

What You Need to Know About ELIJAH:

“Someone Who Watched God at Work”

Study Number Six – 1 Kings 21:1-25

If we were to try to summarize in capsule fashion the saga of the life of Elijah to this point, we would have to say that first he confronted Ahab in the palace with the fact that because they were worshipping Baal, God was going to judge.

For three and a half years it didn't rain and during that time he was preserved 18 months in Cherith and two years at the widow of Zarephath. And then the word of the Lord came to him again saying, “go and show yourself to Ahab” and he went back.

In episode number four we had the confrontation on the Mount of Carmel with the prophets and the priests of Baal. And, of course, Elijah called fire out of heaven on that occasion.

Then we saw him go from the heights to the depths. It's kind of like at every victory we're the most vulnerable. In the pits he was saying out in the wilderness of Beersheba, “I'm turning in my prophet's badge. I'm through. I'm the only guy left and it's lucky that I ran for my life because I probably would have gotten killed.”

And of course Jezebel had sent a threatening telegram telling him that it was all over, that she was after him. And at the end of this study God had given him some new assignments. Basically that was to anoint these two kings and then to get the guy who was going to take his place—Elisha.

Now for some reason in the biblical record, in the ongoing life of Elijah, the cameras switch back to the palace in these verses.

It's kind of fun, isn't it? How in a story like this it switches back and forth.

We're going to see the condition of Ahab. What's happened to him since Jezreel when he was riding home in his chariot in the rain? Has his life changed? Has he had any evidence of conversion? Is there any indication that he now, because he has seen God obviously answer with fire out of heaven and rain from the sky, responded to all of that? Or is he the same old character?

Now it's amazing how the Bible does that. It kind of lets us drop in and see little pictures of the guy. And by the end of his life, when the judgment comes, God has totally vindicated what happens.

It's been a long series of events, hasn't it?

For three and a half years it didn't rain. And then after that

terrible judgment, we look in on Ahab and he's out worrying about grass for his mules rather than water and food for his people. And now when we come to our current episode, we see a character just as bad as he was before. So it is kind of sad in that regard.

We're going back to the palace. Let's pick up at verse 1.

v. 1 Now it came about after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

“Now it came about after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.”

Now between our last episode in chapter 19, in chapter 20 God has given Ahab a series of military victories. He was quite an astute military man. And that's kind of the way God works in our lives.

He'll just load us up with blessings to try to get us to respond. It's kind of like, “This is your last shot. I'm going to give you everything I can possibly give you to let you respond. I'm going to surround you with lots of friends, lots of love, lots of success, and lots of support.”

And all of that happened, but Ahab hadn't changed any. And now when we come to this study we're introduced to Naboth.

Perhaps God's giving the last opportunity to us. Ever stop to think about that? The fact that He's blessing us and He's providing for us and giving us an opportunity to know Him. He's certainly doing that with Ahab as we see in this study.

Now we need to get in our mind's eye where Ahab lived. He had the White House in Samaria—that's where all the business went on. But he had his Camp David over at Jezreel. And he built an ivory palace there. It was a gorgeous place. It's like a Camp David, a place to retreat and get away. And he spent a lot of his summer over there at Jezreel.

Next door to his summer place is a guy by the name of Naboth who owns a vineyard that's right up close to the palace.

v. 2 And Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "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."

"And Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, '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.'"

What is so incredible, here's a guy that has everything, as far as this world's goods are concerned. He's wealthy. He is the epitome of wealth and yet he's picky over a guy's vineyard

right next door.

Ahab says to Naboth, “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, or I will give you the price of it in money.”

Now what he wants is to be able to come outside and stir up some land, plant some okra, potatoes, peppers, green beans and stuff and work on it there during the summer while he’s away from the responsibilities back in Samaria.

v. 3 But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.”

“Now Naboth said to Ahab, ‘The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.’”

Now isn’t it interesting that living next door to him is a believer? This is one of the 7,000 that haven’t bowed their knees to Baal.

Realize in the life of Ahab he has had key people plopped in his life at critical times?

Remember Obadiah was working for him in the palace. He’s the guy that greatly feared God and protected those 100 prophets. We saw him in one of our previous studies.

He’s put Elijah in his life several times to talk to him and

prophecy to him. And now living right next door to him could have been anybody in the world. But next door to him is a godly man by the name of Naboth.

And in this situation, all he wants is to get Naboth's vineyard. He wants to get out of him what he can get.

Now notice his answer:

“The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.”

Basically what Ahab is asking Naboth to do is be disobedient.

When the land was divided back under the twelve tribes, each tribe was given certain portions of an inheritance of the land. And here for Naboth this was his inheritance from the Lord. And this belonged to the Lord. He didn't really have a right to sell it.

It's kind of like Esau really didn't have a right to sell his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of chili, but he did.

And there's sometimes we sell something we don't have a right to sell. And we don't have the right to sell the inheritance of the Lord.

And he says, “The Lord forbid me from doing this.”

Let's look at some verses from the Old Testament because

this'll make this part come alive and realize what's happening here.

Leviticus 25:23

The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is mine, for you are but aliens and sojourners with me. Thus for every piece of your property you are to provide for the redemption of the land.

Here's the Lord speaking again:

Numbers 36:7

No inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

Then he says:

Numbers 36:9

No inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the sons of Israel shall each hold to his own inheritance.

Ezekiel 46:18 says:

Ezekiel 46:18

And the prince shall not take from the people's inheritance, thrusting them out of their possession. He shall give his sons inheritance from his own possession, so that my people shall not scatter any one from his possession.

What Naboth is facing as a Christian man next door to a very influential leader of the land—the act of disobedience.

It's kind of like when we read in the book of Acts 4, the Lord says to Peter and John: "Don't preach anymore." The authorities do. And remember what they said?

Acts 4:19

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to give head to you rather than to God, are you to judge?"

Naboth has to make a decision.

"What the leadership is asking me to do is in contradiction to my convictions."

Ahab could have learned some things from this guy. Because even in the face of all of this power and authority he's not impressed. He says, "The Lord forbid that I should do that. I can't do it."

v. 4 So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he said, "I will not give you

the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food.

“So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’” And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food.”

Talk about a spoiled little brat having a temper tantrum. He goes into the house; he’s all upset and really down. It looked like he’d been weaned on a dill pickle or something and he throws his face toward the wall and he isn’t talking to anyone and he isn’t eating either!

“Just not going to eat anything! Taking away all my desire for food. I’m so used to having my own way!” Spoiled little brat, not going to talk to anybody.

Now enter Jezebel. Isn’t this just like a soap opera?

v. 5 But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, “How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?”

“But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, ‘How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?’”

“What’s wrong with you Ahab? What are you doing laying there in bed with your face to the wall? Our people have been

bringing food in here to you and you aren't eating anything. All you're saying is you're depressed and there's nothing wrong with you."

Now watch.

v. 6 So he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you a vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

"So he said to her, 'Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, "Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you a vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

"Boo—hoo-hoo-hoo!"

Now is that what Naboth said?

Ahab casts the words of Naboth in a picture of rebellion. It's king and subject in conflict.

Whenever we quote somebody in conversation, we always run the risk of putting our own feelings into it.

And we have to really watch that because we can hurt and destroy and devastate relationships by that very thing.

He didn't say that. What did he say? He said, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

There's another reason. Ahab has never brought the Lord into his life. He never once speaks of the Lord anywhere in all of this biography.

He lashes out at Elijah but he never lashes out at the Lord. He's probably scared of him but he doesn't also bring him into the conversation here. He just makes it look bad for him. And we can do that when we court people sometimes, just by a little twist of words. Give somebody the complete false impression and hurt them badly.

v. 7 And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

"And Jezebel his wife said to him, 'Do you now reign over Israel?'"

"Are you wearing the pants in this kingdom? Are you the king? Man you've got a right to have whatever you want since you're the king! Get up from there!"

"Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

She speaks and the heads roll. She's married to the king!

She's got a right to do whatever she wants!

“There's nothing to be held from you! The turkey living next door is trying to keep a vineyard away from you. You don't have to worry about that. Just let his head roll. I'll show you how to handle that. Just get up and eat and I'll take care of it for you. Let me handle it. I'll satisfy your desire.” And she's done that quite regularly.

v. 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city.

“So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city.”

v. 9 Now she wrote in the letters, saying, “Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth at the head of the people;

“Now she wrote in the letters, saying, ‘Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth at the head of the people;’”

Whenever something like that happened and the king had an issue with a subject from a city, they'd always take the subject and have a feast and put him at the head of the table. Then the witnesses would come in and they'd speak and then the law would be executed. The guy would be instantaneously judged.

And so Naboth's name is on these letters saying, "Get him up at the head of the table."

Evidently this little place is also his summer place because he's from another city. And so they're proclaiming the feast here, they wrote the letters and they seated him at the head of the people.

v. 10 and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death."

"and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, "You cursed God and the king." Then take him out and stone him to death."

The interesting thing about that is Jezebel is aware of the Law—the Mosaic Law. Because the book of Deuteronomy says not by one witness but by two it will be established. (see Deut. 19:15).

Couldn't bring one guy in and say, "Hey, I want to tell you some things about Naboth." They wouldn't do a thing. It has to be two guys.

Notice there are "two worthless" guys. That's the picture of Christ. They brought some worthless guys in and said, "Well he said he would destroy the temple and in three days he's

going to raise it up again.” Think about something to make a guy qualify for crucifixion, that’s incredible.

These guys come in and they say, “He blasphemed God!”

Poor Naboth is kind of a type of Christ in the Old Testament. He’s totally innocent in this situation, but they do it.

Deuteronomy 17 says:

Deuteronomy 17:6

On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death. He shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

Deuteronomy 19:15

A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or sin...

Leviticus 24:14

Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp and let all who heard him lay hands on his head. Then let all the congregation stone him.

And so that’s the Law that’s being carried out here.

v. 11 So the men of his city, the elders and the nobles

who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them.

“So the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them.”

Now she wrote another letter to Elijah and scared him to death and sent him off into the wilderness. She’s written a few in her time. And evidently, they must be really able to accomplish the task that she wants to accomplish.

One thing that this study does is it makes us realize the power of a woman over a man. At least that’s in the text. And we can really see it. She flat made heads roll and made things happen in this situation. And that’s kind of the way the text is going to end up in that way too when we get over there in just a minute.

So what happens?

“the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them.”

v. 12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people.

“They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the

people.”

v. 13 Then the two worthless men came in and sat before him; and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth, before the people, saying, “Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.

“Then the two worthless men came in and sat before him; and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth, before the people, saying, ‘Naboth cursed God and the king.’ So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.”

That’s exactly what Jezebel wanted done to Elijah. That’s why she wrote that letter in the first place.

In our last study she wanted him set up and accused of cursing God or doing something and getting him killed in the very same way. She had that same design and plan in mind, it just happened to Naboth this time.

It happened to a lot of the prophets of the Lord, didn’t it? Stephen was the first martyr of the church. He got through preaching his sermon and they took him out and stoned him to death right there. Threw all his garments at the feet of Saul of Tarsus.

Stephen cried out, saw heaven open, saw the Lord standing on

the right hand of God, and gave up his spirit. With the same words of Christ on the cross, “Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they’re doing.” (see Acts 7:54-6)

Proverbs 15:3

The eyes of the Lord are at every place, watching the evil and the good.

Well sometimes that’s the only comfort we have. That it’s really crummy down here on the horizontal but God’s watching and He’s going to take care of His own.

v. 14 Then they sent word to Jezebel, saying, “Naboth has been stoned, and is dead.”

“Then they sent word to Jezebel, saying, ‘Naboth has been stoned, and is dead.’”

v. 15 And it came about when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.”

“And it came about when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, ‘Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but

dead.”

Now when we read that we think immediately of murder, don't we, of one guy?

The text sometimes doesn't give all the details and we pick it up in a verse somewhere else.

The laws of the inheritance of the land went like this:

Naboth was the guy who owned the property actually, or was the steward of God's property while he was alive. But when he died it went to his sons and it stayed in the tribe to his sons.

Naboth had several boys. If Naboth had died without any boys then it could go back to the throne and Ahab could possess it. Jezebel had to send out letters to have all the boys killed. So his sons were killed as well.

We find this verse in:

2 Kings 9:26

“Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,” says the Lord ...

So she sent a secret group of gorillas to go out and take care of the boys while all this was happening in public and so the whole family was killed. Now the land can revert back to the throne. Ahab can have the vineyard in Jezreel.

Isn't it amazing what a covetous heart will do?

v. 16 And it came about when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

“And it came about when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab arose”—sure enough, got up, stuffed his face and then—“[went] down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.”

And we know he is so excited! Just can't wait!

v. 17 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

“Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,”—the calvary's coming.

Rendezvous with the rebels from the renegades. We're going to get this guy. The guys in the white hats, they're coming. Isn't that neat?

In our last study we thought God gave up, didn't we? We have followed that little phrase all the way through—“Then the word of the Lord came to him saying.” Remember every time we see it, it's almost like we almost want to play the William Tell Overture because we're getting ready for action.

And we saw it:

“Arise, go to Cheroth,”

“Arise, go to Zarephath,”

“Arise, go show yourself to the king.”

In study #5 was the first time we didn't see it. And it said he was afraid, he arose and he ran for his life out of the will of God.

Now what does God do when a servant gets out of His will?

“That's it! Whoop, you're through.”

God is the God of the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth chance when we're slow learners. And He has reinstituted His relationship with Elijah. He's got an assignment for him.

God always gives the toughest assignments to the old birds that have been around a while. And Elijah's been around for a while.

He could have said, “Elisha! Time for you to show your stuff.” He's the young understudy. No. This is big time stuff Elijah.

“the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying,”—go down there. God is going to take care of His own.

And we're asking, "But why did He let Naboth get killed?" Well is death such a tragedy when it's a righteous man? Sometimes death isn't horrible in the world because we're going home to be with the Lord.

And we look at death as a tragedy. That's because we're the type of people who are so concerned about living here that we can't even fathom what's over there. Death isn't a tragedy.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. The Lord looks forward to having His people home.

Enoch walked with God in Genesis and one day God said, "You know, this is so cool. Let's just keep on walking." It says Enoch was not, the Lord took him. Just took him on home. (see Genesis 5:24)

Time for Naboth to leave that cruddy old place next to Ahab. He's had it up to here anyway. "Come on to the house and let Me show you what I've got in store for you. I've got vineyards up here that'll blow your mind. Silly little piece of land next to Ahab down there. Come on up here where you can really enjoy yourself and sing the songs of the saints."

And so in a lot of ways God really does take care of His own. Even though it looks like the bloodshed and the tragedy of it all is really sad and negative. When we look at it from the divine perspective, it's really not. It's just getting rid of a cruddy old outside covering so that the spirit can be free to

come on home to be with the Lord.

Well, what's the Lord say?

v. 18 “Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it.

“Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it.”

v. 19 And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Have you murdered, and also taken possession?”’ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, “In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs shall lick up your blood, even yours.”’”

“And you shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord, “Have you murdered, and also taken possession?” And you shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord, ‘In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs shall lick up your blood, even yours.’””

The curse of ill-gotten gain and the greedy heart is going to be condemned.

Now the tragedy of that verse is Ahab never did get it together, did he? The final word of the Lord to Ahab telling

him that now it's all over. It's the judgment of a greedy heart.

What if God rendered judgment on our life today? Would we be satisfied with what He renders?

“I'll say to my soul, ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease. Eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said unto him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. And then who shall those things be?’” (ref. Luke 12:19, 20)

What are our priorities? Kind of scares us a little bit, doesn't it?

Belshazzar was really having a big blast that night, having all the people in, having a big party, thinking he was just going to go for it all the way. Then a hand came in and wrote on the wall, “Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. You are weighed in the balances and found wanting.” (ref. Daniel 5:25)

“Belti baby, it's over tonight. You know you're through.”

The incredible thing was that 2 Peter is prophetic. When Peter comes to talk about the fact that the Lord's going to come back again, the Lord said He was going to. And He uses the phrase “the word of God.”

The word of God spoke and this world was created. And he says, the word of God spoke and the world is reserved for judgment and the word of God is going to speak and it's all

over.

What's so sober about that? All God has to do is say one word and it's all over. We are standing right now between one word and our eternal destiny. It's when God decides to say it, it's over.

1 Corinthians 15 says:

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52

I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

“God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (ref. Galatians 6:7)

Remember the book of Esther? Haman decided that he wanted Mordecai killed and so he built gallows in his backyard. He tried to work it all out. But Esther interceded and at the critical time Haman is hung on his own gallows.

God always vindicates His own.

v. 20 And 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.

“And Ahab said to Elijah, ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’”

He hasn’t seen him for quite a while. What’s he been thinking? “Golly, he ran off into the wilderness somewhere and died.” Jezebel evidently got the FBI after him and his life was taken. It was nothing significant. Elijah’s not here anymore. He’s operating as though he wasn’t.

Then he starts with the statement:

“‘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.’”

“‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’”

The eyes of the Lord are beholding evil and the good. All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (see Hebrews 4:13)

God knows where we are and what we’re doing.

“I didn’t have to find you. God just told me where you were. I’m just coming down here to be his mouthpiece, to speak the message that’s got to be speaking in this situation. And I found you, sure did.”

v. 21 Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every

male, both bond and free in Israel;

“Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel;”

v. 22 and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin.

“and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah,”—and none of that’s good—“because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin.”

v. 23 And of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.’

“And of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, “The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.””

v. 24 The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs shall eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven shall eat.”

“The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs

shall eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven shall eat.”

God rendered judgment.

v. 25 Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife incited him.

“Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife incited him.”

Women have a powerful influence in the lives of men, either for good or for evil. And Jezebel was ugly when it came to wickedness.

We see this in his reign. He let Jezebel wear the pants in the family. We see it in the religion. She’s the one who made the choices for Baal. We see it in his relationship with her.

He’s laying with his face toward the wall crying while she picks up the letters and writes them and makes all the decisions to have the horrible things happen. She’s the one that killed the prophets of God too. And Obadiah had to deal with her, not with him.

There are a number of lessons that come out of that. Let’s look at them

Kind of a sober story, isn’t it?

Lesson #1: God is long-suffering and patient with us.

He hopes He might get a repentant response.

James 4:8-10

Draw near to God and he'll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he'll exalt you.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not willing that any should perish...

Lesson #2: The evils of a covetous heart—the evils of a covetous heart.

Ahab had everything he wanted but he did not have Naboth's vineyard.

There's a lesson in that. Paul tells Timothy, "Don't love money because it's the root of all evil." (see 1 Timothy 6:10)

And people who've gotten involved in that have been snared with many temptations. If we're living for material things we're never going to be satisfied. You're going to always want more and want more and want more.

And in this situation, the best verse that would have applied is 1 Timothy 6:

1 Timothy 6:6-10

Godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing in and we can take nothing out. So having food and clothing, let us therewith be content.

Philippians 4:12

I have learned to be content whether I'm hungry or full.

Hebrews 13:5

If your conversation be without covetousness, be content with such things as you have. For he has said I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Lesson #3: Happiness does not consist in what you have but in what you are.

Lesson #4: The Lord is aware of sin and injustice, isn't He?

So you don't have to take vengeance into our own hands. Just let the Lord handle it.

He sends Elijah into this situation immediately to deal with this.

His judgment is swift when the time of grace has run out.

Lesson #5: Ahab had prolonged periods to respond, but he never did.

That's the tragedy of his life.

Thomas Guthrie wrote an article—he's an old Puritan writer. It was the story of a guy who wanted to make something that would speak to living life with botched up priorities. And this is what he said:

It's the tale of the goblet which the genius of a heathen fashioned and was true and taught a moral which many a death-bed furnishes the melancholy illustration. Having made the model of a serpent, he fixed it in the bottom of the cup, coiled for the spring, a pair of gleaming eyes in its head, and in its open mouth, fangs raised ready to strike. It lays beneath the ruby red wine; nor did he who raised that golden cup to quench his thirst and drink the delicious wine suspect what lay below till as he reached the dregs, that dreadful head rose up and glistened before his eyes. So when life's cup is nearly emptied and sin's last pleasure taken and unwilling lips are draining the bitter dregs shall rise the ghastly terrors of remorse, death and judgment upon a despairing soul. Be assured a serpent lurks at the bottom of guilt's sweetest pleasure.

(source unknown)

Imagine taking a coffee cup and starting to drink and all of a sudden look into it and see this serpent rising up? That's what it's got to have been for Ahab in this situation.

Lesson #6: The power of personal relationships.

The power of personal relationships—for good and for evil.

Lesson #7: Be sure your sins will find you out.

Proverbs 28:13

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.

Deal with it before the Lord.

Lesson #8: The Lord didn't give up on Elijah even though he missed God's will.

He's still hanging in there. Still serving the Lord.

Father, we bow before You and feel much aware of Your presence here. It's been one of those incredible experiences today to see You go before us in every encounter and circumstance—to sense that You've been right there with us. How we praise You and thank You for that. We would pray that You might now be with each one and keep them safe and provide for us an attitude and heart that is open and receptive to divine truth. Bless us

abundantly we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About ELIJAH:

“Someone Who Watched God at Work”

Study Number Six – 1 Kings 21:1-25

NOTES

v. 1 Now it came about after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

v. 2 And Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, “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.”

v. 3 But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.”

v. 4 So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food.

v. 5 But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, “How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?”

v. 6 So he said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you a vineyard in its place.’ But he said, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’”

v. 7 And Jezebel his wife said to him, “Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

v. 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city.

v. 9 Now she wrote in the letters, saying, “Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth at the head of the people;

v. 10 and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, ‘You cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.”

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v. 11 So the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them.

v. 12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people.

v. 13 Then the two worthless men came in and sat before him; and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth, before the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.

v. 14 Then they sent word to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned, and is dead."

v. 15 And it came about when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead."

v. 16 And it came about when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

v. 17 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

v. 18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it.

v. 19 And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord, "Have you murdered, and also taken possession?"' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord, "In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs shall lick up your blood, even yours."'

v. 20 And 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.

v. 21 Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel;

v. 22 and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin.

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v. 23 And of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.'

v. 24 The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs shall eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven shall eat."

v. 25 Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife incited him.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Kings 21:1-25 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Why does Naboth refuse to give the vineyard to Ahab, according to verse 3?

3. How does Ahab respond to this denial from Naboth, according to verse 4?

4. Describe Jezebel's plan to acquire the vineyard for Ahab.

5. What does the Lord command Elijah to do in verses 18 & 19?

6. What has Ahab done to require Elijah to be confronting him at this time, according to verse 20?

7. What message of judgment is given against Ahab and Jezebel by the prophet in verses 21-24?

8. What part did Jezebel play in this evil record, according to verse 25?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lessons have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God is long-suffering and patient with us in the hopes that He might get a repentant response.

LESSON #2: Happiness consists not in having but in being. Happiness does not consist in what you have but in what you are.

LESSON #3: The Lord is aware of sin and injustice, and His judgment is swift when the time of grace has run out.

LESSON #4: Ahab had prolonged periods of time to respond, but he never did.

LESSON #5: The power of personal relationships, for good and for evil.

LESSON #6: Be sure your sins will find you out.

LESSON #7: The Lord didn't give up on Elijah even though he missed God's will.