

# ELIJAH CONFRONTED AHAB FOR TAKING NABOTH'S VINEYARD

1 Kings 21:1-29; 2 Kings 9:30 - 10:17

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** Elijah, Ahab and Jezebel

**Key-locations:** Samaria, Jezreel

### **Key-repetitions:**

- The Lord spoke: to Elijah (1 Kin 21:17); through Elijah (1 Kin 21:19, 20-24); things happened as the Lord predicted through Elijah (1 Kin 22:38; 2 Kin 9:36-37); Jehu ordered a man to carry out the Lord's words spoken by Elijah (2 Kin 9:24-26).
- People killed: Naboth killed (1 Kin 21:8-13); the Lord accused Ahab of murdering Naboth just to take possession of his vineyard (1 Kin 21:19); Elijah predicted that the Lord would kill Ahab and every male in his family, and dogs would devour Jezebel's flesh (1 Kin 21:21-23); Ahab was killed with an arrow (1 Kin 22:34-37); a prophet told Jehu to kill everyone in Ahab's family (2 Kin 9:6-9); Jehu killed King Joram (2 Kin 9:24); Jezebel was killed by two servants (2 Kin 9:30-33); Samaria's city leaders slaughtered all seventy royal princes (2 Kin 10:1-11).

### **Key-attitudes:**

- Arrogance of Ahab and Jezebel.
- Ahab's despondency.
- Elijah's courage.
- Conflict between: Ahab and Naboth; Jezebel and Ahab; Elijah and Ahab; Jehu and Joram.

### **Initial-situation:**

King Ahab made more choices to do what God considered evil than any previous king of Israel. He married Jezebel, who was determined that the people of Israel worship her god Baal. Also, she tried to kill all the prophets of the Lord God. Prophet Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The Lord God proved that he was the real God. Elijah killed all of Baal's prophets.

### **Initial-problem:**

King Ahab asked to buy Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth refused to sell it.

### **Final-situation:**

Ahab, his wife Jezebel, and all their male descendants were killed, just as the Lord had promised through his prophet Elijah.

## BIBLE STORY

### **Naboth's Vineyard**

Naboth owned a vineyard that bordered King Ahab's palace. Ahab asked Naboth, "Give me your vineyard; in exchange, I'll give you a better vineyard for it."

Naboth responded, "I won't give you what I inherited from my ancestors."

Ahab went home resentful and upset. Ahab lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat. His wife Jezebel found him sulking and said, "Aren't you king of Israel? Cheer up! I'll get you Naboth's vineyard!"

Jezebel wrote letters ordering the city leaders to announce a religious fast and have two liars accuse Naboth of cursing God and the king. Then stone Naboth to death. The city leaders followed Jezebel's instructions. They sent the message to Jezebel, "Naboth has been stoned to death."

Ahab went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kin 21:1-16).

The Lord told Prophet Elijah, "Go meet King Ahab. King Ahab went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. Tell Ahab, 'The Lord says that you murdered someone just to take possession of his vineyard. The Lord says that at the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood.'"

Prophet Elijah found King Ahab in Naboth's vineyard.

Ahab told Elijah, "So you found me, my enemy!"

Elijah answered, "I found you, because you sold yourself to do what the Lord considers evil. The Lord says, 'I'll bring evil on you. I'll kill you and every male in your family because you provoked me to anger and caused Israel to sin. Now concerning Jezebel: Dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh by the wall of Jezreel'" (1 Kin 21:17-28).

### **Ahab and His Family Are Killed**

King Ahab of Israel led his soldiers to war. An enemy soldier shot an arrow at random that hit Ahab between the sections of his armor. Ahab's blood spilled onto the chariot floor, and he died. They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria where the prostitutes bathed. Dogs lapped up Ahab's blood. This happened just as the Lord had predicted (1 Kin 22:29-40).

Ahab's son Joram became king of Israel (2 Kin 1:17).

Years later, Elisha replaced Elijah as prophet. One day Prophet Elisha sent a young prophet to Jehu, the commander of King Joram's army. The prophet poured oil on Commander Jehu's head and declared, "The Lord God of Israel, says, 'I anoint you king over the Lord's people in Israel. Destroy the house of Ahab your master. Everyone in Ahab's family will die. As for Jezebel, dogs will eat her carcass in the open fields of Jezreel. No one will bury her'" (2 Kin 9:1-10).

Jehu's army officers blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!" (2 Kin 9:11-13).

Commander Jehu rode his chariot to Jezreel and met King Joram at the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth. Jehu shot an arrow that pierced King Joram's heart.

Jehu ordered a chariot officer, "Throw Joram on the field that belonged to Naboth. Carry out the Lord's words spoken by Prophet Elijah" (2 Kin 9:14-29).

Jehu rode into the city of Jezreel. Two of Jezebel's servants threw her out of a window, and Jehu's men trampled her body with their horses.

Jehu went inside and ate his lunch. Then Jehu ordered his soldiers, "Bury that cursed woman." The soldiers went out to bury Jezebel, but they found nothing except her skull, her feet, and her hands. The men reported back to Jehu. Jehu said, "This is the word of the Lord that he spoke through his servant Elijah: Jezebel's body will become dog manure on the ground in Jezreel, so no one will be able to say, 'This is Jezebel'" (2 Kin 9:30-37).

Ahab's family had seventy sons living in Samaria. The city leaders slaughtered all seventy of the royal princes. Jehu killed everyone in Jezreel who had any connection with Ahab's family. It happened just as the Lord had promised through Prophet Elijah (2 Kin 10:1-17).

### GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

### SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened when King Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard?
2. Why did Queen Jezebel believe that King Ahab was entitled to get what he wanted?
3. What happens today when people in power believe that they are entitled to get their way?
4. What happened when Prophet Elijah confronted King Ahab at Naboth's vineyard?
5. Why did King Ahab consider Prophet Elijah his enemy?
6. Today, who are some of the people who consider God's servants to be their enemies?
7. How were the prophecies made by Elijah fulfilled?
8. Why is God able to keep his promises?

### LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Excessive desires expose people to mental anguish that arises not from the condition, but from the mind.** Ahab was king and lived in a palace. Naboth refused to sell his vineyard to King Ahab. Ahab went home upset and laid on his bed sulking and refused to eat (1 Kin 21:4). Ahab was discontent in a palace; however, Apostle Paul was content in a prison (Ac 16:25; Phil 4:12).

2. **The person who rejects the Lord may consider the Lord's messenger an enemy.** Ahab didn't like God's message presented by Elijah and considered Elijah a troublemaker and his enemy. Ahab's choices made God his enemy; therefore, Ahab considered Elijah, God's messenger, as his enemy (1 Kin 21:17-29).
3. **Evil people may prosper and enjoy the pleasures of sin temporarily; however, their punishment will come when they receive the wages of sin.** King Ahab and Queen Jezebel enjoyed the luxuries of living in a palace and having power to take the property they desired from Naboth (1 Kin 21:1-16). But Ahab and Jezebel were punished: Ahab died and the dogs lapped his blood (1 Kin 22:38); dogs devoured the body of Jezebel (2 Kin 9:30-37); the male descendants of Ahab were murdered by Jehu (2 Kin 10:1-17). The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23).
4. **Evil people who despise God, may use the religion of the true God to manipulate people to do evil.** Jezebel was committed to her gods and was determined to make all Israel worship her gods. She tried to kill all the Lord's prophets. She was committed to getting what she wanted and she wanted to get Naboth's vineyard for Ahab. In Israel during times of disaster, public fasting and public prayer were proclaimed (Jdg 20:26; Jol 1:14; 2:15). Under the cover of a religious fast dedicated to the Lord God of Israel, Jezebel had Naboth falsely accused of cursing the Lord God. She used the cover of the true God to murder Naboth (1 Kin 21:7-14).
5. **God is all powerful and has the power to fulfill his promises.** He fulfilled his promises of punishing Ahab, Jezebel and their descendants (1 Kin 21:20-24). Ahab died and the dogs lapped his blood (1 Kin 22:38). Dogs devoured the body of Jezebel (2 Kin 9:30-37), and the male descendants of Ahab were murdered by Jehu (2 Kin 10:1-17).
6. **Might may prevail against right when powerful people use their positions to take what they want; however, the mighty who abuse power will be judged and punished by God.** Queen Jezebel was determined to get what she wanted. Jezebel thought that the king had the right to demand anything he wanted and to order his citizens to do anything he wanted. Therefore, when Naboth refused to sell Ahab his vineyard, she had Naboth killed (1 Kin 21:1-16). However, Prophet Elijah predicted that Ahab, Jezebel, and his family would be killed (1 Kin 21:17-28). Elijah's prophetic judgment happened (1 Kin 22:29-40; 2 Kin 9:1 - 10:17).

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### **Role-playing Drama:**

Invite two volunteers to dramatize King Ahab and Prophet Elijah in Naboth's vineyard. King Ahab has gone to take possession of Naboth's vineyard after Naboth's murder. Prophet Elijah confronts Ahab in Naboth's vineyard.