

**100 Great Events of the
Old Testament**
**Lesson #68 – Ahab and
Jezebel**
Family / Teacher Notes
For Sunday, March 31st
I Kings 21



"So Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD." (1 Kings 21:20)

We talked in our last lesson about the days of Elijah the prophet and how there was a very wicked king named Ahab. Ahab had a wife named Jezebel who was also very evil and did all she could to get people to worship the false god Baal. In this lesson we learn something else they did to a man named Naboth that was terrible, and how they ultimately faced God's punishment.

Ahab and Naboth. Shortly after his marriage to Jezebel, Ahab beautified his palace at Samaria so that it came to be called "the ivory house" (1 Kgs. 22:39). Then he built another palace in Jezreel, twenty-five miles to the north, in an area where the weather was better during the wintertime.



There was a man in Jezreel named Naboth who had a vineyard which was right beside Ahab's palace. Ahab decided he wanted Naboth's property, so he went to him and said, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden because it is close beside my house, and I will give you a better vineyard than it in its place; if you like, I will give you the price of it in money" (1 Kings 21:2).

Naboth said "no" since this land had belonged to his family for many years. So when King Ahab didn't get his way we are told he "went into his house sullen and displeased because of what Naboth had said to him. And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food." (1 Kings 21:4). Doesn't that kind of sound like a baby acting that way? Can you believe that a king would act so silly?

Jezebel found Ahab sulking in his bed and said to him, "How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?" (1 Kgs. 21:5). So he explained how Naboth refused to let him have his vegetable garden. She told her husband, "Do you now reign over Israel?" (1 Kings 21:7). In other words, "you are the king, you can do anything and take

anything you want.” So Jezebel said, “Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite” (1 Kings 21:7).

Jezebel’s Plot Against Naboth. Jezebel had promised Ahab that she would get Naboth’s vineyard. This is her wicked plan to get what she wanted. Jezebel sent letters to the leaders of the city where Naboth lived. She put the king’s name on these letters and stamped it with his seal. The letter called upon the city to bring Naboth before the people of the city. Two men were told to lie about Naboth before all the people and say, “This man has blasphemed God and the king!” [The word “blasphemed” means to speak against someone.] Then these two false witnesses were to ask the village to take Naboth out and stone him (put him to death) for having blasphemed.



The men of his city did just what the letter said to do. The two terrible men came in and accused Naboth of blasphemy. And even though Naboth had not really done this terrible thing, they took him outside the city and stoned him until he died. When Jezebel got word that Naboth was dead she told Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, which he refused to sell to you." So Ahab went and claimed the vineyard for his own. Everything went off as Jezebel planned, except for one minor detail which she overlooked — God was watching. God had seen all that had happened and was very angry about what Jezebel and Ahab had done to Naboth.

Elijah Confronts Ahab. God sent Elijah the prophet to speak to King Ahab about his sin against Naboth. Elijah arrived and Ahab was out in Naboth’s vineyard and when Ahab saw him he said, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” Elijah told the king the Lord’s message, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD: Behold, I will bring trouble on you. I will take away your descendents...because you have angered me and have led Israel into sin. And as for Jezebel, the dogs shall eat her by the wall of Jezreel.”

To our surprise we find out that “when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body.” That was an act of humility and repentance. For all his wickedness, Ahab understood that he would face God’s judgment for his terrible actions. When Ahab showed repentance, God showed him mercy and agreed not to bring His judgment on Ahab during his lifetime.

But in time Ahab turned his back on God’s prophets and three years later he died in battle. Ahab’s son Joram was killed and his body was dumped in Naboth’s vineyard. Jezebel probably thought she had escaped God’s judgment, but about 14 years later Jehu, king of Israel, had her killed. II Kings 9 tells how when she heard that Jehu was coming Jezebel put on her eye makeup, fixed her hair and looked out her upstairs window. King Jehu commanded that she be thrown from the window. She died and just as Elijah had predicted, her body was consumed by dogs.

God's judgment seems to have taken awhile, but it finally came and both Ahab and Jezebel were dealt with. Galatians 6:7 says, "Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows that he will also reap."



Rom. 15:4 "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

Jezebel's Way of Looking at Life. Jezebel had grown up the daughter of a king and then became the wife of a king. She was probably used to getting just about anything she wanted. When she set up Naboth to be killed, her basic way of looking at life was, "Take what you want and destroy anyone who stands in your way." Jesus tried to teach His followers a very different way to live: "'Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.'" (Lk. 6:31) Would you want to be treated the way Jezebel treated people, or the way Jesus treated people?

Sometimes Evil Influence Can Live On. Another sad part of what we learn about Ahab and Jezebel is that they influenced their children to live in an evil way. Two sons of Ahab and Jezebel later ruled in Israel.

- The first was Ahaziah. Of him God says, "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother."
- During the reign of their second son, Jehoram, Jezebel's terrible influence went on (2 Kgs. 9:22).
- Ahab and Jezebel also had a daughter, Athaliah, who married Jehoram. Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was one of the good kings of Judah, but when his son Jerhoram married Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, he was influenced to be an evil king. It says, "He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife), and he did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chron. 21:6).
- Jehoram and Athaliah's son became the next king of Judah and yet we are told, "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab, for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction" (2 Chron. 22:2-4).

Christians should strive to teach and train their children in the ways of the Lord. We hope our good influence can live on in the world through them.

Can There Be Jezebels in the Church? It is terrible to think about, but even in the New Testament, there was someone kind of like Jezebel who claimed to be a Christian, but tried to influence Christians to do evil things. Revelation 2:20 says, "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."