

## A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH

### 1 KINGS 21:1 – 22:38

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~ Our Spiritual Safari begins this leg of our expedition at a familiar chapter in the life of Ahab and Jezebel; and it concerns Naboth's vineyard. This spot in Samaria where Ahab's palace was built may be the most beautiful spot on the face of the earth. Omri built the palace, and Jerusalem can be seen to the south from it. The valley of Esdraelon and the Sea of Galilee can be seen to the north, and the Jordan River is visible to the east. Naturally, the Mediterranean Sea is to the west. Any vantage point you look out from this place, the view is spectacular, to say the least. I think anyone living in that land would like to have a home where Ahab's ivory castle stood.

Well, we're not told which side of the palace Naboth's vineyard was on, but I don't think it matters; his vineyard was the best in Israel, by far. Ahab wasn't satisfied with what he had; which should have been enough – but Ahab wanted the vineyard; and he wanted it now. As we read, Naboth couldn't sell it; and didn't want to sell it if he could have. It was Naboth's patrimony – the land God had given to his ancestors; the vineyard had been passed down from father to son likely since the days of Joshua. There were Mosaic Laws against selling a parcel of land from out of a Jewish family. Naboth was daring to turn Ahab's offer down; but that's what he did.

Enter Jezebel. She has all the answers for Ahab. I'm sure she called the shots in the castle. When she asked Ahab, "... doth thou govern the kingdom of Israel?" – it was said in an extremely condescending tone. Jezebel can't figure out why Ahab even asked Naboth for the vineyard. Ahab could have issued a land seize decree and – that would have been that. Well, Jezebel isn't letting this go, because she sees an opportunity for evil; and she is ready to display her authority. Jezebel was absolutely masculine, dominant and domineering – a wicked, wicked whore of a woman. I hope you'll read the gory details of her murder and robbery plot if you don't know the story; if you do know the story, I don't blame you for skimming over it....

## **XXI**

**1 And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.**

**2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.**

**3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.**

**4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.**

**5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?**

**6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.**

**7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.**

**8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.**

**9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:**

**10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.**

**11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.**

**12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.**

**13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.**

**14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.**

**15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.**

**16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.**

**17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,**

**18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.**

**19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying,**

***Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.***

***20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.***

***21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,***

***22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.***

***23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.***

***24 Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.***

***25 But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.***

***26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.***

***27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.***

***28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,***

***29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.***

~ Jezebel's murderous plot worked out exactly as she had planned. Her arrangement with the children of the devil couldn't have gone more smoothly. They lied against Naboth, saying he blasphemed God and the king; and that was that. I can't think of any injustice greater than this robbery and murder. This is the equivalent of killing a man and taking his wallet today – it's robbery and first degree pre-meditated murder. I don't think Naboth owned anything of value outside of his vineyard, either. This happens day in and day out in our contemporary society. The rich man of the world – who already has more than he needs – will take advantage of those who have nothing. Enter Jezebel to tell Ahab he can have whatever he wanted; one way or another! With that, we say goodbye to Naboth as quickly as we said hello.

It's extremely interesting to me how Ahab mitigated the murder in his life by simply humbling himself before God. Honestly, I think Ahab had a deeply disturbed guilty conscious; but I question whether he fully understood right and wrong. I'm sure his peers were looking on, so, the sackcloth and fasting were more for show than anything else. Either way, friends, we won't get by with sin; Ahab and his family lineage will die for this. It really doesn't matter who you are or how badly you feel about your crimes and sins, there is a day coming when the child of God has to settle the bill here on earth. God has a man on the scene at this time; and thank God Elijah never stopped declaring the Word of God. Be not deceived, friends – God is not mocked. Whatsoever you sow, that you shall reap. For God's man, this is an immutable law that will never be altered or changed. If Ahab and Jezebel were around today, they would confirm it, I promise you that.

Jacob discovered God's precept of reaping what we have sown to be immutable; Pharaoh of Egypt was shown it was true in Moses' day. Pharaoh thought he had gotten away with murder until he woke up to find his own son dead. David committed an awful sin; we've seen that account on safari. Saul of Tarsus led the stoning of Stephen; and there came a day in Antioch when Saul – Paul – was stoned and left for dead. So, with the heinous act concerning Naboth, judgment was pronounced upon both Ahab and Jezebel. This effectively ended the line and rule of Ahab. His house will no longer reign after this. All of his descendants will die off as we move along. Both decrees God made through Elijah concerning this couple from hell

came to pass. Interestingly, I never hear anyone disputing what happened to them....

## **XXII**

***1 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.***

***2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.***

***3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?***

~ Chapter twenty-two fulfills the promise God made to Ahab concerning the consequences in his family for the murder of Naboth; to wit, that all males of Ahab's house would die. This is one unusual chapter in the Word of God; and we're not going to complete our examination of it in this report. As we will read, the kingly line of the northern kingdom of Israel comes to an end; and Jehoshaphat comes to the throne in the southern kingdom of Judah – and Jehoshaphat was a good king – but he made a near-fatal mistake forming an unholy alliance with Ahab.

You will recall our previous report concluded with war in Israel – again – and a good king who did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord hooked up with the most wicked man in Israel. What could the explanation possibly be? Well, we're going to find out that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. This is another case of the sons of God marrying the daughters of men – and it's never good. When the ungodly line crosses with the Godly line, or a believer and an unbeliever are married, you can be sure the believer will have serious trouble. If you marry a child of the devil, your father-in-law will see to your torment. You can just write that down.

Anyways, Israel has lost Gilead to Syria, and they should have accepted defeat and gone home. Jehoshaphat should have stayed away from Ahab from the beginning. Jehoshaphat, being God's man, asked for the advice

from the only prophet of God in the land at the time, Micaiah; but then he ignores Micaiah's advice. That seems silly, doesn't it? Jehoshaphat knew they weren't getting the mind of God from the false prophets – but he isn't listening to truth and wisdom. This isn't even Jehoshaphat's fight to begin with; this was Ahab's problem. It's just stunning to realize it this way. Gilead never belonged to Judah. Jehoshaphat should have fled as soon as Ahab told him that he hated Micaiah....

***4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.***

***5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.***

***6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.***

***7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?***

***8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.***

~ Someone once said a man isn't known by his friends – a man is known by his enemies. Every man should make sure he has the right enemies, friends. For Ahab to say he hated Micaiah was the most sincere compliment and revelation of enlightenment Micaiah could have received. Frankly, I am a bit proud I have the right enemies around this forum on which I teach. I certainly love them. The enemies I have aren't merely proponents of the Word of God – although most of them say they are. I truly thank God for my friends, but I thank Him for those who hate me.

The passion of politics and religion today is sought after with peace at any price. What that means, in a word, is: compromise. I have heard it said of some they have no enemies. God have mercy on them. Those people don't stand for the cause of Christ or anything else; and they fall for everything. Micaiah should have been the best friend Ahab had – but Ahab didn't care what God had to say. Remember, Paul asked the Galatians, "... *am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*" Well, that sets Micaiah up as the after-dinner speaker in another wildly dramatic scene....

***9 Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.***

***10 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.***

***11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.***

~ Zedekiah running around with his iron horns is puerile. I can just see this scene playing out in the throne room. Two kings sitting on thrones; and four hundred drunk prophets performing the after-dinner pre-show! Naturally, the masses always support such a production. As we read on, the messenger sent to retrieve Micaiah tries to advise him what should be said. The king wanted to hear one thing, and everyone else wanted the king to hear what the king wanted to hear. Micaiah could have simply joined in with the false prophets and that would have brought him favor. Micaiah could have said whatever Ahab wanted to hear, because Ahab wasn't coming home from the battle; what difference would it have made? I suppose this messenger thought he was helping Micaiah by giving him inside information....

***12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand.***



**13 And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.**

**14 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.**

**15 So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.**

~ The prophets of Baal had obviously read the book "How to Win Friends and Influence People" – and Micaiah, joining in for some seditious fun, agreed in biting sarcasm. Ahab detected it immediately. Micaiah was almost as sarcastic as Elijah had been. They were cut from the same cloth, to be sure. Micaiah had neglected to read up on how to win friends; and he obviously never read the book "The Power of Positive Thinking," either. In fact, Micaiah is as negative as he can be. See, there is a whole lot of power in negative thinking, friends. I think we need a bit more negative thinking today. Alright, Ahab was wicked, but he wasn't altogether stupid....

**16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?**

**17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.**

**18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?**

**19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.**

**20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.**

**21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.**

**22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.**

**23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.**

~ Micaiah turned serious and solemn startlingly quickly. This parable could be called the reducto ad absurdum! This is a preposterous parable of contrasts. We don't find these types of parables elsewhere except the Lord's teachings recorded by Luke; such as the parable of the unjust judge. God isn't an unjust judge, friends. Most absolutely miss the point. Can you imagine God calling together the angels and asking them advice on what He should do? It's laughable and ridiculous what Micaiah says in verse nineteen and twenty. Verse twenty-three is about the nicest way Micaiah could have possibly called these prophets a bunch of idiots. Well, Ahab was not pleased – and Micaiah will be thrown in prison – but Micaiah will have the last word....

**24 But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?**

**25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.**

**26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;**

***27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.***

***28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.***

***29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.***

***30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.***

***31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.***

***32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.***

***33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.***

***34 And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.***

***35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.***

***36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.***

***37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.***

***38 And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.***

***39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?***

~ Our safari ends this report with the battle being concluded; but one of the enemy soldiers has discovered one arrow remaining in his quiver. So, he just let it fly for the fun of it. Well, that arrow had Ahab's name written on it. Ahab didn't want to die on the battlefield, so he has his driver take him away – and he was taken directly to the vineyard of Naboth. The vineyard, the ivory house and all the cities mean nothing to Ahab now. Jehoshaphat is running for his life all the way back to Jerusalem. We'll see Jehoshaphat was deeply traumatized by this episode. That's where we're going to conclude this report. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows – that shall he reap! The next leg of our safari will take us out of first Kings and into second Kings. I hope you'll be with us as we move forward to take the entire Word of God to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles ~