

1 Kings 21:1-7

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Date: 17 July 2024

[0 : 00] be it this evening. 1 Kings 21, and we're going to limit ourselves to the first seven verses, so verses one through seven. And I'm limiting myself because of the business meeting, and I want to take some time, I want to have the time at the end for us to spend in prayer.

So very easily we could just make our way through the entire chapter, and on a normal Wednesday or Sunday night we would. But so we're kind of just introducing the chapter, and you'll see why in just a moment, hopefully. But let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much.

Thank you for the day you've given us, and just so grateful for the opportunity we have of gathering together. Father, I thank you for each one that's here, and I thank you for the grand privilege it is of opening up the Word of God with one another. So Lord, I pray as we open it up, we would see it with clarity. We'd see it and the truth that it contains in order that truth would have a direct impact upon our lives. We pray that the application would be real, it would be lived out.

And we pray that all that takes place in this place tonight would be God-honoring and Christ-glorifying. Be it through the business portion, through the prayer time. Lord, the work that's going on with the youth and the children, we pray for that. And Lord, just in all things, we ask that you would be exalted in our midst, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, still making our way through first kings. We're still during the reign of Ahab. So real quick synopsis of where we're at.

The majority of first kings deals with the northern kingdom, especially the latter part of first kings, until we get to maybe one small mentioning there in the last chapter, next to last chapter, as it references the southern kingdom. So we're kind of focusing on the northern kingdom. And if you remember, that's the kingdom that very quickly, as soon as it was divided, after Solomon's reign, when his son Rehoboam came into power, made a very unwise council, said, I'm stronger than my dad, and all this other stuff, took the advice of those who grew up with him rather than the elders who ruled. But this was of God. So we need to know, we don't ever need to forget the sovereignty of God as it affects the history of man. And I say that in that it's really easy to get discouraged when we see what's going on. And it's real easy to kind of get down and out saying, well, that just doesn't make any sense. Man is really messing this up. And man is messing this up. But let's not be surprised by that because man's been messing things up since the garden, right? We've been messing things up since the very beginning when God said, here's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here's the tree of life.

[2 : 34] Don't eat from that tree. You have free reign from every other tree, which included the tree of life. And man took from the one tree, which he was not supposed to eat from. So man has been fouling things up from the very beginning. When we see the nation divided, we realize that this was a direct result of Solomon's sin of having a divided heart. And we begin to see the wages and the outcome of that.

Now the divided nation. So you have Northern Kingdom, Southern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom, the lineage of David stays true. So there's one lineage of Kings in the Southern Kingdom. The family of David stays upon the throne all the way up until we go into captivity. And even during the Babylonian captivity, the lineage of David is still there. That's important for our biblical interpretation. We see that when we get into second Kings. The reason that's important is because we pick that account back up in Matthew and we see the lineage of Christ. And we're looking for the seed of David who would sit upon the throne of David eternally. We meet that in Jesus Christ. The Northern Kingdom, you have nine dynasties in a much shorter period. They last approximately 200 years less than the Southern Kingdom. So they fall to the Assyrians. But from the very beginning, we see the Northern Kingdom, which is Israel, kind of rebelling and revolting against the Lord God. They started out, you want to remember, kind of making some adjustments as to how they worship God. They set up golden calves and they wanted to do it. They wanted to still worship God, but worship in their own way, in their own place, in their own manners. And then it eventually turned

into, well, we can worship God and these other gods. And then we come to Ahab, who is the king that's reigning during this time and says, no, we're just going to replace God with Baal. You know why he did that because of his choice of bride, Jezebel, his wife, whose name is just notorious throughout scripture. We find her even all the way into the book of Revelation, right? And she is synopsis with rebellion and false worship and all this leading away from God. If you read the letters to the seven churches, those who follow the way of

Jezebel are those who go into false worship and those who try to replace God with the worship of another God, lowercase g. So really things are going south in the Northern Kingdom really quickly, but we know God always has his people. He always has his person. Elijah was there. We've seen all that.

Now we kind of come to this instance, which we're going to introduce tonight in the 21st chapter, where we kind of see in the introduction, I'm going to give it to you, a conflict of worldviews.

[5 : 11] Because we would get caught up in what happens as opposed to why it happens. And it pertains a man, it applies to a man in his field, and we know how it all comes out. Again, we'll see the prophecy, and this will be kind of one of the doom and glooms. This chapter is a dark chapter, but I will tell you by the time we get to the end, we also see just the wonder of God's grace and mercy in it as well.

We're not going to get there tonight because we're going to limit ourselves for the sake of time. Just the first seven verses, I know you say, well, Pastor, you keep saying that, right? Because I know I'm cutting it midway, right? And you're going to say, well, keep going, but we don't need to keep going because then we'd have to go on through the rest of the chapter and we'd be here all night.

So anyway, we'll start in verse one of the 21st chapter there in 1 Kings. It says, 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.

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 and money. But Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers. 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.

[6 : 35] And he laid down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food. But Jezebel, his wife, came to him and said to him, How is it that your spirit is so sullen and that you are not eating food?

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.

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.

Just like Jezebel, to come in there and save the day, right? We'll see how she does it when we finish the story. Many of you have read the story, you know how things happen. Jezebel's planning and all the petitioning and everything she does will actually come back and haunt the family as it moves forward.

But anyway, here we have the story of Naboth, the Jezreelite, who has a vineyard in Jezreel, and Ahab, the king of the northern kingdom of Israel. And I want you to see this conflict of worldviews, because this is what's going to cause the problem.

[7 : 38] That is, how they see the world, and how they see the governing authorities in the world, and how they make their decisions upon this reality, because it's something that is true here.

And the nation of Israel had gotten to this point, the nation, the northern tribe, had gotten to this point because of their false worship. But it's just as true today, because we have this conflict of worldviews still today in our day and time, and it really goes back to worship, because what we worship, or what we see as the greater being, will be how we see our world, and how we make decisions based upon that.

So we see this conflict being played out, and it will be played out in a dramatic fashion as we make our way through the chapter. But we just want to see, how do these things come about? How does it come about?

I'll go ahead and give you the spoiler, and I know you've read the story, but not only do we see in this chapter, but we see in 2 Kings chapter 9 that Naboth and his sons all get stoned. That the whole family, every male in the family, gets killed over this event.

How do we get there? How did this happen, and how does it happen over this one piece of land? Well, really, it just depends on how you see the world, and how you see your place within it. The first thing we see is there is the view of convenience.

[8 : 50] Ahab is reigning in the northern kingdom. Now, the capital of Israel is Samaria. Samaria is about 50 miles away from Jezreel.

It's pretty close to the southern kingdom of Judah, but Samaria is the capital city. We've already noticed this, and we've seen it in chapters prior to this, that Ahab not only is living in the capital city of Samaria, he also has a residence in the city of Jezreel.

Jezreel, if you look on a map, is along one of the major trade routes of the kingdoms, plural, of that time. So it's a prominent city. Samaria is not.

It's south of the trade routes. No trade routes run through it, but Jezreel runs smack dab in the middle of one of what is, what we qualified as an international trade route. It is also closer to the birthplace or the home place of Jezebel.

So he has a house over there, and he has a house over here. He's not reigning from Jezreel because the place of reign is Samaria, but he resides, and he has a palace in Jezreel because he's king.

[10 : 03] He can do whatever he wants to, or so he thinks. He is the one who is dictating how things happen. So Ahab has this place over here, and it tells us that, Behold Naboth the Jezreelite.

Now, Naboth the Jezreelite belongs there. This is his hometown. This is not just a place of convenience that was closer to his in-laws. This is not just a place of prominence that is on a major trade route, and if you want to be an important person of the kingdom, you want to live somewhere around the major trade route, right?

This is where he's from. If you go look at the distribution of the land, this is the tribal allotment of Naboth's family. I believe it's Issachar, the tribe of Issachar, and this is where they get their land, and it's a very small portion that they are given, and Jezreel's right smack dab in the middle of it. So this is his given inheritance to his family when, if you're reading through Scripture, Joshua comes in, and they divide up the land there at the end of the book of Joshua. Joshua's been in his family ever since then.

Ahab, not so much. This is a place of convenience. This is a place of, well, ease. And all of a sudden, he goes into the city, and he notices he has a palace there, but beside his palace, there's a vineyard. And he wants the vineyard not because of its appeal, but just because of its proximity.

[11 : 16] That is, it's a convenient vineyard that's right next to his palace. And he wants it not for a vineyard, but he wants it for a vegetable garden. So, as king, he believes he has the right, and he believes he has at least every legitimate right, and who's going to tell him no, to get this piece of property because it's next to his palace in the city that he likes to live in, even though it's not the capital city.

So what we see is that Ahab is first behaving with a mindset of convenience. This is close to me, so give it to me. It makes more sense for me to have it.

We don't know where Naboth lives. We don't know, but we know his vineyard's here. We know he is a Jezreelite, so this is his city. It doesn't tell us that he lives on the vineyard, but this is his vineyard. This is his family's land. But it seems to be more convenient because the king has a palace there, so Ahab thinks, well, since this is the thing most convenient to me, we know in the chapter, if you look, it is not that Ahab has a lack of land.

I'm not trying to beat the horse here, but I want you to notice this. He has what he calls better vineyards that he will give him in place of this one. It's not that he needs the land.

It's just that it's next to his palace. And since it's next to him, it seems that it makes the most sense, since he is king, that he should have it because he wants it. Too often, people make decisions based upon that which is most convenient.

[12 : 42] The thing that seems to be the closest to me, or the thing that, in all accounts, makes the most sense. And Ahab is doing that.

He is operating by a mindset or a worldview of convenience. It's close to me. This is where my palace is. It only makes sense that I have it. And since it makes sense that I have it, I'm going to

take it.

The problem is he runs into a Naboth. But we understand this reality here that even in today's time, that most of our physical decisions, and if we're to be honest, most of our spiritual decisions are based upon convenience.

That is, that which is easiest to do. That which does not maybe cost me a lot of sacrifice. It is that which seems to be already around where I'm at. It's where I like to be at.

It's where I'm most comfortable at. He didn't hang out in Samaria. He hung out in Jezreel. And since this is where his palace is, now the wording seems to imply that he probably, after asking for the land, went back to Samaria, which was less than a day's journey for them.

[13:42] But yet he really wanted it because that's where he'd like to be. And it was very convenient to his palace there. And it just seemed to appeal to him. And he's king. And too often we make decisions that way, that this is convenient.

It's next to me. It's easy. It makes more sense that I have it than that you have it. And we see that he does that. And he's even willing to pay a little bit of price for it.

But this viewpoint of convenience really only benefits one person. And that is Ahab. Ahab really wants it, thinks he should get it, but he doesn't get it.

Well, he does at the end. And then he gets it later on, as we will see. So you have this viewpoint of convenience. The second thing that we notice in here is this implied view that you should have would be a view of conformity.

Ahab expected Naboth to give him the field. And the reason he did is because, we are told, he is king of Israel. He expected Naboth to conform to what everyone else was doing.

[14:53] It is amazing when we read this. We are told, when we read the northern kingdoms, kind of the history. Now we're not given the history of all of God's people. But we're given the history of God's interaction with his people.

And how quickly this whole portion of the land of Israel and the people of Israel has a people group, which encompassed 12 tribes. But how quickly these 10 tribes forsook the Lord their God.

And they really were just following the leadership of the people that were ahead of them. They were submitting and succumbing and even conforming to what the leaders were doing.

They said, well, if the leaders say that we need to worship the golden cast because it's too inconvenient to go down to Jerusalem, I guess we'll worship the golden cast. And oh, well, if the leaders say that we need to worship Baal instead of doing that, they would just continue to conform to these realities.

And whatever it is the leader wanted to do, more than likely the people kept doing. Now we know there are some. There are 7,000 who have not bowed the knee or kissed the Baal, we are told.

[15:53] But yet we see the majority of the people are conforming. And it is for this conforming to the sins and the wickedness of the kings that God will judge the northern kingdom first. This is why the Assyrians come in.

They are an instrument of judgment for their rebellion. Each one, each individual is held accountable for how they conformed or did not conform to this reality of what was going on.

Ahab makes the offer and he expects there will be no resistance. And we know that he expects that because of his actions that come for it. He says, I'll give you a better vineyard. Now I find it humorous because it is Ahab who determines which one is better.

Maybe Naboth thought his own was better, right? But the king said, well, I'll tell you, I've got a better one or I'll give you the price of it in silver. I know it says money, but it's just implied there. I'll just weigh out silver to you.

I'll pay you for it. And there's the full expectation that these things would come about. And we know it because Ahab goes home. It tells us sullen and vexed and sits upon his couch or his bed and turns his face away from the table and won't even.

[16:54] He's pouting. That's what he's doing. Okay, he's pouting because this shouldn't have happened. Because in his world, everybody just conforms to what he wants.

And everybody should behave and live and operate the way he expects them to. We would think by now he would have understood with his encounters with Elijah, even with the happenings of Mount Carmel.

We would expect that he may have would have learned his lesson. He learns his lesson at the end of the chapter and then later on we understand he really didn't learn it. But at this moment, his

expectation is that people would just conform to his desires.

Too often, we, for lack of a better word, go through some pouting of our own because people don't always conform to what we think they would.

They don't do. People don't behave the way we expected them to. We thought that what we had was a great idea and how we saw things would be the same way that everybody else would see things.

[17:58] And we thought that everybody else would be just jump right on board. And even if we were offering them something, what we perceived to be better than what they have, because they don't want this. It's next to my house, so to say.

We would expect everybody would conform to that. And then we get so upset when they don't. But this is that viewpoint of conformity. We think that everybody's going to see things the way we do.

The third one is the one that's really that gets us in trouble.

It's a viewpoint of conviction. And this is where we encounter Naboth. Now, after that which was convenient to Ahab and that which he expected everyone to conform to didn't happen.

Jezreel, it's like I said, he leaves Jezreel and goes back to Samaria. And Jezreel looks at him and says, in the original language, implication is there, aren't you the king?

Why don't you act like the king? So now this is where we get this conflict. Jezreel brings the reality to mind. She says, you're king. So what you say should happen.

[19:11] And she's going to make it happen. She's going to, she said, well, if you're not going to play the part of the king, I will play the part of the king. And she does. She takes the king's seal. She takes the king's paperwork. She does all these things. We'll see that. But the implication is, why are you upset when you're the king?

And since you're the king, you should have the authority to do whatever it is you want to do, at least in her mindset. But the problem is there's a Naboth. And Naboth operates with a viewpoint of conviction.

And it's the one really that God calls each and every one of us to have this worldview of conviction. And the conviction is this. It is a grand conviction of who indeed has the greatest power upon the earth.

It is the conviction that the one standing before you is not the end all be all. And we see it here because as soon as they have asked the question, he is king.

We know he's king. We know he has a lot of people around him. We understand that. Naboth answers very quickly in verse 3, the Lord.

[20:20] Now, he uses the covenant name of the Lord. It's Yahweh, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. So all of a sudden, he's not just saying the God who's up there. He's saying the God that I'm in a covenant relationship with.

The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers. Here's the conviction. Ahab, no matter if you're king, no matter if this makes more sense to you, no matter if you're offering me something better, you don't get the last word.

Because the conviction is settled that there is someone greater than you that I must answer to. And he says, the Lord forbid. Now, the king is asking, but he declares the Lord forbid.

He says, there's one greater than you, king, that says, I can't do it. Now, what is he referencing? He's referencing the book of Leviticus. If you go back to Leviticus chapter 25, starting in Leviticus chapter 25, somewhere around verse 23, maybe a little bit prior to that and following.

God gives this great declaration concerning the land. He does it elsewhere, too. It's not just a one-time place. He talks about when they distributed land and divide the land. God makes this declaration. It's when it refers to the year of Jubilee and all these realities.

[21:39] He said that you should not sell forever your father's property. You cannot sell your property to another man. And then God makes this declaration. Because this is my land.

The land belongs to the Lord God. And you are a tenant upon my land. See, Ahab saw himself as the king of the land.

But Naboth operated under the conviction that there was one greater than the king of the land who actually owned the land. And it was the one who owned the land who had told him he didn't have a right to sell the land.

And it didn't matter how powerful, how authoritative, how grand of a position this individual before him who was asking for it was. The conviction was God forbid it because the word of God says I

can't do it.

And it is the covenant of God that has ensured that it would stay with me. And it is his land. So he knew the reality that this may be convenient. And it may have appeal.

[22 : 42] And it may actually prosper me a little bit in this life. But the reality is, is there is another king that I have to stand before someday. Maybe the vineyard would be better that Ahab was offering him.

Maybe the silver would have been beneficial. We don't know much about Naboth's reality. But what we do know is that he could have been enriched by selling the land. But he said, I'm not going to do it because the temporary gain of this life does not compare to the eternal judgment that I will have for forsaking what God had committed.

It is a conviction of the things of heaven are greater than the things of this earth. And it was a conviction that there was one greater that he had to be accountable to than the one who was offering him this great offer.

And he was operating with a worldview of conviction. Now, we would love to say that that conviction, we're going to read the rest of it, not tonight, is a great way to be.

And it is. It's how we ought to live. But do not lose the reality that that viewpoint of conviction costs Naboth and his family dearly. They die for it.

[23 : 57] But he did not move away from it. Nowhere in scripture are we told that if we live with a godly conviction in a godless world that it would always come out good. But we are commanded to live with a godly conviction in a godless world in spite of the outcome.

It's easy to say, well, in the end, Ahab gets the land. You're right. But the conviction is the one Naboth stood before at the moment of his death was greater than the one who killed him and ended his life.

There is this conviction that changes how we view the things we do in this world. And we need to have that viewpoint, that worldview of reality, that the one we stand before is not always those who stand before us.

The one we stand before is the one who has spoken to us with clarity in his word. Now, we're not the nation of Israel. So, you know, we can make our land transactions. We understand that. You know, I was actually on the way home this morning.

I was listening to Moody Radio. And they were talking, happened to be talking about the land and who does the land belong to and all this reality of the land of Israel and, you know, in particular, all that. We can go all the way back to Scripture and we can look at these things and see that.

[25 : 10] I know that. That's a covenant relationship that God had entered into. So it's not like I'm sitting here saying you can't sell your daddy's land, you know. I wish my grandparents hadn't sold their land.

I look back a few generations ago, oh, that would have been nice. The reason I kind of wish it now is because it's worth a lot of money now. I wish, you know, I probably would have been that guy who sold it. But the reality is not that that's a sin to sell.

It's the conviction of when the world asks us to compromise the clear commands that God has given us. It is the conviction that when we're living in this covenant relationship with the holy God, that his commands are greater than the world's suggestions.

It may be convenient for the world for us to align with their worldview. It may be more convenient for them for us to conform to their reality.

But the people of God have always been called to live by conviction. And conviction that sometimes costs dearly. But it is a conviction that is a reality that we must live with.

[26 : 16] Because if we don't, we'll just give it all up and forsake everything God's called us to do. Now, we'll see how God is faithful to this when we finish this story.

But I want you to see, really, what we see in this whole account of a man with a vineyard in Jezreel. It's just a clash in worldviews. It's the same thing that happens in our life each and every day.

It's just a clash in worldviews. How we handle that, what side we fall on, really is based upon our convictions. As we see what God has said and how serious we take it.

And we see it in 1 Kings 21, verses 1-7. I better stop right there, or I'll get preachy, and we'll keep going. And we got business that we have to take care of.

Miss Lynn will start throwing stuff at me, and then we'll all get in trouble. So here we go. All right. All right. All right.