

Naboth's Vineyard

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[0 : 00] Now as the Lord enables us, let us again turn to the first book of Kings, chapter 21, to consider some words we have from the beginning of this chapter.

Reading again at the beginning, Now Naboth, the Jezreelite, had a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria.

And after this Ahab said to Naboth, Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house and I will give you a better vineyard for it.

Or if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money. But Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my father.

One or two thoughts on these words. Now King Ahab was the fourth king of the ten northern tribes of Israel.

[1 : 21] And he reigned for 22 years over these people. And in chapter 16 from verse 30 onwards, Ahab, the son of Amri, did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him.

And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him.

He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made an Asherah.

Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. A very uncomplimentary statement regarding this king of Israel.

He wasn't without his better points. We read that he had a large building program.

[3 : 11] During his years as king. And this is in chapter 22 at verse 39. And he seems to have been keen to have the people furnished with good buildings.

The rest of the acts of Ahab and all he did. And the ivory house that he built. And all the cities that he built. Are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

He had a mind to build up the nation in that tangible and practical way.

He also had success as a king warrior. Particularly against the Assyrians. When on more than one occasion.

He defeated the Assyrian forces that threatened the security of his land. But against these better points.

[4 : 12] The overriding view of the scripture regarding King Ahab is. That he was a very bad man. And he left a very bad heritage or legacy behind him.

He was instrumental in bringing the worship of Baal Merkart into Israel. I know that Baal had been a god of the Canaanites long before his day.

In the days of Samuel for example. The people of Israel bowed to Baal. And it was a constant recurring threat to the people.

This idolatry of Baalism. But with this particular king. He and his wife as it were.

Were doubly determined. To bring the children of Israel under the influence of Baalism. And Ahab and his wife.

[5 : 21] Were supportive of Baalism. To the extent that you read earlier on in this book. That there were 450 prophets. Of Baal.

Entertained. At the palace table. At Jezebel's table. And 400 prophets. Of the grove. The Asherah. That's 850 prophets.

Of the idols. And at the same time. There were 100 prophets of the Lord. Being fed. By one of the Lord's servants. By 50. In a cave. To keep them from being slain.

By Jezebel. So there was this battle going on. In the land. Really a spiritual battle. A spiritual fight.

Between light and darkness. And of course that's nothing new. It's been like that from the very beginning. When Satan entered the Garden of Eden.

[6:18] And for all his plausible words and promises. He was the agent of bringing darkness and confusion. Into the minds of Eve and Adam.

And into the minds of their seed. Even down to the present moment. The darkness of sin. Where sin seeks to promote idolatry.

And the worship of anything or anyone. Apart from the worship of the true God. And we see here. That Ahab.

He wanted land. For himself. At the beginning of this particular chapter. It's not as if he had.

A little corner. Of Israel. It's been estimated that he had. And a total area of land. In Israel. About 8000 square miles. From Dan up in the north.

[7:17] Right down to Jericho. And west. On to the. Shores of the Mediterranean Sea. And if you measure that. It comes out something like. 100 miles by 80 miles.

Which is. What I've just said. In square mileage. He had a huge area. Nevertheless. The power of evil. Was so.

Dominant in his life. That he wanted even more. And more. At the expense. Of this man. Nabal. And.

That's just to say. Two things. First of all. As we have at the beginning. Of this chapter. A sinful request. Give me your vineyard.

The king. Ahab says to Naboth. That I may have it. For a vegetable garden. Because it is near my house. And I will give you. A better vineyard. For it.

[8:13] A sinful request. And secondly. The answer he receives. From this man. Naboth. Is a godly answer. You see.

At the very beginning. Of Naboth's answer. In verse 3. He says. The Lord. Forbid. That I should. Do this thing. The Lord.

Wasn't in all the thoughts. Of King Ahab. While at the same time. The Lord. Was dominant. In the thoughts. Of Naboth. The Jezreelite. And I would just like to say.

One or two words. First of all. About. This sinful. Ungodly request. That King Ahab. Made known. To this man.

Naboth. Now. He either. He either. He either. Didn't know. Or he didn't care.

[9:13] What the word of God said. Regarding the inheritance. Of the people of Israel. The people of God. If you were to read in Psalm 78.

For example. In verses 52 onwards. You find there. That the Lord. Had taken the people. Into the land. In the days of Joshua. And he had divided the land. By lot.

To them. The inheritance. Was. There. And you find. In this particular. Instance.

That what. The King Ahab. Was seeking to do. Was to contravene. A clear. Scriptural. Directive. In Leviticus 25. At verse 23.

You have this. The land. Shall not be sold. In perpetuity. For the land is mine. Saith the Lord. For you are strangers.

[10:09] And sojourners. With me. You see. The land. Is the Lord's. He has certainly granted it. To these people.

The Israelites. In the land of Canaan. With this stipulation. They must not sell it. Between tribes. And between one another. And the King Ahab.

Sought to break that. Law of the Lord. And the other one. Is in Ezekiel. Chapter 46. And verse 18.

And that says. Moreover. The prince. Shall not take. Of the people's. Inheritance. By oppression. To thrust them.

Out of their. Possession. So that was. As it were. Speaking directly. To himself. As the king.

[11:08] The prince. Said over them. And the scripture says. You mustn't do it. You mustn't. Oppress your people. You mustn't. Claim their land. Because it is not.

Your land. It is not. Their land. In essence. It's the Lord's land. That he has granted to them. As an inheritance. And Ahab didn't care.

Give me your vineyard. It's a lovely vineyard. Or if you don't want to. Part with it. Well I'll give you money. Does that not induce you.

And draw you to. Considering. Well maybe I'll give it away. For money. You see. This was the way. Ahab was working. And.

We see that. There is this. Continuing. Malignant spirit. In the world. Still. The evil.
[12:09] And the power of evil. Seeks to undo. What is right. Seeks to trample. Over. The word of God. And all that it asks of us. Seeks to suppress.

The word of God. We find that. In Romans chapter 1. The truth is being suppressed. By these people. It's underfoot. They don't care. What the word of God is saying. But they want their own agenda. To be progressed. They want what they want. Not what the Lord wants. And I'd like to.

Extend this thought. A little bit more. To. Ourselves. In particular. And. The way. The power of evil. And the temptation. To sin. Seeks to. Draw us away. From what the Lord is asking. Of us.

[13:05] But before going there. I'm going to. Come to what. Was given to this king. By. By way of an answer. By Naboth. Naboth said.

The Lord forbid. That I should give you. The inheritance. Of my fathers. See. He must have been. A strong.

Strong. Individual. This man. Naboth. Because he stood up. To the king. And the king. With all his authority. And all his influence. Nevertheless. This man.

Had his focus. Upon the Lord. He stood. On what the Lord. Was saying. He feared the Lord. More than he feared the king. And this is what.

Ought to be the priority. With us all. Fear God. And keep his commandments. It says. In Ecclesiastes 12. For that is the whole duty.

[14:00] Of man. Or the whole of man. See. How does. This kind of situation. Present itself. To us.

As people living today. I'm going to say. One or two things. First of all. About the Christian church. That Naboth.

In a sense. Who is the owner. Of the vineyard. In Jezreel. That's been appointed. To him. By the Lord. It's as if he represents. The church of Christ.

In any age. Or generation. You see. The Christian church. Or the church of Christ. Is under attack. All the time. Satan says. Give me your vineyard. In what way. Does this pose a threat.

[15:00] To the church. Well. Think of. The authority. Of scripture. For one thing. Think of the doctrines. Of scripture. Think of the way.

The scriptures. Are for us. Who have inherited them. And who hold them dear. They are the only rule. To direct us. That we may glorify.

And enjoy God. They are the. Revelation. Of God. To us. Jesus. When the apostle Paul. Was going into. Rome. He was going into.

A very. Godless. Multi-faith society. With low. Moral. Low. Moral. Low morals. Low morals. And very.

Very. Worldly ethics. And he was going in. To reason. With people. Who. Thought that they were able. To reason him. Out of his.

[15:56] Gospel faith. But he says. I am not ashamed. Of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God. Unto salvation. To all who believe.

For in it. The righteousness of God. Is revealed. From faith. To faith. As it says. The just shall live. By faith. You see.

He knew. That the gospel. Was full of power. The power of God. The God. Who took his people. Out of the land of Egypt. By a mighty hand. And an outstretched arm.

The God. Who kept them safe. Through their wilderness journeys. Who brought them into. The land of Canaan. And there. Subdued their enemies. The power of God.

Was there. And when you think. Of the apostle Paul himself. The way he was. So adamant. Against the gospel. And against.

[16:51] All that was. Dear to the saints of Christ. Nevertheless. In one moment. Of one day. He was. The subject.

Of God's. Saving power. And he bowed the knee. To Christ. On the road to Damascus. The power of Christ. Invaded his life. And subdued him.

To himself. In our day. So many people. Disregard. The authority.

Of the word of God. They disregard. What the word of God. Says about God himself. That he is. The eternal God. And that he is the one.

Who has created all things. By the word of his power. And that he is the God. Who sustains all things. By that same word of power. So that.

[17 : 46] Without his sustaining power. All that is in being. Would revert to nothingness. And the scientists. Come along. And they say to us.

That can't be. You have to relinquish. Your faith. In the scriptures. It just doesn't make sense anymore.

We are so advanced. Nowadays. That we can. Really. Progress. Things. Without. Any reference. To God at all. Give me your vineyard.

Leave it aside. I am sure we have all. Made up with people. Who have that kind of argument.

But you know what the word of God says in Proverbs. Buy the truth. Buy it. And sell it not. Sell not.

[18 : 48] This wonderful inheritance we have. This legacy that we have been handed down. The word of God. The scriptures. In a language that we know. In a language that is precious to us.

Whether it's Gaelic or English. Or any other language that's near to our heart. The scripture is available to us. And it's God's revelation. Of himself. And of his way of salvation.

In Christ Jesus. Not only do we have the scriptures. But we have. Commended to us. Bible based practices.

A lifestyle that is. According to the mind of God. Revealed in the scriptures. You see there is a biblical ethic. And the ethics of the scripture.

Promote peace. And promote harmony. Promote peace. In the hearts and minds of people. And in communities. And in the spirit of Ahab.

[19 : 54] In our present day. Says. Part with that. Leave it aside. In a modern world. There's no place for the Bible at all. Well I.

Disagree completely. With Ahab. And his spirit. In that particular situation. And then. Thinking in terms of.

Christians as individuals. The Ahab. Of this world. Seeking to. Enforce. And bring to bear upon us. An idolatrous. Lifestyle. He says. Part with. These things that are. Near and dear to you. As an individual Christian.

Part with your Christian. Lifestyle. Give way on this particular issue. Why are you so. Puritanical on that particular issue. Why are you so.

[20 : 55] Committed. In your private life. And your public life. To this particular kind of ethic. Day by day. Prayer life. Bible reading.

Meditation on God's word. Coming to the house of God. Coming and going. Is there any point in it? Part with that. It's a new age.

It's a new world. Be modern. Be progressive in your thinking. Leave these. Old things behind you. Do you remember the story of.

Jacob and Esau. And Esau was. Willing to sell his birthright. For a mess of pottage.

As it says in the scriptures. A little stew. Because he was famished. Having come in from hunting. And Jacob said. Well I'll give you some of it.

[21 : 56] If you give me. What's most precious. Your birthright. And he said. Well. What uses it to me. I'm about to die. So he parted with his birthright.

Just like this man. Was encouraged. To do. By the king Ahab. Give me. He says. Your vineyard. Which is precious. Yes. But this man stood his ground.

And he said. God forbid. He forbids it. And I go along with what the Lord says. Not what you. O king. Are saying.

You see. In the epistle of. Paul to Titus. We have in chapter 2.

In verses 11 and 12. Very interesting words. The grace of God. It says. Has appeared.

[22 : 58] Bringing salvation for all people. Training us. To renounce ungodliness. And worldly passions. And to live self-controlled.

Upright. And godly lives. In the present age. Waiting for our blessed hope. The appearing of the glory. Of our great God and saviour.

Jesus Christ. Training us. To renounce ungodliness. Which is what this man did. He turned us. With his back upon the king. And he said.

I'm not having what you're suggesting. And when the spirit of this age. In which we live. And the spirit of Satan. Approaches us. Trying to slacken our.

Commitment to the things of God. And the ways of the word of God. We must stand. Upon what the word of God is saying. And charging us. To live our lives.

[23 : 57] Godly and committed. To what is right. However difficult it might be. Whatever dangers might. Come our way as a result. However much people may mock.

It's better to be. On the side of the Lord. Than on the side of those. Who seem. To be modern and progressive.

The Lord was saying. Through Isaiah. To the people. In 52. 11. Come here. From among them. And touch not the unclean thing. The unclean suggestion. The unclean invitation. The worldly. Prompting. To a lifestyle. Different. To what the scripture commends. Come away from it. Turn aside from it. Keep.

[24 : 56] Almost straight and narrow. You find in the scripture. Again and again. People commended. For not having turned. To the left hand. Or to the right.

In other words. They didn't. Straddle. The way. They kept. In the middle of the way. That the Lord had commanded. And they didn't turn.

To the left. Or the right. The king. Ahab here. Sought. To turn this man. Out of his own vineyard. Out of the inheritance. That he had received.

And the devil wants us. In our day. To turn away. From the inheritance. We also have received. What about.

People who aren't yet. Believers. In Christ Jesus. Does this apply to you? Well I would suggest. That it may do.

[25 : 52] When you're looking. As it were. From the sidelines. Upon the Christian church. And the life of Christian people. And Ahab. The dark spirit.

Satan himself comes. And he asks you. You give me. The vineyard of your life. You have been granted life. By God.

You live in a modern world. Everything. Is possible for you. Don't you turn away. From the things. From the things.

That are. Seemingly. So unprofitable. Like the lifestyle. Of many Christian people. Whom you know. They just seem to be.

So ordinary. Life is more exciting. If you follow. The world. And the things of this world. So Satan says. And he promises.

[26 : 50] So many different things. Give me your life. I'll give you. So many things. I'll give you joy. I'll give you.

Peace. I'll give you. Satisfaction. I'll give you. Money. I'll give you. Fame. All of these. Different things. You know that. Satan came to the Lord Jesus.

Tempting him. In the same kind of way. He says. See all these kingdoms. Of the world. I'll give them to you. If only you bow down.

And worship me. Satan. Defeated. Satan tried to defeat. The Lord. And the Lord. Defeated him. He wasn't going to bow down. Before Satan. Satan had no authority. To give him anything. He has no authority. To give you anything.

[27 : 48] Because the Lord here. He suggests to us. That this is our real danger. If you listen to Satan. And his.

His secret whisperings. In your mind. Give me your life. He says. If you do that. If you yield to him. If you yield to him. You will end up like.

Ahab. Condemned by God. When you think of. The answer. That this man gave to the king. What did it lead to. In his life. Well it led to an awful lot of. Suffering. You see. You see. The king's wife.

Jezebel. Jezebel. Was behind. The king. To try and progress. The work. Of idolatry. And she arranged.

[28 : 45] To have this man. Naboth. Trapped. By worthless men. Who brought false charges. Against him. You have cursed God.

And the king. And if that was to be said. They were going to stone. This poor man. And surely that's what happened. For standing.

Through to. Through godliness. And through to the word of God. This man. Was stoned today. When you think of.

The prophets. In the old testament. To said of Isaiah. That he was slain. And sawn asunder. Because of his faithfulness.

To the lord. Think of the apostles. Peter was. Slain. Others of them were slain. Because of their. [29 : 42] Commitment to the word of God. Think of the covenanters. In Scotland. Because of their faithfulness. To the scriptures. And church government. As described by the scriptures.

Many of them died. Think of the Puritans. In England. Many of them burnt to the stake. Because of their allegiance. To the word of God. Our own free church.

Forbears. Suffered much. Maybe not death. Directly. But suffered much. Because of the standard. Took. And we see here.

That this is what happened. To Nabal. He was put to death. And was willing to be stoned. Because of his allegiance.

To the word of God. You know. So. So. We don't know. What awaits us.

[30 : 43] As a generation. Of Christians. We read the newspapers. And see news bulletins. And are aware. That Christians are being persecuted.

In various countries nowadays. Rather than deny their Lord. They are willing. To stand firm. On the word of God.

To do what pleases him. The powers that be. In these. In these. Unsympathetic. Nations. Ask. Give me your vineyard.

And they said. No. I am not going to give. Way to you. Because I love my Lord. Whatever it costs me.

I am not going to deny him. And when you read in the scriptures. In the book of Revelation. It says that these people. Were faithful. Unto death. And they received the crown of life.

[31 : 42] Crown of life. What is. A vineyard. Or it is value in money. Received from a king.

In this world. What is that. In comparison to a crown of life. What do you think. Happened.

In the experience. Of. Ahab himself. Believe that Naboth. Was one of those.

Who didn't bow the knee to Baal. Do you remember. What the Lord said. To Elijah. Elijah felt so alone. In the country of Israel. And he thought. There was nobody.

Who feared God. But himself alone. And the Lord said. I have 7000. The knees that I have not bowed to Baal. And I believe. That this man. Naboth.

[32 : 37] Was one of these people. Who didn't bow the knee to Baal. He was. A fervent. Worshipper of the Lord. In truth. Despite the fact.

That he was stunned. At the hands of evil men. Nevertheless. His soul was. Sanctified. At the point of his death.

And went immediately. Into glory. What about. Ahab. Well.

The Lord had written. Very dark. Words. Concerning Ahab. That say here. That he and his wife. Met. A very. Sad end. Very sad end. Ahab. And his family. His wife Jezebel.

[33 : 35] If you read in 2 Kings. Chapter 9. For example. At verse 25. It says here. What happened. In the experience.

Of this man. 2 Kings. 9. Jehu. Said to. Bidkar. Take him up. And throw him.

On the plot of ground. Belonging to Naboth. The Jezreelite. For remember. When you and I. Rode out. Side by side. Behind Ahab. His father. How the Lord.

Made this pronouncement. Against him. You see. His family. Were reaping. The fruits. Of Ahab's. Iniquitous.

Idolatrous. Lifestyle. It's interesting. That the Lord. Is not asleep. In relation.

[34 : 30] To the sinful. Life of people. The generations. That follow. May. Reap. The awful. Consequences.

Of the sins. Of this generation. Of the sins. That I. Commit. In my life. The Lord. May see fit. To bring.

Fruit out. In the experience. Of those. Who follow. And we see also. Second Kings. 9. 33. It's talking about.

Jezebel. And he said. Throw her down. So they threw her down. And some of her blood. Spattered on the wall. On the horses. And it trampled on her. He went in.

And ate and drank. And said. See now. To this cursed woman. And bury her. For she is a king's daughter. When they went to bury her. They found no more of her. Than the skull. And the feet.

[35 : 27] And the palms. Of her hands. When they came back. And told him. He said. This is the word of the Lord. Which he spoke. By his servant. Elijah the Tishbite. In the territory. Of Jezebel. Of Jezreel. The dogs shall eat. The flesh. Of Jezebel. The cots of Jezebel. Shall be as dung. On the face of the field. In the territory of Israel. So that no one can say.

This is Jezebel. In our day. It is so.

So important. For us to value. The heritage. The Christian heritage. We have. The wonderful. Gospel.

Legacy. That's been left. To us. Because you can see. On every hand. People trying to unravel it. Bringing in. Various laws.

[36 : 21] That are so contrary. To the word of God. In various areas. Of life. Not just one. Or two areas. In successive areas.

Of life. People are trying to. Get underneath. The gospel. And put it out. Put it out of its place. And replace it. With some kind of.

Nebulous. Niceness. To prevail. Among people. Well that is no way forward. I'm afraid. And if our country.

Buys into that kind of thinking. More and more. It's a disaster. Waiting to happen. It's happening already. I believe. Neighbors.

He had a little plot of ground. Granted to him. By God. You have a plot of ground. Your own heart. Your own life. Your own.

[37 : 20] Congregation. Your own. Denomination. Your own country. For which we ought to pray. And pray more and more. Servantly. As the day goes on.

Lest. The spirit of King Ahab. Undoes. All the good. That has been done. Down through the ages. Through the gospel. Through the gospel. Give me your vineyard.

He says. God forbid. That I would give you. The inheritance of my path. The Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. He paid so much. And so highly. For the privileges. We enjoy. God. I used to work with a man.

Years ago. When I was working in the mill. And I would meet him. And he would very often say. Well he said. This is a lovely day. And it cost.

[38 : 25] Our saviour. Much. For us to have a lovely day. With sunshine. And I believe he was. Theologically accurate. Every nice day.

And every moment. Happiness we have in life. We have as a result. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we have nice days. And have had nice days.

In our churches. Down through the years. All because the Lord Jesus. Has done what he's done. Don't let Ahab.

Interfere with these things. In your own personal life. Don't give money. Of the territory. That the Lord. Has seen fit to grant you.

By way of grace. And when you think of. The wider area. Of our nation. Pray that the Lord. Would keep us. From having Ahab.

[39 : 26] Come any further into our nation. To dismantle the good things. That have made our nation great. Down through the years. The greatness.

The greatness. Based upon. Righteousness. And the truth of the gospel. May God grant. That to be so. Let us pray.

Help us. Oh Lord. We pray. To be fervent. In our following. Of what is right. And good. And what is God pleasing. And God glorify.

However small. Our corner might be. Just as Naboth. Had a little. Vineyard. Which he was willing. To guard.

Even to the dead. Let us also. In our own hearts. And in our own lives. And in our own station. Stand firm.

[40 : 25] Upon the word of God. To do what pleases thee. And to do what will. Be glorifying. To thy great name.

And beneficial. To our nation. And our communities. We pray for thy blessing. To be with us now. As we sing. Thy praise in conclusion. We ask forgiveness.

For all of us. For Jesus sake. Amen. We'll turn to the Scottish Psalter again now.

And Psalm 37. Psalm 37 verses 3 to 7.

It's on page 252. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord. And be thou doing good.

[41 : 26] And so thou in the land shalt dwell. And verily have food. Delight thyself in God. He'll give thine heart's desire to thee. Thy will to God commit.

Him trust. It bring to pass shall he. And like unto the light. He shall thy righteousness display. And he thy judgment shall bring forth. Like noontide of the day.

Christ in the Lord. And patiently wait for him. Do not fret. For him. Who prospering in his way. Success in sin. Doth gain.

These tanzas. Psalm 37 verses 3 to 7. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord. Amen. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord.

And be thou in good. And so thou in the land shall dwell.

[42 : 34] And be thou in good. Till I thyself and God will give.

Thy heart is life to thee. Thy head shall be. Thy criticized ministry to pass shall lead.

Unlike unto the light he shall, thy might shall bless his way.

Until thy judgment shall be for thy noontide of the day.

Rest in the Lord and patiently with fire and good on may.

[44 : 08] For his reproach, we give his way success in sin of grace.

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all. No one forevermore. Amen.