

Ahab & Jezebel

Ahab wants a vineyard

1 Kings 21

Naboth had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. And Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your vineyard for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if you prefer, I will buy it from you." But Naboth said, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers." And Ahab went into his house disturbed and sullen. And he lay down on his bed, face to the wall, and would eat no food.

Jezebel his wife came to him, and said, "Why are you so disturbed that you won't eat?" And he said, "Because Naboth said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" And Jezebel said, "Are you the King of Israel? Arise, eat, and cheer up. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth."

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city. The letters said, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people; and set two evil fellows beside him, and have them accuse him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him to death." And the men of his city, the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jezebel had said. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead."

Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, which he refused to sell you; for Naboth is dead." And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead,

Ahab arose to take the vineyard. 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. And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood."'"

Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" 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; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male child; because you

Ahab asks Naboth for his vineyard



have made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel the Lord said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel.' Any one belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and any one of his who dies in the country the birds of the air shall eat."

There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife urged on. He did very wickedly going after idols, as the Amorites had done.

And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about dejectedly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house." ■

Soldiers search for Jezebel's body



Ahab's family destroyed

1 Kings 21

Later on, Elijah's prophecies about Ahab and Jezebel came to pass. Ahab went to war against Syria with the King of Judah, Jehosaphat. He had been told by the prophet Micaiah that he would die in the battle.

So instead of dressing like a King normally would, he dressed like a soldier and Jehosaphat dressed like a King. But as he was riding in a chariot he was struck by a random arrow and badly wounded. He propped himself up for the rest of the day but was bleeding very heavily. That evening he died.

After he was buried, the soldiers took the chariot to Samaria to be cleaned, and there the dogs licked the blood of Ahab, just as Elijah had said.

God had also said that Ahab's family would be destroyed during his son's reign. When Jehoram, Ahab's son, was King, God chose Jehu, who was a commander in Israel's army, to take Jehoram's place.

Jehu killed not only the sons of Ahab, but even the king of Judah, who was working with him. Then he went to Jezreel where Jezebel was. She put on make-up and did her hair, perhaps hoping to influence Jehu. But he called to the servants in the tower where she was and they hated her enough to throw her out the window.

When the soldiers came back later to gather her body for burial, they could not find it. Just as God had said, the dogs had eaten it. ■