

# Ahab & Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21

**PPT Title**

## Ahab & Naboth's Vineyard

**Main Point:** God is perfectly loving and perfectly just.

**Key Verse:** *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

**Props:** A large bunch of grapes

### BACKGROUND/REVIEW (1 Kings 20)

**Say:** Last week we learned that God is a God of new beginnings. He seeks after us; He wants us to turn from our sin and follow Him. Even when the prophet Elijah gave up and ran away, God went after Him. God gently prodded Elijah to see that fearing the evil Jezebel and running away was sin. But Elijah did not repent. Once again, God displayed His power before Elijah's eyes, but Elijah still would not repent. So God appointed a new prophet for Elijah to train up. Soon, Elisha would take Elijah's place.



The next chapter of the Bible, 1 Kings 20, centers around two wars. King Ahab, King of Israel, was under attack by the King of Syria and 32 other kings combined! Though Ahab was an evil king, God was faithful to the promises He had made to His people, the Israelites (Deuteronomy 20:10-13). God sent a prophet to tell Ahab, "The Lord says, 'Do you see this huge army? I will hand it over to you today. Then you will know that I am the Lord.' " (1 Kings 20:13) Not once, but twice, God brought victory to Israel, even though the army they fought was almost twenty times larger than their own army.



But even though God showed incredible grace and mercy to Ahab, Ahab did not follow God's law. God's law said that when the Israelites defeated an enemy at war, every man must be killed (Deuteronomy 20:13). Ahab did what was right in his own eyes. He made a treaty with the enemy King of Syria and let him go free because he promised to give Ahab many cities. God sent a prophet to speak to Ahab once again. This time, the news was not good for Ahab.



*He told the king, "The Lord says, 'You have set a man free. But I had said he should be set apart to the Lord in a special way to be destroyed. So you must pay for his life with yours. You must pay for his people's lives with the lives of your people.' "*

*The king of Israel was angry. He was in a bad mood. He went back to his palace in Samaria.* - 1 Kings 20:42-43

King Ahab did not die right away, but his time was coming.

### AHAB & NABOTH'S VINEYARD (1 Kings 21:1-16)

*Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. One day Ahab said to Naboth, "Since your vineyard is so convenient to my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you*





for it.”

*But 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 21:1-4 NLT*



**Say:** Let’s try to picture this scene. King Ahab wanted a piece of land to plant a garden. He chose a vineyard right next to His palace. Ask: Who knows what a vineyard is used for? *Growing grapes.* **Teacher:** Hold up a bunch of grapes. **Say:** A vineyard is land that is used to grow grapes. But Naboth, the owner of the land, said he could not sell it. Naboth wasn’t just being stubborn here. He had a really good reason for refusing the King. Naboth was following God’s orders. 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).

King Ahab offered Naboth a better piece of land. Using human logic, Naboth would have been better off taking the King’s offer. But Naboth was not doing what was right in his own eyes; he was obeying God.

So King Ahab did not get what he wanted. We might imagine that a wealthy King might have shook the man’s hand, thanked him for his time, and rode off to find another piece of land. But instead, this grown man stormed off, pouting! He probably looked a lot like this. **Teacher:** Make a scowl face, sticking out your bottom lip with your arms crossed in a huff. **Say:** Okay - let’s see it. Everyone show me your best pouting face! **Say:** That’s it exactly! You all look like toddlers who didn’t get what you wanted! And that is exactly how King Ahab looked! He went home, crawled in bed and refused to eat! That was no way for a King to behave!



Soon, his wife, Jezebel, came in. She asked what had made him so upset. Let’s listen very carefully to Ahab’s answer.

#### PPT Verse

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

**Ask:** What was wrong with Ahab’s answer? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** Look carefully at what Ahab said. **Ask:** Was his statement TRUE? *Yes.* **Ask:** Was it the WHOLE truth? *No.* **Say:** Ahab left out the most important part of the story. He didn’t tell his wife *why* Naboth refused to sell the land. We will see that this is going to cause a whole lot of trouble!

**Application:** There are many times in our lives when we may be tempted not to tell the whole truth. If we have done something wrong, leaving out details might seem like a convenient way to stay out of trouble. For example, what if you were playing baseball in your yard? When it was your turn to bat, you closed your eyes and swung your hardest. Immediately you heard glass breaking. The ball went right through your neighbor’s window, but no one was home at your neighbor’s, so you hid the bat and didn’t say a word. Later, your mom came and asked, “Honey, did you see what happened to the neighbor’s window?” Since your eyes were closed, you quickly reply, “No.” You may not have seen it, but you certainly knew what happened.



Or, at times, we might want to give a certain **impression** by leaving details out of our story. Little Jacob might point to his sister and scream, “She hit me!” But the part that Jacob left out is that he actually hit his sister first. Jacob wants to leave the impression that his sister is all in the wrong, and he is completely blameless. This was the case with King Ahab. He gave the impression that Naboth was just being stubborn, when the whole truth was that Naboth was obeying God.

We must understand that a half-truth is not the truth at all. Truth matters, and as believers in Jesus, who is "the Truth," we should always tell the whole truth.

**Say:** With the impression that Naboth was stubborn and selfish, Jezebel decided to take matters into her own hands.

*His wife Jezebel said, "Is this how the King of Israel acts? Get up! Eat something! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth from Jezreel." - 1 Kings 21:7*



Jezebel came 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 to the orders. She even stamped it with the King's seal to make it look official.

Sadly, since the order had been sealed with the King's seal, it had to be followed. The leaders did as they were told. The townspeople believed that Naboth had cursed God and the King. They stoned him to death.

*When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, "You know the vineyard Naboth wouldn't sell you? Well, you can have it now! He's dead!" So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it. - 1 Kings 21:15-16 NLT*

**Note to Teacher:** Jezebel's plan is both ironic and disturbing. The irony is that she would falsely accuse a man of cursing God when she had spent her entire life cursing God, and even murdering His prophets. It is very interesting that even though she was not an Israelite, she knew enough about Israelite law to use it against an Israelite. She knew that blasphemy bore the punishment of death by stoning (Leviticus 24:14-16). It is indeed disturbing that she knows so much about the God of Israel, she has seen His hand at work, and her gods had been proven to be false, yet, she continued in her ways, without fear of the one true God.

### **JUDGEMENT ON AHAB** (1 Kings 21:17-26)

**Say:** God sent Elijah to Naboth's vineyard to give King Ahab a VERY serious message. The Lord was going to punish Ahab for being a part of Naboth's murder.



*Ahab said to Elijah, "My enemy! You have found me!"*

*"I have found you," he answered. "That's because you gave yourself over to do evil things. You did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord says, 'I am going to bring horrible trouble on you. I will destroy your children after you. I will cut off every male in Israel who is related to you. It does not matter whether they are slaves or free... You have made me very angry. You have caused Israel to commit sin.' " - 1 Kings 21:20-22*

Elijah told Ahab that Jezebel would also be killed. 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 evil way. He worshiped statues of gods." (1 Kings 21:25-26a)

### **AHAB REPENTS** (1 Kings 21:27-28)

**Say:** Ahab took Elijah's prophecy seriously. He tore his clothes and put on black clothes. This was a sign of mourning, as if someone had died. Ahab stopped eating and began to act very humble. God sent another message to Elijah about Ahab.



*It said, "Have you seen how Ahab has made himself low in My sight? Because he has done that, I will not bring trouble on him while he lives. But I will bring it on his royal house when his son is king." - 1 Kings 21:29*

God had already decreed a punishment - Ahab, Jezebel, and their sons would be destroyed. But because Ahab finally bowed down to the Lord, and acted with humility, God would not punish Ahab's sons until after Ahab had died.

In time, all that God had spoken came to pass. Ahab died in battle when the Lord decided it should happen (1 Kings 22:20, 37). Jezebel died in the exact way Elijah had prophesied (1 Kings 21:23, 2 Kings 9:33-37). And eventually, all of Ahab's descendants were killed (2 Kings 10:11).

*I want you to know that the Lord has spoken against Ahab's royal house. Not a word of what He has said will fail. The Lord has done exactly what He promised through His servant Elijah." - 2 Kings 10:10*

**Application:** In today's story, we see that God is **just**, and He is also **loving**. Another word for just is *fair*. Like a good judge, God must punish sin. It would not be fair for a judge to allow someone to break the law and not punish him. In the same way, God must punish sin. But this makes God very sad (Genesis 6:6) because God loves people very much (1 John 4:8).

*In the book of Exodus, God told Moses, "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)*

As we saw, God was very patient with Ahab and Jezebel. He gave them many, many opportunities to repent and turn to Him. But Ahab insisted on having things his way. He did not give a second thought to God's command about the land. God's way is always best, but Ahab and Jezebel thought that they knew better than God. Finally, the perfect and patient God had had enough. He decreed the punishment for this prideful, selfish, idol-worshipping couple. Notice that Ahab and Jezebel's sin brought terrible consequences for their children. They lived wicked lives in front of their children. So their children followed their wicked behavior, and they too would be punished (1 Kings 22:52, 2 Kings 2-3). Our sin ALWAYS ruins things, and it almost always affects other people.

Yet, even after all of the horrible things that Ahab had done, God showed mercy to him because he repented of his sin. God did not bring punishment to Ahab's sons while Ahab was alive. Even though God is just, and must punish sin because He is holy, He is also completely loving, giving us every opportunity to turn from our sin, and turn to Him.



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). But God **loves** us so much, that He sent Jesus to pay for our sin. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. Only our faith in Jesus takes our sin away and brings us back to God.

**PPT Key Verse**

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**PPT Main Point**

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