve to deal with that sin to rid the nation of it. Testimony is given by two men, charging that Naboth has committed a most grievous offense, an offense punishable by death. And so Naboth is executed, just the way the law prescribed. The only problem is that this was an innocent man."

1Kings 21:11 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.

1Kings 21:12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

1Kings 21:13 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.

1Kings 21:14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

The elders and nobles of the city did as commanded in the letters. They proclaimed a fast and placed Naboth in the seat of honor. The two wicked men then came and publicly accused Naboth of blaspheming God and the king. They then took him out of the city and stoned him to death.

It seems to be inferred in 2Kings 9 that his sons were also killed.

2 Kings 9:25–26 “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; 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.”

1Kings 21:15 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.

1Kings 21:16 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.

When Jezebel heard that Naboth was dead, she told Ahab to go and take possession of his vineyard. Ahab asked no questions or showed any curiosity about how the man had died. He immediately headed down to the vineyard to take possession of it.

1Kings 21:17 ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **1Kings 21:18** 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. **1Kings 21:19** 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.

The LORD spoke to Elijah the prophet and told him to go and confront Ahab the king in Samaria. He would find him in Naboth's vineyard staking claim to it. Elijah was to tell Ahab that the LORD knew that he was responsible for the death of Naboth just so he could take possession of his vineyard. He was then to pronounce God's judgment against him. He would die in the very spot where Naboth was killed and the dogs would lick up his blood as they had Naboth's.

Note that the LORD held Ahab accountable for the actions of his wife. Allowing her to use his seal made him complicit in her plans. It seems obvious that he knew she would have to resort to evil of some kind to get him the vineyard. He also probably thought that he would not be held accountable for her actions.

I think scripture reveals Jezebel to be much more evil and ruthless than Ahab.

1Kings 21:20 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.

1Kings 21:21 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,

1Kings 21:22 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.

1Kings 21:23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

1Kings 21:24 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.

1Kings 21:25 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.

1Kings 21:26 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.

When Ahab saw Elijah, he greeted him as his enemy. Elijah answered that he had come to see him because the evil he had done had made the LORD angry and had caused Israel to sin.

Elijah then told Ahab God's judgment against him. My summary: I (the LORD) will bring evil upon you and kill all of your descendants. There will be no one left to carry on your family lineage. Your lineage will be cut off just as surely as had King Jeroboam's and King Baasha's before him. You have continued to provoke me to anger with your wickedness and led Israel to continue in sin. The dogs would eat Jezebel's remains by the wall of Jezreel. None of your posterity will be given a decent burial. There have been none like you who have been so determined to work such wickedness before the LORD as influenced by Jezebel. You have done the most detestable things in the worship of idols. You have acted no better than the Amorites whom the LORD cast out of the land when giving it to the people of Israel.

Guzik provides further insight: "In likening the sin of Ahab to the sin of the Amorites, God prepared the ground for the future eviction of Israel from the Promised Land. As the Amorites were cast out of Canaan for their continued idolatry and rejection of God, so would the northern kingdom of Israel."

1Kings 21:27 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.

1Kings 21:28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1Kings 21:29 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.

When Ahab heard Elijah's pronouncement of the LORD's judgment against him,

he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, fasted, lay in sackcloth and wandered around in dejection.

The LORD took note of Ahab's acts of humiliation and told Elijah to tell Ahab that he would not bring about this judgment during Ahab's lifetime; judgment would fall during his son's reign.

Oh how often we see in scripture how the children of evil men suffer as a consequence of the sins of their father. However, the flip side is also true. Children often are blessed because of their father's faithful obedience to the LORD, e.g., the sons of Zadok that will serve in the millennial temple.

Ezekiel 44:15–16 "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge."