

Leader guide

In this lesson:

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 21

TAKE HOME TRUTH

FFCA - In every way God is indescribable and incomprehensible but loving enough to be personal and knowable. The same God who created us is the same God who became like us in order to save us.

FFCB - Our King is all powerful, all knowing and supremely gracious to those who humbly submit to His rule over their lives.

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Our Incomparable King



OVERVIEW

Fake news. Collusion. Corrupt leaders. Cover up.

Yesterday's news?

No. This is what is happening in 1 Kings 21. The writer of 1 Kings wanted to make sure we understand how deeply flawed and evil King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, were in their time.

The story we look at this week has all of the drama and intrigue of the worst case of government corruption. The center of the drama is a godly man by the name of Naboth, a vineyard owner in Jezreel. In many ways, Jezreel is the Northern California of Israel. It is a beautiful, rich region that was in many ways the bread basket of Israel. Isaiah referred to it as the "fertile valley" (Isaiah 28:1). The name "Jezreel" in Hebrew means "God will sow."

Then, in addition, he gave a second offering of 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of silver (1 Chronicles 29:2-5).

Henry David Thoreau rightly observed, "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone."

Obviously, David was not possessed by his possessions. In his prayer for the temple, he revealed his heart: "... who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from Thee, and from Thy hand, we have given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14).

What a contrast is this example of Ahab! Like David, his view of possessions reflected his heart, and what a different heart it was.

This is most clearly seen in how the two kings responded when confronted by the Lord's prophet. David's immediate response to Nathan the Prophet's accusation of stealing Uriah's wife was to the point: "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13).

In contrast, when Ahab saw Elijah the prophet approaching him, he said, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" After hearing God's judgment against Ahab, he did display repentance, but Matthew Poole observes,

This humiliation or repentance of Ahab's was only external and superficial, arising from the terror of God's judgments; and not sincere and serious, proceeding from the love of God, or a true sense of his sin, or a solemn purpose of amendment of his life, as appears, because all the particulars of his repentance here, are external and ritual only; nor is there the least intimation of any one sign or fruit of his true repentance, as that he restored Naboth's land, or reproved his infamous wife, but in the very next chapter you find him returning to his former vomit.

The Lord acknowledged Ahab's act of humility in v. 29, but the text implies that Ahab's temporary repentance brought temporary deliverance from the Lord's judgment. In the end, the Lord promised to bring calamity on the house of Ahab. Three years later, Ahab was dead.

Looking at our own cultural history, what inheritance have we been given that we must faithfully preserve for the next generation?

As we have observed, Naboth stood on the principle of law when he refused to sell his land to Ahab. He was not only thinking about his own well-being but understood his land to be "an inheritance" from his fathers and to his sons. He was only a custodian, or steward, of this inheritance. Therefore, when Ahab offered to buy the land, Naboth's response was quick and clear: "the Lord forbid!"

We need to look at the great inheritance we have received from our fathers, that is an inheritance from the Lord. What is this inheritance? A godly heritage. We received from our fathers the Bible, a vibrant church in America, freedom of worship, moral and ethical standards, etc. We need to remember that these gifts are not ours, nor can they be taken for granted. This godly heritage was fought for and our forefathers struggled to win these freedoms for our country. They passed them on to the next generation, who passed it on to the next, and so on.

We are merely custodians of this godly heritage today. We are caretakers who must pass on this inheritance to the next generation.

