



Church of God Sunday School

ELIJAH AND NABOTH'S VINEYARD

1 Kings 21:1 — 22:40; 2 Kings 9:1-37

King Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, continued to disobey God, even after God revealed that He was the true God by sending fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. King Ahab liked to have his own way. God wants us to do His will and not to go our own way, but King Ahab and Queen Jezebel were very selfish people, and they were very wicked, as we shall see.

There was a man named Naboth (*NAY-buth*), who had a very nice vineyard. It was nearby the palace of King Ahab. Every time Ahab looked out his palace window, he could see this vineyard. King Ahab thought it would be perfect if he could have this as a garden for his herbs.

King Ahab spoke with Naboth, offering to give him a better vineyard or pay him what it was worth. But Naboth told King Ahab that he could not sell it. The land was "the inheritance of [his] fathers," and God's law forbade him from selling it (Leviticus 25:23-28).

King Ahab went into his palace feeling "heavy and displeased." He laid down on his bed, turned himself to the wall, and would not eat. King Ahab was pouting!

When Queen Jezebel heard that the king had taken to his bed, she went to see him. She asked him, "Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?" King Ahab told her how he had offered to buy Naboth's vineyard or give him another vineyard, but Naboth

would not sell his vineyard.

In so many words, Jezebel said to King Ahab: "Aren't you the king? Get up and eat something. I will give you Naboth's vineyard." How could Jezebel take Naboth's vineyard away from him and give it to Ahab?

Jezebel was a wicked woman, so here

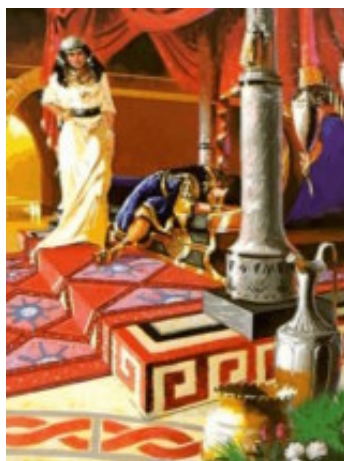
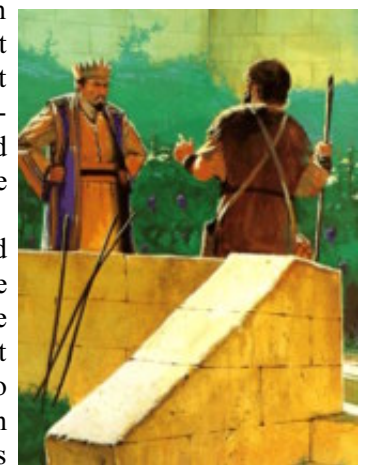
is what she did. She wrote letters to the elders and nobles of the city, telling them to proclaim a fast, as if something wrong had been done. The men were to bring Naboth before the people. Two wicked men were supposed to tell lies about him and say that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king. These were crimes with strict punishment. After all this, Naboth was to be taken out of the city and stoned to death!



When the nobles and the elders received the Queen's letters, they did just as Queen Jezebel had told them to do. They never asked if Naboth was innocent or guilty. They just brought in two men who lied about Naboth before the people. Then poor Naboth was taken outside the city, where the people threw stones at him until he died. (Naboth's sons were also killed; 2 Kings 9:26.)

When word came to Queen Jezebel that Naboth was dead, she went to wicked King Ahab. She said, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth . . . for Naboth is not alive, but dead." Ahab rose up and went to take the vineyard for himself. But God had seen all that had taken place. He was not pleased. He sent Prophet Elijah to Naboth's vineyard with a very sad and sober message for the king.

When Elijah found King Ahab among the grapevines, he spoke the words of the Lord: "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? . . . In the place where dogs



licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood." Ahab answered Elijah: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah told Ahab: "I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD."

King Ahab was going to die, and the dogs would lick up his blood because he had been so wicked! Not only was he guilty of the death of Naboth, but Ahab had also "provoked [God] to anger, and made Israel to sin."

Elijah told Ahab that his family would not escape punishment either. Ahab's house (family) was going to be "like the house of Jeroboam" and "Baasha [BAY-uh-shuh]"—completely destroyed! Jezebel would die a terrible death. Elijah said, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel [JEZ-ree-uhl]."

King Ahab listened to all Elijah had to say. Finally, the proud king humbled himself before God. He tore his fine clothes to show his grief. He put on sackcloth (the rough clothing people wore when someone had died). He fasted (or did not eat). He was not pouting now. He was very careful of his actions before God. He wanted the Lord to see his sorrow.

God saw all that King Ahab did. He told Elijah that because Ahab had humbled himself before Him, the evil that was to come on Ahab's household would not come "in his days" (or while he lived). God would keep the evil times away from Ahab's family until after Ahab died. "But in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."

King Ahab was so wicked that the Bible says: "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 . . ."

A few years later, King Ahab went to war. Although he was dressed in disguise (not dressed as the king), a random arrow struck him. By the evening, King Ahab was dead, "and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot." In fulfillment to Elijah's words, as the chariot was being washed out, "the dogs licked up his blood."

Many years later, Jehu (JEE-hoo) was anointed King of Israel. God sent a prophet to tell him to "smite the house of Ahab." When Queen Jezebel heard that Jehu was coming to Jezreel, she "painted her face, and tired her head." She called out the window to Jehu (in so many words), "Do you come in peace, murderer of your master?" Jehu did not answer her but said, "Who is on my side?"

The servants who were with Jezebel threw her out of the window, and she died. Later that day, when men

were sent to bury her, all that could be found were a few of her bones. So the prophecy of Elijah came true: "In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel."

MEMORY VERSE:

"But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness . . . whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."
—1 Kings 21:25

Connect the Dots to Find What Was Growing in Naboth's Vineyard

