



March 22, 2015

1 Kings 21

"Stand Your Ground"

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We were introduced to King Ahab when Elijah confronted him about the idolatry Ahab had permitted to proliferate in the nation of Israel. The problem was that Ahab had allowed the influence of his pagan wife, Jezebel, to lead the people away from God. In this study we'll learn important lessons from the lives of Ahab and Naboth, concerning character, courage, and convictions.

Historical Background

1. **1 Kings 21:1-4** - *"Some time later there was a incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. Ahab said to Naboth, 'Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth.' But Naboth replied, 'The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.' So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat."*
2. Ahab's "pity party" helps us learn a lot about his weak character and his instability.
3. Ahab was a complicated man and a corrupt king, and there are seven full chapters in **1 Kings** (more than any other king, except Solomon) that tell his story, and the reason he gets as much coverage as he does is because he is a *really bad king*.
 - a. **1 Kings 16:30** - *"... he did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than all the kings before him."*

- b. **1 Kings 16:33** - "... he did more to provoke the Lord... to anger than all the kings before him."
 - c. **1 Kings 21:25-26** - "(There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel.)"
4. Ahab's life came to a tragic end when he died in battle and dogs licked up his blood, just as the prophet Elijah had predicted.
 5. **1 Kings 21** paints the picture of Ahab's pathetic life, and the depths of his wickedness, greed, and anger, in addition to his passive and sullen personality.

Naboth

6. Naboth was a true follower of God, and we know this to be the case, because he invoked the name of the Lord when he responded to Ahab's request.
7. Naboth's vineyard was in close proximity to the king's palace, and its location and desirability caused Ahab to want to seize the land for his vegetable/herb garden.
8. Naboth firmly stated that his land was not for sale, so Ahab made a counteroffer to exchange properties or pay Naboth for what the land was worth.
9. Naboth did a very courageous thing, which was based on principle, when he denied the king's request, because he knew his refusal might have cost him his life.

Ahab

10. This wasn't the first time Ahab went home "*sullen and angry.*"
11. In **1 Kings 20**, after Ahab had been victorious (a victory God gave them) over Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram (Syria).
 - a. **1 Kings 20:28** - "*The man of God [unnamed] of God came up and told the king of Israel, 'This is what the Lord says... 'I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the Lord.'*"
12. After the victory, is a weird twist to the story, referred to Ben-Hadad, the king he had just defeated, as his "*brother!*"

13. It's remarkable to note that he made a treaty with Ben-Hadad and set his new friend free!
14. In [1 Kings 20:42-43](#), we read that after Ahab set Ben-Hadad free, and unnamed prophet came to Ahab and said: "... *'This is what the Lord says: 'You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.'* Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria."

Jezebel

15. [1 Kings 21:5-7](#) - *"His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, 'Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?' He answered her, 'Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, 'Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.' Jezebel his wife said, 'Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.' "*
16. We learn the details of her scheme in [1 Kings 21:8-16](#), and how she planned and carried out the killing of an innocent man and his sons, who may have been killed while attempting to defend their father.
- a. [2 Kings 9:26](#) - *"Yesterday I [God] saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, declares the Lord, and I will surely make you pay for it on this plot of ground..."*

God Always Knows

17. God always takes notice of injustice, and Jezebel will certainly be judged for her actions.
- a. [Nahum 1:3](#) - *"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished."*
- b. [Deuteronomy 32:43](#) - *"... [God] will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people."*
- c. [Romans 12:19](#) - *"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."*
- d. [Ecclesiastes 8:11-13](#) - *"When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong. Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent*

before God. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.”

18. [2 Kings 9:30-37](#) provides the details of Jezebel’s horrible death.

The Rest Of The Story

19. It’s reasonable to assume that Naboth knew what would happen to him if he didn’t give his vineyard to Ahab, so why didn’t he just sell out and be done with it?

20. The reason he didn’t just do whatever it took to save his life was because Naboth was a man of principle, courage, and conviction.

21. In the agrarian society in which he lived, Naboth knew that the land was his life and his source of income, because his livelihood depended on the land.

22. Another reason he wouldn’t part with his land was because it was his inheritance from the Lord.

23. [1 Kings 21:3](#) - *“... Naboth replied, ‘The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ ”*

24. Naboth and Ahab were polar opposites.

a. Ahab was a wicked king who worshiped idols and embraced the idea of entitlement to the max!

i. Wicked old Ahab made every effort possible to persuade the righteous man to compromise, and when he wouldn’t give in, the righteous man paid dearly for his convictions.

b. Naboth was a righteous man who worshiped God and cherished God’s inheritance.

25. Naboth is one of the unsung heroes of the Bible.

26. Naboth held on to his land because it represented something more than dirt; its value wasn’t in acreage, but in heritage.

27. Naboth was unwilling to relinquish what God had given him, no matter what someone else offered or how sweet the deal was or what it would end up costing him!

28. There are Ahabs and Jezebels today, and they will never stop trying to get us to compromise when they charm us with the idea that there's something better, something more, or something more attractive.
29. Pastor Gary said, "If anything causes us to relinquish our values, convictions, honor, or virtue, we must say, 'No!'"
30. [1 Peter 1:3-4](#) - *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you."*
31. Pastor Gary encouraged us to remember that when the Ahabs and Jezebels come (and we can be sure they will come!) we shouldn't sell out, but stand firm for what's right, guard what has been entrusted to us, keep the faith, and never relinquish what God has given us!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [1 Kings 21:1-7](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share examples of times when they've hosted a "pity party."
4. How have the Ahabs and Jezebels caused you to compromise your principles?
5. Spend time talking about Naboth's courage, convictions, and principled life.
6. How has the Lord helped you in specific situations when you were courageous enough to hold to your convictions?
7. Read and discuss the Scriptures that demonstrate that God always takes notice of injustice. (See #17 above)
8. Have there been times when you've disregarded your inheritance from the Lord?
9. Read and discuss [1 Peter 1:3-4](#).

10. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: remember that God always takes notice of injustice, and he will do what's right; remember Pastor Gary's challenge to not sell out, but to stand firm for what's right, guard what has been entrusted, keep the faith, and never relinquish what God has given.