

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 21

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 Kings

And we are coming down to the last two chapters –

And as I mentioned last week, the focus of the last here chapters of 1 Kings is King Ahab – who the scriptures refer to as the most wicked king of the Northern Kingdom –

Let's pray...

[1Ki 21:1-29 NKJV] 1 And it came to pass after these things [that] Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which [was] in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it [is] near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. [Or], if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money."

In our study last week – we saw King Ahab continue to walk in rebellion against the Lord.

God repeatedly revealed Himself to Ahab – through the drought, through the fire from the sky, through victories over the enemy – we saw that last week.

A prophet came to Ahab and told him -

Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the LORD.’”

However, Ahab continued to reject God’s grace and at the end of ch 20 –

Ahab is condemned by the same words that he responded to the prophet.

He condemned himself – it was his choice.

Because he chose to disobey God’s will.

So – even though God had given him a great victory over the enemy – Ahab returns home pouting.

So – here in chapter 21 – time has passed.

And Ahab has a desire.

There is this plot of land next to the palace – he wants it.

Now, Ahab wants to do the right thing.

He doesn’t want to simply take the land.

He makes an offer to swap lands with Naboth – even offers him a better plot of land

And also makes an offer to purchase it.

So Ahab's desire here is not necessarily wrong.

He is not acting on it inappropriately.

The same thing goes for our lives.

We can have desires –

And sometimes, those desires line up with God's will and sometimes they don't.

So the issue isn't the desire being wrong the issue is with what we do with those desires – what happens as a result of the desire.

Because what we do with the desire reveals where our heart truly is.

Jesus said

[Mat 6:21 NKJV] 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

And so the point is that there are things that drive us that are unhealthy – that are unspiritual, that are wrong for us.

We can't be driven by our desires.

[Jas 1:14-15 NKJV] 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

So the scriptures make clear that uncontrolled desires leads to destruction.

And so the only way we keep ourselves from being driven by our desires is by making Jesus our main desire.

[Psa 27:4 NKJV] 4 One [thing] I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

Yes – we can have other desires – but being at His feet should be our main desire.

[Psa 37:4 NKJV] 4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

So it is amazing as we submit ourselves to the Lord how our desires begin to change.

I have seen it in my own life – the things I once wanted are not the same things I want today and the things that the Lord has given me are exactly the things I want.

3 But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!"

When God led the Children of Israel into the Promised Land –

The land was divided among the tribes –

And the law prohibited the people from selling their land – it was supposed to be passed down from generation to generation.

So – for Naboth to sell his land to Ahab – he would have been violating the law.

4 So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food.

Ahab goes home and he begins to pout.

His heart is revealed in his actions -

Keep in mind that King Ahab is the king of Israel – 10 of the 12 tribes are in Israel – yet, he is outing to the point that he is not even eating – because he didn't get this piece of land for a vegetable garden.

He had all of this – but his desire was for the thing that he didn't have.

And this is our human nature.

Think of the garden of Eden –

We usually focus on the tree that they couldn't eat – but God told them – you can eat of all the other trees in the garden – except this one tree –

What became the obsession of their souls – that one tree.

Why can't I have that???

The wanting is not the problem, the wanting more is not the problem – the problem occurs when God says – No – you can't have that,

It goes back to being content in what the Lord has given to us -

5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?" 6 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 [another] vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.' " 7 Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

Now, good ole Jezebel –

We need to understand that this is not a wife who simply wants to comfort her husband.

If we look at the original language – she is belittling him.

She is basically calling him spineless.

It is like her saying – “You are the king of Israel what is wrong with you? Don't you have a backbone? You don't have to make deals with this guy – just take it. Do I need to do this for you?”

That is what she is saying –

Watch me!

She is referring to Ahab's authority but she is not acknowledging his authority.

She is taking his authority away from him.

We get a sense that -

Jezebel is the one who wears the pants in this family.

8 And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed [them] with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who [were] dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9 She wrote in the letters, saying, **Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people; 10 and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, "You have blasphemed God and the king." [Then] take him out, and stone him, that he may die. 11 So the men of his city, the elders and nobles who were inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, as it [was] written in the letters which she had sent to them. 12 They proclaimed a fast, and seated Naboth with high honor among the people. 13 And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!" Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died.**

Under the name of Ahab – Jezebel proclaims a fast among those in the city -

This type of fast was proclaimed when a city feared God's judgment.

So – she wants to use Naboth as a scape goat with the help of these two criminals – who are going to bring up a false witness against Naboth and this would give the leaders of the city a reason to put him to death.

They are going to think that everything is going to be ok with God – and that judgement would be averted if they put Naboth to death.

Now – in 2 Kings 9 – it is implied in the scriptures that Jezebel also sends the order to kill the sons of Naboth.

Because once he is killed – the sons would have been the heirs of the vineyard.

So we see the sin start to grow

Same thing with David and Bathsheba – it went from a one night affair to David plotting to cover the sin by getting Uriah to sleep with his wife and then when that didn't work – he plots the murder of Uriah.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead." 15

And it came to pass, 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." 16 So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

So Ahab gets what he wanted in the first place.

But in the process, the true nature of his own heart is being revealed.

He is a murderer and a thief too.

Now, some might say – wait a minute, Ahab didn't come up with the plan – it was Jezebel – it was the two false witnesses.

Ahab simply benefitted by what had transpired.

But we must understand that Ahab knew what was going on.

He allowed it to happen.

And in the process, he was giving his support by allowing it to happen and clearly benefitting from what happened.

Remember - Murder is a matter of the heart

Turn your bibles to James 4

[Jas 4:1-3 NKJV] 1 Where do wars and fights [come] from among you? Do [they] not [come] from your [desires for] pleasure that war in your members? 2 You

lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend [it] on your pleasures.

Ahab is the perfect example of this –

And what James is saying here – is that when we are led by our desires – it is going to lead to destruction.

We need to ask the Lord first

Our problem is not with the Lord saying, “no”

Our problem is that many times we don't ask the Lord and then, when He says no – we pout and we continue to seek after our desire.

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

Now, the last time we saw Elijah – he was depressed in the cave on the mountain – and God sent him to call Elisha.

So it has been about 6 years between that event and where we find ourselves now.

But we see Elijah's availability and continued faithfulness to do what the Lord has called him to do – when the Lord wanted him to do it.

18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who [lives] in Samaria. There [he is], in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it.

God tells Elijah –

I want you to meet Ahab as he is on his way to claim Naboth's vineyard for himself.

Imagine – Ahab –

He is happier than a kid in a play pen

He is probably thinking about his new garden

All the veggies and herbs he is going to grow in it.

He has a big smile on his face and has no idea that God has him on a collision course with Elijah.

19 "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 dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours." ' "

Here is the things church -

The Lord only lets people go so far in their sinful delusions.

He only lets people go so far in their sinful delusions before He lets them have that head-on crash.

And for the believer who living with hidden sin in their life – thinking that they are getting away with it.

Sooner or later – that train is going to have a crash.

And the Lord will do it – not to hurt us or destroy us – but because He loves us too much not to do that.

Because His grace is such that it compels Him to do that.

[Ecc 12:14 NKJV] 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

[Mar 4:22 NKJV] 22 "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

God knows –

And sooner or later He is going to let us know that He knows.

And He does that by shining His light on it and drawing attention to it in our life.

This is His mercy

This is His grace

It is not His anger

He just loves us too much to let us go – so He turns the lights on.

By the way – did you notice that God instructs Elijah to go tell Ahab and not Jezebel???

God is holding Ahab accountable – not Jezebel.

Why?

Because Ahab was responsible as the spiritual head of his family

He is also accountable because he was to be the spiritual head of the nation.

He was also accountable because he allowed it to happen.

And finally, he is accountable because he willingly embraced the benefits of Jezebel's sin.

20 So 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: 21 'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22 '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 made Israel sin.' 23 "And concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' 24 "The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field."

God's judgment against Ahab

Because of Ahab's wickedness – there was not going to be a dynasty.

And also – judgment is pronounced against Jezebel.

25 But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26 And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all [that] the Amorites had done, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

Jezebel may have stirred up Ahab into doing wicked things

Jezebel may have been the one who instituted the worship of Baal in Israel

But Ahab is still accountable because he is the one who chose to worship the false idols and he is the one who allowed Jezebel to have this influence among the people.

27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. 28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? **Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."**

Over and over again – over the last few weeks, we have seen refer to Ahab as the most wicked king that Israel had.

But notice – after pronouncing judgment upon Ahab –

Ahab repents

And we see how repentance changes the course and the direction of the sinner's life.

I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."

Now, does that mean that Ahab's son is going to have to pay the penalty for his father's sin – no

Because you read 2 Kings – Ahab's son is just as bad as his father.

So the penalty will come because of where the son is.

Now, I want to close with this –

As we look at the life of Ahab – it appears that he is sincere in his repentance, at least for the moment.

Like a lot of people, he is repentant at the moment.

Now, here is the question I want you to think about.

Does God know where Ahab's heart is going to be 2 weeks from this episode or 2 years from this episode?

Yes.

Because for those that have read ch 22 – Ahab's repentance is going to be short lived.

But – I want you to notice how does God respond – here in ch 21???

Based upon what He knows is going to happen or based on what He sees happening at the time?

based on what He sees happening at the time.

Now – turn to Matt 18

[Mat 18:21-22 NKJV] 21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

In order for us to understand this principle of God – we are never going to understand how to forgive people.

Forgiveness is not dependent upon what we think someone will later do or what we think the sincerity of the repentance is, at the moment – or what we know the sincerity of the repentance to be.

Forgiveness is to be granted regardless – because that is exactly what God does.

God gives man the benefit of the doubt.

He has done that with you and He has done that with me.

I repent and He knows full well – I am going to go back right out there and do the same thing.

But the moment I repent – He forgives me.

And that is because God's forgiveness and restoration is not dependent upon what will be – but on what is.

And church, that is grace, that is His mercy and that is His love and that is His way.

And He will deal with the person who is not truly repentant when that unrepentance is seen – but until then, He grants it.

And so too – He tells us to do.

Is Ahab a repentant man – at this point he is – will it last, we will find out in two weeks.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'