

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29

Introduction

Have you ever acquired something either for “free” or at a greatly reduced cost and thought that you had scored a really great deal? Then with that acquisition came things you hadn’t counted on—maybe repairs, great aggravation, or some other negative. And then, in the end, with what it wound up costing you, you wish that you had not acquired it because **it wound up costing you more on the back end than you realized on the front end?**

As we move along in this story tonight of Ahab and this vineyard he just “acquired,” Ahab is about to realize that his vineyard (Naboth’s Vineyard) **that he thought didn’t cost him anything will in the end cost him everything!**

Naboth’s reputation had been marred by Jezebel, and **the end of that process brought about the shedding of innocent blood—Naboth’s blood and the blood of his sons!**

Well there is a problem that Ahab and Jezebel had not counted on—**God sees everything that we do!** Also, **sin has a way of catching up with us and we can’t cover it up—at least not from God!**

As we begin this chapter, we recall that Ahab wanted Naboth’s vineyard that was next to the king’s palace. Naboth would not sell this land to the king. So, **Jezebel concocted a plan to frame Naboth for blasphemy against God and being a traitor to the king** and had the people stone him and his sons to death.

In Ahab and Jezebel’s mind, the plan worked—Naboth is dead and his vineyard has now become the property of Ahab! *(Read verses 15-16)*

But God knew the truth behind this treachery of Jezebel! **The innocent Naboth had done nothing more than be obedient to the Law of God in telling Ahab that his vineyard was “NOT FOR SALE!”**

So, we left off here last week with Ahab headed to take possession of what he thought was now his vineyard. In his mind he had gained a vineyard!

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29

But it was an unjust gain! And the LORD wasn’t too happy with Ahab over it! This “gain” is going to become a loss! A great loss! Ahab got his vineyard, but we will see here that he did not have the pleasure of enjoying it!

I. WE SEE THE PROPHET ELIJAH SUMMONED TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO AHAB! (Vs 17-18)
Ahab, no doubt, had illusions of NEVER seeing Elijah again!

In Ahab’s mind, Elijah had been the one that had caused Ahab so much grief already!

First there was that 3 ½ year drought!

Then there were those 3 ½ years of Ahab not being able to find Elijah anywhere!

Then there was the showdown on Mt. Carmel where his and Jezebel’s god, Baal, was shown to be a fraud god!

Then the LORD God Jehovah answered by fire for Elijah!

Then the people shouted “***The LORD He is the God!***”

Then they killed ALL the prophets of Baal!

And in Ahab’s mind, ALL of that was because of Elijah!

But Elijah was just the LORD’s messenger boy!

Ahab hurried back to the palace and told Jezebel all that had happened! **And Jezebel threatened Elijah and put him on the run and Ahab hadn’t heard from him since!** I’m sure Ahab thought **good riddance! And please, don’t you ever come back! You know that Ahab never, ever wanted to see Elijah or hear from Elijah again!**

But the LORD had watched the unfolding of all these events! In fact, **the LORD was very aware of ALL that had transpired and He knew the truth of what has happened to Naboth and He knew the hearts of Jezebel and Ahab!**

Proverbs 15:3—“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29

We can choose to do wrong, but we can't hide the truth from God!

God was fully aware of Jezebel's treachery and even Ahab's complicity with what she had done! The LORD knew the TRUTH! And Ahab is not ready to handle the TRUTH being exposed!

Naboth's blood cried out to the LORD for vengeance!

Psalm 34:15—“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”

And so the LORD summoned one of Ahab's worst nightmares to deal with him—The Prophet Elijah!

Note before we move on how that the LORD is still calling it *“the vineyard of Naboth” (Vs 18)*!

WE SEE THE PROPHET ELIJAH SUMMONED TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO AHAB!

II. WE SEE THE PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT FROM THE LORD! (Vs 19-24)

In Ahab's mind, **he probably thought that he was in the clear!**

Both Naboth and his sons were out of the way! There was no one left in Naboth's family to make a claim! The vineyard belonged to Ahab!

But here we see that **IF** Ahab was ready to party because he finally got his way and his vineyard, his party was about to be rained upon!

Ahab got the vineyard alright! But he wasn't able to enjoy it because Elijah, Ahab's **“A #1 party pooper,”** showed up and ruined everything!

Elijah delivered this message from the LORD that exposed Ahab's sin! His sin had been found out! That which he and Jezebel thought they had covered was now exposed!

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29

Some may think they can keep things hidden, but there is no one who can continually keep a lid upon their sin! We need not deceive ourselves into thinking we can!

The truth will come out at some point! Even if it only comes out at our judgment before the LORD!

Numbers 32:23—“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

Ecclesiastes 12:14—“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

The wrong way to handle sin was to try to cover it and conceal it!

Proverbs 28:13—“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Don't cover your sin, confess it to the Lord and forsake it!

Ahab was caught off guard when Elijah showed up! Can you imagine the look on Ahab's face when Elijah showed up with him standing in the vineyard?

He was caught off guard because he had not seen or heard from Elijah for several years! He thought Elijah was ancient history!

Ahab called Elijah his enemy here! **(Vs 20)**

Ahab was so blind that he thought Elijah was his enemy! Elijah was not the enemy here! As I said Elijah was just the messenger boy for the LORD! **Sin was Ahab's real enemy!**

Sin distorts and blinds us to the truth!

The person who leads you to sin is not your friend! Elijah told Ahab, in *Vs 20—“...Thou has sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.”*

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29**

Ahab was a slave to his own sinfulness! He sold himself into bondage!
Ahab traded the valuable for the cheap! That is what sin leads us to do!

We have abundant Bible examples of people who made this mistake.
Achan traded his and his family's life for a garment and some precious metals (gold and silver)!
Judas traded Jesus the Son of God for 30 pieces of silver!
And here Ahab traded Naboth's life and his own for dirt!

Anytime we choose to live wickedly, we lose in the end!

Proverbs 11:21 – "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered."

Elijah here pronounced judgment upon Ahab from the LORD!

He is told what his **covetousness** and **discontentment** have cost him!

Elijah told Ahab in *Vs 19* that in the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, the dogs would also lick up Ahab's blood!

i.e. His death would be a violent one! His blood would be shed!
Ahab would reap what he had sown. Ahab, through the hand of Jezebel, was cruel to Naboth and so his own death would also be cruel!

Added to that was the judgment against Ahab's descendants! They would ALL be cut off! And his partner in crime, Jezebel, would become dog food by the wall in Jezreel—not exactly a royal funeral!
The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in 2 Kings 9:30-37!

In a nutshell, Elijah told Ahab that he was not getting away with his sin!
WE SEE THE PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT FROM THE LORD!

**III. WE SEE THE STATEMENT OF AHAB'S PERVERSENESS!
(Vs 25-26)**

Ahab was perverse! There is no doubt about that! But Jezebel was an evil influence upon Ahab! That does not excuse what he did!

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29**

But she stirred up the perverseness that was already in Ahab!

They kind of remind me of one of the many famous couples in crime! (Remember the infamous Bonnie and Clyde). I didn't recognize any other names in the list of 15 couples that I found online, but most all of the couples that were listed fed off the perverseness of each other!
How sad it is for that to be the case! Birds of a feather flock together!

IV. WE SEE THE HUMILITY OF AHAB! (Vs 27)

Ahab could have doubled down on his perverseness here and just had Elijah killed! However, I think Ahab realized that would only make things worse than they already were for him and hasten his judgment!

So, for the first time, we see that Ahab showed some signs of humility and repentance! He put on sackcloth, tore his clothes, and fasted!

That kind of reminds me of how Nineveh responded to the preaching of the Prophet Jonah!

Anyway, it says here that Ahab "*went softly*" which means he walked slowly, barefoot, or meekly. He humbled himself! But listen, it was not because he all of a sudden developed a hatred for his sin! It was because **he feared judgment that had been pronounced!**

V. WE SEE THE LORD'S JUDGMENT IS DELAYED! (Vs 28-29)

Psalm 86:5 – "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."

Ahab showed the first sign of going in the right direction. So God showed Ahab grace and mercy and delayed His judgment. He would not live to see the death of his sons! So, only part of the judgment would be fulfilled soon. We'll see it in the next Chapter!
1 Kings 22:37-38 – "So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake."

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB'S COSTLY VINEYARD
1 KINGS 21:15-29

The main judgment came during the reign of Joram when he was destroyed by Jehu. (We'll see that when we get to **2 Kings 9:25-26**)

God delayed his judgment upon Ahab because Ahab humbled himself before the Lord! God blesses a humble spirit!

I wonder, are you facing some chastening caused by your own sin?

Psalm 51:17– “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

James 4:6– “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

James 4:10– “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

1 Peter 5:5– “...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

Micah 6:8– “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Next week, LORD willing, we'll see Ahab with another prophet of the LORD (Micaiah) whom Ahab does not like either! He doesn't like him because in Ahab's own words, “...he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.”

We'll see that Micaiah gives him a prophecy from the LORD regarding his attempt to go and recover Ramoth-gilead from the Syrians!

That's not going to turn out well for Ahab either! But this time he makes sure that the LORD's prophet is going to be affected as well!