



# Ahab & Naboth's Vineyard



Ahab was a wicked King with wicked ways. But God, the King of kings, is a good, loving, and perfectly just King. God even showed mercy to the undeserving King Ahab.

## Day #1: Ungodly Anger

Do you like eating vegetables? Have you ever grown vegetables in a garden? King Ahab decided that he wanted to buy some land so his servants could grow vegetables for him. He looked around for some land near his palace that would have rich soil for growing good vegetables.

There was a man in Israel named Naboth. He owned a vineyard that was right next to King Ahab's palace. King Ahab liked Naboth's piece of land and he wanted to buy it. But Naboth told the King that his land was not for sale. The reason Naboth would not sell the land is because God commanded him not to. Back when God handed out the land to the twelve tribes of Israel, He forbid them to sell or give their part of the land to another tribe or family (Leviticus 25:23).

**+** *Naboth replied, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors."*

*So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth's answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!* - 1 Kings 21:3-4 NLT

This was no way for the King of Israel to behave! He should have patted Naboth on the back for doing right in the eyes of the Lord. But Ahab did not care about the Lord's command. Ahab only cared about himself.

**\*** It is ALWAYS right to obey the Lord. But some people will not understand when you do. You can expect some people to become angry or treat you badly when you do the right thing. Even so, follow the Lord, and let the Lord take care of the other person's bad attitude and actions.

## Day #2: Half-Truth

There is a word for Ahab's greed and anger. The word is covet. To covet is to wrongly want something that someone else has, without caring at all about the other person's right to have it. God clearly says that coveting is wrong. In fact, it is the last of the Ten Commandments:

**+** *Do not long for anything that belongs to your neighbor.* - Exodus 20:17a

Soon, King Ahab's wife came in and found Ahab fuming with anger. She asked him what had made him so upset. Listen carefully to Ahab's answer:

*"I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or trade it, but he refused!" Ahab told her.* - 1 Kings 21:6 NLT

Ahab's answer was only half of the story. He didn't tell his wife that his request for the land was against God's command. He didn't tell her that Naboth was obeying the Lord by refusing to hand over his property.

Telling half of the story is the same as lying. The Bible calls the devil the father of lies (John 8:44). The devil always mixes truth with lies (Genesis 3:1-5). When Ahab told his half-truth, he showed that he was following the devil's example. This half-truth was about to lead to big trouble!

**\*** When we tell a half-truth, we lead others to believe a lie. For example, you might say, "He hit me." But the whole truth is, it was an accident, or you hit him first. Sometimes, just the way we say something is deceitful. No matter what the consequences may be, always tell the whole truth. In this way, you will be more like Jesus, who IS the Truth.

## Day #3: Evil Plan

Jezebel did not encourage her husband to calm down and do the right thing. She could have said, "It was probably hard for Naboth to say no to you, but he wanted to follow the Lord's command. Tomorrow, I'll go with you to look for another piece of land." Instead, she encouraged his coveting by coming up with an evil plan.

She wrote a letter to the leaders of the town where Naboth lived. She ordered that the leaders to call everyone in town together for a day of prayer. She said to give Naboth a special seat, and then call in two bad men who would lie about Naboth, saying that he had cursed God and cursed the King. She said that the townspeople must stone Naboth to death. Jezebel signed the King's name

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to the orders, and stamped it with the King's official seal.

Sadly, Jezebel's orders were followed. Because of her wicked scheme, the Israelites killed an innocent man. King Ahab then went to claim Naboth's land. Ahab and Jezebel may have thought that they got away with murder, but nothing escapes the watchful eye of the Lord.

 *The Lord is watching everywhere, keeping His eye on both the evil and the good.* - Proverbs 15:3 NLT

God sent Elijah to give King Ahab a VERY serious message:

*You have made Me very angry. You have caused Israel to commit sin.* - 1 Kings 21:22b

Not only did Ahab and Jezebel sin, but they also caused the Israelites to sin. This was a terrible thing, and there would be a terrible punishment.

 Think about your actions very carefully. Never do something that leads someone else to sin. Very serious punishment comes to those who lead others into sin (Matthew 18:6-7).

## Day #4: Perfect. Just. Loving.

Have you ever been in a real courtroom? The highest seat in the room is reserved for the judge. During a trial, the judge is in authority. He or she has the job of making sure every person is treated fairly. Treating everyone fairly is called being JUST. It is the word from which that we get the word justice. A just judge makes sure that each person is punished according to the crime he has committed.

The Bible says that like a perfect judge, **God is perfectly just** (2 Chronicles 12:6). Justice is part of God's character (Psalm 89:14). God could never be unjust. Every sin must be paid for.

Ahab and Jezebel had plotted and led others to commit murder. Through Elijah, the perfect, just God pronounced their punishment. God said that Ahab and Jezebel would both die, and all of their sons would also be destroyed.

These are some very strong words, but Ahab had earned his punishment. God had blessed him with being made the earthly King of God's own people, and Ahab turned his back on God and all this was right. The Bible says:

 *There was never anyone like Ahab. He gave himself over to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord. His wife Jezebel talked him into it. He acted in the most*

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*evil way. He worshiped statues of gods.* - 1 Kings 21:25-26a

Ahab took Elijah's prophecy seriously. Finally, Ahab understood that his actions had consequences. Ahab became very humble.

Here we see another part of God's character. **God is perfectly loving.** Even after all of the terrible things that Ahab did, God showed mercy to Ahab. Because Ahab was finally humble, God announced that He would not punish Ahab's sons until Ahab had died.

 Look at a coin. See that it has two sides. We usually call these sides "heads and tails." Just as one quarter has two sides, God has many sides. Today we looked at God's just side and His loving side. Both of these sides are perfect, and one does not take away the other.

## Day #5: God Describes Himself

If someone asked you to describe yourself, what would you say? In the book of Exodus, God described Himself this way:

 *I am the Lord God. I am merciful and very patient with My people. I show great love, and I can be trusted. I keep My promises to My people forever, but I also punish anyone who sins.* - Exodus 34:b-7a CEV

In this description, God tells us that He is perfectly just and perfectly loving.

There is no greater proof of this than the fact that God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us (John 3:16). Just like Ahab, each one of us has done evil in God's sight, and we deserve to be punished by our **just** God (Romans 3:23). The punishment for our sin is death and eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23, Isaiah 59:2).

But God **loves** us so much, that He sent Jesus to pay for our sin. Jesus willingly took the punishment we deserved when He died on the cross. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. When we place our faith in Jesus, He takes away our sin and brings us back to God.

*But God demonstrates his own **love** for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* - Romans 5:8

*(God) is **fair and just**, and He declares sinners to be right in His sight when they believe in Jesus.* - Romans 3:26b NLT

 Take a few minutes to list some of God's characteristics. Thank Him that He is perfectly loving and perfectly just. Thank Him for loving you enough to send Jesus to pay the just penalty for your sin.