

1 Kings 21:8-29

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles, go with me to 1 Kings, 1 Kings chapter 21, 1 Kings chapter 21. We'll be finishing that chapter this evening. We introduced it this past Wednesday.

We're rapidly coming upon the end of 1 Kings, just one more chapter after we finish this one. Wednesday night was business meeting night, so we kind of confined ourselves to the first seven verses of the 21st chapter.

So we'll pick up in verse 8, kind of give you a little bit of background information, and then we'll go to the end of the chapter there in verse 29. So let me get you caught up, and if you weren't here, or even if you were here, and you've lived a little bit of life between now and then, you might have forgotten something.

Ahab has desired to purchase or to trade for the field of Naboth. Naboth, a Jezreelite, had a vineyard next to Ahab's place there in Jezreel, and Ahab wanted it.

Naboth said he would not do it. He could not do it because the Lord forbid him to do it. He was quoting a scriptural principle where God says, You could not sell indefinitely or forever the inheritance of your fathers.

[1 : 13] We saw Wednesday that there was a grand difference in world views. Ahab was looking at matters of convenience and matters of where he thought he had the right to claim something. Naboth was looking at things from a spiritual point of view.

He was seeing it as a gift of the Lord. Naboth was living as if one was grander in authority, one was grander in position than even King Ahab who was standing before him. So that's kind of where we left it.

He went home and he was pouting about it. And his wife asked him why he was pouting about it and told him to act like a king, to get up and to take the land. And he didn't want to act like a king and as some Bible commentators said, Since Ahab wouldn't act like a king, Jezebel decided she would.

And that's where we pick up. We pick up in verse 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.

Now she wrote in the letter saying, 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.

[2 : 29] They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people. 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 they sent word to Jezebel saying, Naboth has been stoned and is dead. When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said, 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.

When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, to take possession of it. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, 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. 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 will lick up your blood, even yours. Ahab said to Elijah, Have you found me, O my enemy?

[3 : 47] And he answered, I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. 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.

And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Naboth, and like the house of Basha, the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin.

Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel. The one belonging to Ahab who dies in the city, dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field, the birds of heaven will eat.

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. He acted very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord cast out before the sons of Israel.

It came about when Ahab heard these words that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted. And he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the dishbite, saying, Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before me?

[4 : 59] Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days.

1 Kings 21 verses 8 through 29. I want you to see this evening some settled realities and unsettling times. What an unsettling time it is when the king wants a piece of land.

He won't get the piece of land, not because of legal matters or financial concerns, but because of spiritual realities. And the king who is ruling over God's people, a grand portion, ten tribes of the nation of Israel, is so unconcerned about spiritual realities that he goes home and he pouts about it.

And his wife, therefore, orchestrates this grand plot of having the individual, not only the individual murdered, but even the individual and his sons murdered. Because, you see, when we open up 2 Kings chapter 9, we are told that it is Naboth and his sons which are stoned outside of the city.

And it had to be his sons because if his sons had survived, then when Naboth died, the land would have went to his sons. But to ensure that Ahab could get his way, Jezebel decided to kill both him and his sons on false accusations.

[6 : 17] And they did it in such a manner that he was falsely accused. He was condemned of a spiritual misinterpretation. This should really strike us as being very much like the betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ on the night of his arrest, where two worthless men also stood up before the council and gave a false report.

And it was blasphemy that they were accusing him of. Here we see Naboth dies at the hands of these individuals. He is stoned to death and Ahab goes and just takes to the land. And what an unsettling time when this is the king of the people of Israel, but he is acting anything like a king, and he's definitely not acting anything like the king of God's people.

But in the midst of this, there are a number of things in this passage that we could see, but there are some settled realities that I want us to hold on to. Because quite honestly, when I'm studying it and I'm going through it, and I can list all of these things, and I can kind of break it down into about five or six different points, and then I ask myself the grand question, so what?

What does it mean to us if we see these facts as they're recorded in the scripture? So I've tried to condense it a little bit. I've brought it down from five or six to three, and I want you to see just the kind of so what's, because what can we learn from reading this account, and why is it even here?

The first thing I want you to know is that we must have an awareness of the influence and the failings of mankind. We must have an awareness of the influence and the failings of man.

[7 : 48] It is striking in this passage of scripture how much influence one individual has. And that individual in this passage of scripture is not the king, but it's the king's wife.

It is Jezebel. The king heard that Naboth would not give him the land, because Naboth stood his ground and said, The Lord forbid that I give you my land. He did not say that I'm not going to give it to you, because what you are providing for me is inferior or below the market value.

He said, I will not give it to you, because God has given a spiritual standard and a spiritual reality. Therefore, I'm operating on spiritual principles. Ahab did not argue.

You notice that, right? We have said that there is at least a little bit of a grain of good in Ahab. I know he's wicked and worthless, and we'll get to all that in just a minute. But when there was famine in the land, at least he was a king who was going around looking for water.

He was out among the people. He did not ever, as far as we know, try to kill Elijah, though he met him face to face several times. He was looking for him. There's at least a little bit of grain of good, but whatever grain may be present is completely erased by the influence that he allows to exist in his life.

[8 : 59] We see here that he goes home and he pouts about it, and he tells his wife. Now, he fails to tell Jezebel the spiritual principle. Don't miss that. When Jezebel asks why he's despondent and why he is kind of upset, he says, well, because I offered Naboth silver.

And I said, if silver's not enough, I'll give you this land. And he wouldn't give it to me. He said he's not going to do it. Now, he didn't say the reason he's not is because God said he forbids it. He just said he won't do it, because, see, in Jezebel's world, it didn't matter what God said.

She was not an Israelite. She was not a worshiper of the Lord Jehovah God. And yet Ahab refrains from telling the spiritual realities or the spiritual concerns, and therefore the influence is left to Jezebel.

Jezebel says, well, get up and act like a king. Now, what does that mean? You have to remember Jezebel is the daughter of a king, right? And being the daughter of the king, I'm sure that when she grew up, if her dad wanted something, he just went and took it, because they were the kings of the Amalekites.

And in that land, they would just go, I forget which nation it was, I think, or which language it is. But recently I read that the word for war in that language simply means get more cattle.

[10 : 07] So it is, to go to war means to go get more stuff. And I'm just going to go to battle, and I'm going to go get more stuff. Why? Because that's what it is. That's what you do. You act like a king, you go get it. And Ethan knows exactly what book that came out of.

It's a book of worthless information. The reason he knows it is because I let him use it. Useless knowledge book. I love that book. All kinds of useful stuff, right? But anyway, it is just to go gain more possessions.

That's what kings do, and Jezebel cannot understand why he's not doing that. So she says, since you can't do it, I'll do it for you. And we notice Ahab is pouting, and Jezebel is writing.

She does everything officially in a very unofficial way. She takes the official paper with the official pen, and she puts the official seal on it, and she sends it to the officials, and she makes an official accusation, even though it's a false one.

And she's doing everything by the letter of the law, because the letter of the law in the book of Deuteronomy says that if an individual was to blaspheme God, that they were to call a council or a fast, and they were to present that individual or seat that individual before all that were present at this fast, and they were to bring witnesses in.

[11 : 14] So they were doing everything according to the letter of the law, but it was all legally and morally wrong. But what we notice is that this non-Israelite lady is making very Israelite accusations.

And it says that she wrote to the leaders, it tells us there, that she wrote to those who were of reputation, the elders and the nobles of that city.

And she wrote to those elders and nobles, and they listened to her. They did everything that she told them to do. Now, we know that they weren't confused, thinking it came from Ahab, because when they gave the report back, who did they give the report to?

Jezebel. Then they told Jezebel, what you have commanded has been done. And then Jezebel went and told Ahab, he's dead. So these elders and nobles are influenced greatly by Jezebel.

And then we are told later that there was no one more wicked than Ahab. It tells us, surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Now look at this, comma, because Jezebel, his wife, incited him.

[12 : 32] Friend, we must be aware of the influence of even one person. This one person completely changed the dynamics of all of the events.

That is to say, it really does matter who we have around us. The influences we allow to exist, the influences that we allow to continuously and perpetually speak into our life, this is why we live in a world of influencers, quote unquote, people seeking to influence others.

And people find an influencer for anything they want to do. Any sin you would like to get into, any good thing you would like to get into, there is someone who can influence you on how to do it or why to do it or why you should or shouldn't do it.

We're in a world full of influencers, but it is important that we understand and that we pay very, very close attention to who we allow to exist among us.

Scripture is adamant about this. We must be aware of the reality of who is influencing who. It is something that we have to constantly be on guard for in our lives, in our kids' lives, and in our grandkids' lives.

[13 : 53] It is something that we must pay very, very close attention to. It is something that we must see and we must seek out. We must seek it out with intentionality. Intentionality. And we must pay very close attention to who is influencing our spiritual walk as well.

So we're aware of the influence of man, but along with the influence of man, we must also be aware of the failings of man. Not only can man influence you, and they will, mark my word, man will fail you.

It says that Jezebel, and it's repeated over and over and over and over again in just a few verses. Jezebel wrote to the elders and the nobles of his own city, of the city that Naboth lived in, of his own city.

It tells us multiple times that these were people of his city, of his city, of his city. Now, why is that important? Because Jezebel and Ahab live in where?

Samaria. They have a place in Jezreel, but they live in Samaria. That's the capital city. They're not from Jezreel, but Naboth is a what? Jezreelite.

[14 : 59] So he's from Jezreel. That's his hometown, right? He grew up there, and when she writes the letters, she writes to the people of his own city. Those who betrayed him were those who knew him his whole life.

Those who betrayed him were those who knew him, and they failed him. They make an accusation that he has blasphemed God and the king.

An unsubstantiated accusation. We are told that it was worthless men who made that accusation. Over and over again, we're told it's worthless individuals. I just, a side note here, you can find a worthless person to go along with anything you want to.

Just because you can get some agreement to it doesn't mean you ought to do it, right? There'll be somebody that'll agree to do it somewhere. But we notice this, we are told, because it is very becoming of us to be aware of this, these were people from his own city.

These were people who should have known his character and probably did. They should have known his family and they probably did. But these same people who were of his own city were so influenced by that one person, they stoned Naboth and his sons.

[16 : 12] Man will fail you. And the reason man will fail you is because it doesn't take much to influence them. We are aware of the influence and failings of man.

Number two, we also have this settled reality that there is an accountability of the individual before an omniscient God.

I know there are long points, but they bear repeating. There is an accountability of the individual before an omniscient God.

Jezebel has influenced this whole situation and she influenced the situation with men who failed Naboth, men who knew him better than they knew her. But because of the influence upon their lives by her, they failed him and stoned him.

She goes back to Ahab and she says, go get the land. Now, according to Israelite law, if no male descendants are alive to inherit the land, then the king has a legal right to take possession of the land.

[17 : 25] So what she did is she just made a legal way for him to take the land. And she knew what she was doing. It was premeditated. She looked at Ahab and she said, okay, go take the land because he who said he would not sell it to you for silver is no longer alive for he is dead.

And the implication is there, not only is he is dead, but every male in his family is dead. And since they're all dead, the throne now has a right to claim the land. I'm telling you, this is pretty messed up stuff.

We can acknowledge that and admit that. And Ahab says, well, that's a good word. Now, just like he did not tell her, the reason Naboth wouldn't sell it was because of spiritual realities. She did not tell him how Naboth was dead.

She just said he's not alive. And then he goes to take possession of his land. On the outside, it looks good. I mean, who's going to stand up? The elders and the nobles of the city, they were in on it, right?

It's all, it's an open and shut case. This land now belongs to Ahab. It's right next to this place. The problem is, is there's a God who sees all. There's an omniscient God who understands and sees all.

[18 : 31] And he has always got people who are un, who are uninfluenced by those who change society. Look at what it says. And then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite. That is, Elijah didn't know any of these matters.

Elijah would have had no reality of what had just transpired. But it was the revelation of the word of the Lord that came to the man of God who declared to him what had been done.

So now we have the word of the Lord coming to Elijah the Tishbite. And look what it says. Arise and go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel who is in Samaria. So God tells him he's going to go take possession of the land. Now this is what God says.

Now you know the account. Jezebel writes the letter. Jezebel sends the letter. Jezebel gets the letter delivered to the elders and the nobles. The elders and the nobles bring in some worthless men.

The men of the city kill and stone Naboth and his sons. But this is what God says. God says to him, have you murdered and also taken possession?

[19 : 32] See Ahab is held accountable for the matters which he should have stopped. He said well Ahab didn't do it. But Ahab's king. Right? It was Ahab's actions which started the whole reality.

If Ahab had accepted the statement that the Lord forbid that I sell the land and if the spiritual reality had settled the matter then nothing would have went any further. Ahab's bitterness and his anger led to the murder of Naboth.

And the murder of Naboth now is charged to Ahab. Jezebel is not off the case. We'll get to it in just a minute. But now all of a sudden Ahab has to stand and give an account to an omniscient God.

Because while in the eyes of man it may be okay the eyes of God see everything clearly. We have this reality that there is an accountability for every individual.

Jezebel will be held accountable for her actions. We can be assured that the elders and the nobles and the worthless men are held accountable for their actions. But Ahab is not going to get his land and get away with it because he's going to be held accountable for his actions as well.

[20 : 38] So no matter who we let influence us we as individuals will all stand before an omniscient God and give an account someday. Man will influence and man will fail.

But it is the individual who is held accountable. And as individuals we will stand before a God who knows all even the intentions of our own hearts. He knows the desires and the ambitions and even the motivations behind why we do and why we say what we say.

See Ahab would not accept the reality that God did not allow him to possess the land but rather he wanted it and in his world view he should have it. And through his world view he did get it.

But God's going to hold him accountable and still does. Each of us is accountable before a God who knows and sees all. There is an accountability of the individual before an omniscient God.

Now the most amazing thing we see this awareness of the influence and failings of man. We see the accountability of the individual before an omniscient God.

[21 : 52] Third and finally we stand in an amazement at the mercy extended to the repentant one. There is an amazing thing that happens at the end of this chapter and we stand with amazement at the reality of the mercy of God that is extended.

Elijah comes with a very clear word. Elijah begins speaking in third person actually begins speaking in the presence of God as God when Ahab says have I met you or have you found me oh my enemy and he says well I'm not enemies because of anything I've done we're enemies because of what you've done.

and Elijah declares to Ahab things that will happen by the way every prophetic word is fulfilled we'll talk about in just a minute it all comes about just as Elijah says verse 25 is there in the midst of this and I'm so thankful that verse 25 proceeds 25 and 26 proceed verses 27 28 and 29 they seem to be kind of out of place because it seems to be a repetition we are told in the 21st verse that when God is making well actually it's in verse 20 he says I have found you because you have sowed yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord there Elijah begins to declare the evil intentions of Ahab but we are told just how evil Ahab is immediately before we are told just how grand the mercy of God is verse 25 says surely there was no one like Ahab it's not a good thing it says surely there was no one like Ahab who sowed himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord because Jezebel his wife incited him he acted very abominably in following idols according to all that the Amorites had done whom the Lord had cast out before the sons of Israel so the author of the word of God wants us to know this man had nothing good going for him right there was no one as wicked as he was because of the influence of his life he was most desperately wicked but look at what it says it came about when Ahab heard these words that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before me because he has humbled himself before me

I will not bring the evil in his days but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days Ahab actually repents now it's not a repentance that lasts don't think that he's a believer it's not that but this has been a number of seasons coming we've had the rain that has stopped we've had the showdown on Mount Carmel we've had the rain that came we've had the battle and the war which preceded this event in which Elijah was held accountable by one of the prophets of God who met him as he came home with the spoils of war and each time all that happens is Ahab goes home and Ahab goes home and Ahab goes home this time Ahab hears the word hears the accusation of the word of God hears the declared judgments of God and he is broken over it this time he humbles himself it says and he puts on sackcloth and he doesn't just walk around in it he actually sleeps in it he lives in it for a little while and God takes notice now we're not told this so that we may see the goodness and righteousness of Ahab because he is not righteous we see this so that we can be overwhelmed by the mercy of God it is God's great and grand mercy that stays his hands of judgment in light of Ahab's repentant attitude and if Ahab that there was no one like him and if Ahab who done such wicked deeds at the sign of his repentance

God would respond to that where does all other men and mankind stand if God could respond to that with mercy what about those others of the nation of Israel now this does not void the prophetic word of Elijah for the blood of Ahab will be spilt it will be his son's blood who is spilt at that vineyard that the dogs will come lick up his blood that's still in the lineage of scripture the blood of Ahab Jezebel will be eaten by dogs that is by the way dogs are unclean in Jewish thought and this is one of the most defiling ways to be unburied in Jewish thought is of utter offense to the individual so more than likely Naboth and his sons were allowed to just openly decay in the field this is why the blood was licked up by the dogs they had shown them great dishonor that same dishonor is extended to

[27 : 09] Ahab's family Ahab will die in battle we'll see that but we see the mercy of God on display the same God who declares these judgments is also the same God who responds to man's repentance and if that God in the Old Testament who responds to the repentance of an individual who humbles himself how much more so when the greatest and grandest of all sinners falls humbly on his face at the cross of Jesus Christ where the payment has been made in full how much more must we be overwhelmed by the reality that there is none so wicked none so desperately unrighteous that the righteousness of God cannot reach down and redeem them and save them this is why Paul could say he was the chief of sinners because he knew the reality that the mercy of God the grand mercy of an ever loving God is so much greater than the wickedness of man sure we see that man can influence and fail us sure we understand that each individual is accountable before a holy God but the reality of that accountability ought to create within us a humbling of our hearts it ought to create a repentant nature and in repentance we see that even the greatest of sinners can fall on his face and God would welcome him it's an amazing thing

God doesn't have to stay his hand of judgment but he does why because the story is not about Ahab and Jezebel and Naboth the story is about the Lord God Almighty so what is he's still in control he sees all he knows all he holds all accountable and he's even welcome and willing to receive all who come to him in faith Ahab doesn't it's short lived and God will not be mocked and a random man will draw his bow at random and shoot an arrow in a random direction and it will pierce the very one joint of armor in Ahab's armor and he will die in his own sins but God is not a big mean God who leaves man without excuse he is a God who graciously mercilessly or mercifully extends his hand time and time and time again and yet

Ahab will not respond and the question is I know that we see this and we know people in our lives and we say oh I wish they would respond if God can humble see the humility of Ahab how much more of those individuals around us may we not fail to pray for them and may not fail to continue to share with them that there is a God who responds to the repentant heart of every individual and he is a God who knows all sees all and may we see that there are some settled realities in unsettling times sure some people have great influence and many people will fail us every individual will be held accountable before an omniscient God but that is a God who is very rich in mercy and he is willing and able to respond to the repentant believer let's pray and then we'll be dismissed God we thank you so much for this day I thank you that when we open up the word of God that we see the truths that it contains but we know that these truths point us not just to the historical realities but they point us to the

God of history so God we're overwhelmed and we're amazed at who you are you know all see all and you do all Lord you're also willing to Lord I know there may be individuals who are on our hearts and minds people that do not know you that we are aware of we pray for them we ask Lord that you would work in a mighty way in their lives if given the opportunity Lord may you help us to be the Elijahs who would stand up and declare the truth boldly help us to be the!

who live according to spiritual principles for spiritual realities even though it may cost us Lord help us to shun the influences of others around us and may we be those who influence those that are near us for your glory and your honor and your praise Lord be with us as we leave here tonight we ask that as we depart from this place we would be utilized and used for the kingdom for your praise and your honor for you are worthy oh God and we ask it in Jesus name amen thank you guys really so Thank you.

[32 : 40] Thank you.