



## Lessons from Elijah's Life

# Ahab's Last Straw

Date: 29 April 2020

Text: 1 Kings 21:1-20

Key Lesson: God's patience will eventually run out.

### Ahab's Selfishness

- Naboth had a vineyard in Jezreel (v.1). King Ahab wanted it and offered to buy it or to trade for it (v.2). This was a selfish demand. Naboth refused because of God's law (v.3). Look up Leviticus 25:23 and Numbers 36:7. Ahab knew God's laws about one's inheritance.
- Acting like a spoilt kid, went home very upset and pouting because he could not have his way (v.4). As he sulked, he refused to eat. Selfish people manipulate to get their own way. It is sinful for children to scream, holler, cry, pout, get angry or have a tizzy to get their own way. It is sinful for a spouse to use tears, withhold affection, become moody, act grumpy, or make hurtful threats to manipulate to get his or her way. Selfishness and manipulation are sins that God hates (James 3:16).

### Jezebel's Wicked Plot

- She went to see why Ahab was not eating (v.5). He told her the whole story (v.6).
- Jezebel plotted a wicked plan and had Naboth and his family killed (v.7-14) (cf., 2Ki 9:26).
- Ahab got up from his pouting and took possession of Naboth's vineyard (v.15-16)

### A New Word from God (v.17)

- Once again, the word of the LORD (Jehovah) came to Elijah the Tishbite. For some time now, perhaps as much as 5 or 6 years, Elijah had a less public ministry. Gill suggests, "Perhaps Elijah, while Ahab was engaged in war with the king of Syria, spent his time in founding or reviving the schools of the prophets, and instructing and training up those that were in them for public usefulness, since we afterwards hear of them."<sup>1</sup>
- Regardless of what he had been doing, God had been at work in his heart. He was no longer discouraged, defeated or self-centred. He had regained his spirit of courage.
- God's message this time sent him back to King Ahab again. He was again to make the trek to Samaria the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Likely, memories of his first hike to that city nearly a decade earlier flooded his mind. Having learned from his victories, failures, restoration and recovery, he was prepared once again to face the wicked king. This word from the LORD was new assurance to Elijah that God was not finished with him yet. If we will confess and forsake our sin, God will once again use us for His glory. We must not become spiritual hermits.

### Elijah's Errand (v.18-19)

- Go down to meet Ahab. You will find Ahab "in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it."
- God blamed Ahab for Naboth's death. He had consented to Jezebel plot. As the leader, he was guilty. As a leader, God wants you to live the verse I mentioned recently, 1 Corinthians 16:13.
- Note God's harsh message for Ahab (v.19), "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Payday was coming for Ahab. God's patience were running out. God could have taken Ahab's life years earlier, but God is longsuffering and merciful.

### Ahab's Snide Remarks (v.20)

- God's judgment pronounced in verse 19 is not repeated in Elijah's conversation with Ahab beginning in verse 20. It is possible that the conversation began in verse 19. If Ahab already heard verse 19, his comments in verse 20 are foolishly bold.
- Notice the cynical way that Ahab speaks to God's prophet. He called Elijah his enemy. We must never consider God's preacher to be our enemy just because he tells us truth that we do not want to hear (Proverbs 27:6).
- Elijah affirmed that he had found him. The reason he found him again is that he was again working evil in the sight of the LORD. We cannot hide any of our activities from the Lord (Pr 15:3). He knows even the secrets of our heart (Ps 44:21). One of the duties of preachers is to urge people to do right and to warn them of God's judgment if they refuse to do right. Be grateful when God convicts.

<sup>1</sup> John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, theWord module