

The Reckoning

1 Kings 21:1-29

Main Idea: God calls us to live by faith. Faith chooses the goodness of God over sinful pleasures. Faith perseveres in the face of persecution for righteousness.

The prelude to our story in 1 Kings 21 begins with Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, Israel's neighbor to the north, attacking Israel's capital city, Samaria. Ben-Hadad surrounds Samaria with an impressive force comprised of 32 other kings who join forces with him. After some fighting, it becomes obvious that Ben-Hadad is going to win this war. So Ben-Hadad sends messengers to King Ahab.

The messengers say, *"Ahab, you are a defeated king. The terms of peace are these . . . you must give Ben-hadad all your gold and silver."*

ALL of IT?"

"YES! All of it."

Ahab knows that he is way outmanned and out-charioted. He stands NO CHANCE in a battle against this force. In hopelessness he replies. *"OK."*

"Oh yes, you must also give your wives and your children to Ben-Hadad to do whatever he wants to do with them."

"My wives AND my children?"

Yes.

King Ahab replies *"OK. OK. I have no other options. All that I have is yours to take."*

The messengers leave to report back to Ben-Hadad. But Ben-Hadad thinks, *"I should have demanded more!!"* So he sends the messengers back to Ahab . . . *"Ahab, tomorrow, Ben-Hadad will send his moving company and go through your palace and also through all the house of your servants . . . the other government officials, the wealthy and the poor and the movers will take whatever they want from the people in your city."*

"Wait a minute! That is not the agreement!"

"So what?!? It is Ben-Hadad's new demand!"

King Ahab sends for the elders of Israel and says, *"I have some bad news. Ben-Hadad is just looking to trouble and trouble us. In return for peace, he demanded from me all my gold, my silver, my wives and even my children. And for the sake of our nation, I did not refuse him. But NOW he had changed the peace agreement!"*

The elders then say, *"Do not give in on this one!"*

So Ahab sends back word, *"Hey, I will still keep the original agreement. I will give you my gold, my silver, my wives and my children . . . BUT you cannot pillage all of Samaria!"*

Well, Ben-Hadad is now in a drunken rage! He says, *"I will grind the whole of Samaria to dust! Nothing will be left!"*

King Ahab finds some courage to face this threat. He now knows that the FIGHT MUST GO FORWARD. He replies back, *"Let the soldier who is just beginning to put on his armor BEFORE the battle not boast like the soldier who is taking off his armor after winning the battle!"*

Ben-Hadad had been drinking quite a when he heard Ahab's reply and he gave the orders to attack Samaria immediately.

Meanwhile a nameless prophet from the LORD approaches Ahab. *"Ahab, do you see that great army lined up against you? Do you notice how MANY soldiers are ready to kill you and your people? The LORD is bigger than they are. The LORD has ordained to give you that vast army into your hand today. He is doing this so that you will KNOW the LORD is God."*

Ahab asks, *"How will the LORD win this battle? It seems hopeless!"*

"The LORD will use some young officers with you leading them."

"Really?"

"Yes. Really!"

"Should I go now?"

"Yes. Right away!"

So Ahab gathers 232 young officers and 7000 troops. Around noon when it is really really hot, Ben-Hadad is in his tent still partying like its 1999. When he is told about Israel's troops advancing, he thinks that they might be coming to agree to his peace terms. **He is not ready at all for a fight.**

King Ahab's army slaughters the Arameans. The Aramean army panics and flee. Ben-Hadad escapes with his life.

When King Ahab arrives back in Samaria following this victory, the prophet of the LORD tells him that Ben-Hadad will come back in the spring to do what he promised. Ahab needs to get ready for the next attack.

In the spring, Ben-Hadad advances upon the Israel city of Aphek. King Ahab goes out with his little army to meet him. But in comparison to the vast size of the Aramean army that filled the countryside, the Israel army looked like two little flocks of goats.

The prophet again meets Ahab with the message of the LORD's power and might. *"This is what the LORD says: The Arameans have said, 'The LORD is the*

god of the hills and not of the plains.’ So I will defeat this vast army for you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” The prophet also includes, “And Ahab, you must put Ben-Hadad to death. Do not show him mercy. He has defied the LORD and has killed His people. Do you understand?”

Yes.

What are you to do?

I am to put Ben-Hadad to death.

Good.

The two armies clash on the plains, and the Israelites kill 100,000 Arameans in battle and the LORD kills another 27,000 by making a big city wall in Aphek fall down upon them. However, Ben-Hadad escapes and hides in a secret room in the city. His servant convince him that the best potential to live is to go to Ahab and beg for mercy. These servants go to Ahab in clothes that show sorrow and repentance. They tell Ahab that Ben-Hadad is now Ahab’s “servant”. They plead for his life.

Ahab says, “I am listening. Go get Ben-Hadad.” When he arrives, Ahab honors him by inviting him up into his chariot. There, Ben-Hadad promises that if Ahab lets Ben-Hadad live that he will give back everything that his dad took from Israel . . . all the towns and trade routes.

Ahab is flattered by this powerful king’s deference and says, “Ok.” They make a treaty to seal the deal.

At this the LORD is angry with Ahab and He sends a prophet to him to tell him, *This is what the LORD says, “**You messed up royally!** Because you spared Ben-Hadad’s life after I told you to put him to death, now you must die in his place and your people will die in the place of his people.”*

So Ahab who had been so happy with the LORD when He gave him a miracle victory, is now really angry with the LORD and filled with self-pity. He goes to Samaria to sulk.

Some time after these events, Ahab is still licking his wounds and goes to his vacation home in Jezreel. He is not trying to forget the curse that the prophet of the LORD placed upon him.

He is looking out over his palace wall and thinks how much he enjoys the view of his neighbor’s vineyard. Naboth is one of the great neighbors who trims his bushes, weeds his vineyard and makes his place look spectacular. While Ahab is musing over his neighbor’s place, he starts thinking what he would do with it if he had that piece of property.

He thinks, "I already have a vineyard on my property, but that place would make a great location for a garden!" He starts thinking of all the fresh produce that would be grown there to fill his table with the choicest of meals.

So one day he sees Naboth cutting grapes from his bountiful vineyard and he shouts, "Hey Naboth! I am glad I caught you outside today. I have been thinking about a deal that I think you are really going to like!"

Naboth said, "OK." Naboth knows Ahab's selfish character and is suspicious from the start about any kind "DEAL" he would offer.

Ahab said, "Well, I have been noticing how lovely your vineyard is."

"Thank you. I work really hard to tend it."

"Oh I know! I see you out here all the time. But I was thinking. Your place is so very close to my winter palace. It would make the perfect place for a vegetable garden to help us host royal dinners."

"OK". Naboth does not like where this is going.

"Well, I would not ask to buy it from you without you profiting from it. So here is what I am offering. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange. Or if you prefer cash I will give you way more than it is worth! Which ever is fine with me. How about it?"

Naboth is a very righteous man. He knows what God has said about this matter. He knows that when Israel was given the land XXXX years ago in Joshua's day that the LORD said, *"The land that I am giving you shall never ever be sold. For the land is mine. You do not own it, I do. I am giving portions of this land to every family in Israel so that every family will have a part in the everlasting covenant that I made with Abraham. You may not transfer any part of the land from one tribe to another, because my plan is for every family of the people of Israel to inherit the blessing of land in my kingdom."* (Leviticus 25:23-28; Numbers 36:7). Naboth knows all of this. His objection to Ahab's offer is not a financial one or even a sentimental one. His objection to Ahab's offer is a spiritual one. He knows that he cannot sell this property to Ahab without sinning against the LORD.

So he says, *"King Ahab, thank you for your generous offer. But I can't do this. The LORD has forbidden me from selling my property to you. This is a sin against the LORD that you are asking me to do."*

King Ahab is not used to being turned down. He sees Naboth's righteous conviction and stomps away frustrated and angry . . . like a spoiled little boy who is refused ice cream. He throws himself face down on his bed and screams into his pillows. He kicks his bed and tosses and turns in exasperation. At suppertime, his servants came to his bedroom. They know that he has been crying his eyes

out all day. He did not eat any lunch or afternoon snack. They knock gently, “O King Ahab! The royal chef has cooked up your favorite meal . . . lamb chops with sweet onions.”

“I do not want any of it! Get out of here!” he pouts. The servants then tell Queen Jezebel, *“Queen, we do not know what is wrong, but we think you need to check in on King Ahab. He is not eating. We are worried about him!”*

Queen Jezebel frowns and marches into Ahab’s room. “Why are you so upset that you are not eating your meals?”

“Because I talked with Naboth and he upset me.”

“What did he say?”

“Well, I really want his vineyard for my vegetable garden. So I offered him overmarket price for it and he said, ‘No!’

“Ahab, are you not the KING? Do you not rule over all the little people? You can do anything you want. This is not how a powerful man like you should act!

Get up now. Go to the dining room and eat your dinner. Do not vex yourself one moment longer about. I will give you Naboth’s vineyard.”

Jezebel is an incredibly wicked woman, but she is also very smart. She knows the Bible. She knows the law from Leviticus 24:16 where cursing the LORD is a crime punishable by stoning. She also knows the law from Deuteronomy 17 where a capital offense required two or three witnesses to convict. She also knows that fasts are proclaimed by God’s people when grave sins have been committed and they needed to be addressed through repentance and justice.

Jezebel writes letters in Ahab’s name to the leaders who lived with Naboth in Jezreel. She orders them, ***“Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the head of the people. And set two worthless men opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, ‘You have cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.”*** (1 Kings 21:9–10 [ESV](#))

The men quaked in fear as they heard Jezebel’s command. They knew this was a great act of evil, but to disobey would be to lose their lives. They loved life more than the LORD and they carried out this wicked plan with precision.

They set righteous Naboth as the head of the people as they proclaimed a religious fast to honor the LORD. Then two worthless shouted out, “Naboth cursed both God and the king! We heard it with our own ears!” Naboth reeled with surprise and replied, “But this is not true!” The two worthless men also shouted, “Naboth’s sons also cursed God and the king.” Naboth again protests, “But this is NOT true!”

The leaders declare Naboth and his sons guilty and took them all outside the city. They placed them in pit, picked up the largest rocks they could find and one by one cast stones down upon each of their head. Each one falls to the ground growing and then unconscious and then lifeless.

The leaders sent a note to Jezebel which simply read, "Naboth has been stoned. He is dead. His sons are dead too." Jezebel rejoices and immediately runs to see her sad husband.

"Ahab! Ahab! Great news! You know the vineyard that Naboth would not sell you? Well . . . guess what?"

"What?"

Jumping up and down with glee, "Naboth and his sons are all dead! No one owns the vineyard now. You can go claim it and it is yours!"

Like a teenager receiving the gift of a new motorcycle, "No way!" Ahab immediately jumps out of his bed and heads over to the vineyard to claim it as his own.

While Ahab is busy making plans to change the vineyard into a garden, God speaks to Elijah. "Elijah, go down to talk with King Ahab again."

"Again?" "Yes, again

"He will be at Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel claiming it for himself. Say to him, *'This is what the LORD says, 'Was it not enough that you killed Naboth? Must you rob him too? Because you have done this wicked thing, dogs will lick your blood at the place where they licked the blood of Naboth!'*"

"Ok. I will go."

When Elijah appears before Ahab, Ahab's face falls with concern. "So, my enemy, you have found me at last!!" Ahab's conscience had been speaking to him and he knew that God's servant would appear before him as the result of his sin.

In truth, the only friend King Ahab had was Elijah. Everyone else was saying "Yes. Yes!" Jezebel is not a friend. She is an enemy to King Ahab's soul.

"Yes, I have come because you have sold yourself to what is evil in the sight of the LORD. You traded your soul for a vineyard. You thought you could keep God for seeing your sin. But the LORD sees everything that is done in secret. You have angered the LORD to judgment upon you and your house. So now this is what the LORD says, 'I will bring disaster upon you and will consume you. I will destroy every one of your male descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in all of Israel! I am going to destroy your family as I did the family of Jereboam because you have sinned against me and have led all Israel into sin.'"

“Regarding your wicked wife Jezebel. I have seen her sin too. Dogs will eat Jezebel’s body at the plot of land in Jezreel. Neither of you will receive the honor of a funeral. You will have no burial spot to mark your life. In fact, every member of your family who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs and those members who die in the field will be eaten by vultures.

When Ahab heard these words, he felt the fear of the LORD upon him. He was afraid of the judgment to come and felt remorse for his sin.

“Why did I do this wicked thing to Naboth?” As a sign of contrition, he tore his clothes, dressed in rough burlap, fasted from food . . . he did not even take off his rough burlap clothes when he went to bed. He went about in deep mourning with tears and moaning.

The LORD sees Ahab’s humble response and has mercy. The LORD again meets with Elijah, “Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has done this, I will not do what I promised during his lifetime.” Yet the LORD sees that Ahab’s repentance is not genuine. Ahab responds emotionally to the pronouncement of judgment, but he does not respond spiritually with true repentance. So the LORD adds, “My judgment will fall upon his sons. I will destroy his dynasty.”

Main Idea: God calls us to live by faith. Faith chooses the goodness of God over sinful pleasures. Faith perseveres in the face of persecution for righteousness.

The Pleasures of Sin

This story is an account filled with all kinds of sin. It is an ugly story.

There is the sin of prideful disobedience as Ahab spares Ben-Hadad’s life.

There is the sin of self-pity when Ahab hears of God’s displeasure in his treatment of Ben-hadad.

There is the sin of covetousness as Ahab looks upon Naboth’s garden.

There is the sin of unthankfulness as Ahab despairs that he cannot have what he needs to make him happy.

There is the sin of judicial injustice as Jezebel conceives a plan to use the courts to get Ahab the vineyard.

There is the sin of religious hypocrisy as a spiritual fast is used as a ruse to kill Naboth and his sons.

There is the sin of deceit as witnesses lie about Naboth.

There is the sin of murder as Naboth and his sons are stoned to death for something that they did not do.

There is the sin of stealing as Ahab goes down to claim what is not his.

Sin is everywhere in this story and sin is everywhere in our world.

Why do people sin? Because we find pleasure in it. We sin because we want to sin. We believe that our lives will be better with sin than they will be without it. Our sin always reveals what is in our hearts.

Truth: The problem of sin is not caused by the temptations around us. The problem of sin caused by the sin-loving heart inside of us.

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
"I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his deeds." (Jeremiah 17:9–10 *ESV*)*

Ahab thought his life would be happier and more complete if he had Naboth's vineyard. He visualized the pleasure that the vineyard would bring to him as he planted and harvested vegetables from this plot of ground. AND indeed, his vision of the pleasures of a vegetable garden were not completely unfounded.

The truth is that sin often tastes very good and is pleasing for a time. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was tasty as food, a delight to her eyes and that it would give her knowledge that she did not possess. All of this is true! Eve did not see that hook in the midst of the pleasure of her sin . . . a hook that would capture her in death and would plunge the whole human race into pain and ruin.

Truth: If we continue in sin, it is because we want to.

This is why the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence is necessary for us to be free from sin's enslaving desires. **Only the Holy Spirit can produce within us a heart desire for righteousness.**

This is why the Holy Spirit's filling ministry is necessary for us to be free from sin's enslaving power. **Only the Holy Spirit's empowering us will enable us to overcome the pull that indwelling sin places upon our hearts.**

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16 [ESV](#))

We do not read the Bible in the morning and practice private prayer so that we can boast about our spiritual credentials. We read and we pray because these are the MEANS by which we yield to the Holy Spirit and gain spiritual wisdom and power to say "No." to sin and "Yes." to righteousness.

Truth: The pleasure of sin covers over the sinfulness of sin. It makes our sin FEEL right to us. Sin deceives us into thinking that our own sin is different from other people's sin. Other people's sin is bad, while ours is not so bad.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:12–13 [ESV](#))

Nowhere in this story do we see Ahab or Jezebel stopping to consider whether their covetousness or murderous actions are evil. **They just follow their hearts.**

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (James 1:13–15 [ESV](#))

Truth: We are so deceived by the pleasure of sin that we would not even know that sin is sin if God's word did not tell us.

Nothing in Jezebel's experience told her that what she was doing is wrong. She felt completely vindicated by her feelings. But her feelings were not informed by God's Word.

"What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."" (Romans 7:7 [ESV](#))

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right." (2 Timothy 3:16 [NLT-SE](#))

The problem of sin is universal. Every person finds pleasure in sins of various sorts. The Bible does not claim that every person loves every sin. But the Bible does teach us the every person loves sin.

“What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,” (Romans 3:9 ESV)

All of us are under sin . . . no exceptions. This is the place where we all started when we were born in this world. To be “under sin” means that sin has a grip on our hearts so that we want what we want more than we want what God wants and what we want is really wicked.

Being under sin causes us to suppress the truth about God so that we cannot see our sin for what it is . . . a kind of blindness . . . a deadly cancer . . . a joy robbing imposter.

We are UNDER the condemnation of sin and UNDER the control of sin. We are UNDER sin’s penalty and UNDER sin’s POWER. We are hopeless UNDER SIN and helpless UNDER SIN. We are not merely victims of sin, we are friends with it!

The Persecution of Righteousness

This story raises a question: If Naboth honored the LORD by refusing to sell the LORD’s land to Ahab, why did God not protect him from harm? Naboth’s actions were driven by his commitment to obedience. What happened that Naboth should die at the hands of a wicked man?

Truth: God allows His obedient children to suffer for a time at the hands of evil people.

*“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.””
(John 16:33 ESV)*

Truth: Suffering for Jesus results in future eternal glory.

The message of this story is NOT to feel sorry for Naboth. Naboth is rejoicing! Naboth is receiving greater joy NOW and FOREVER BECAUSE Ahab executed him and took his field. This is God’s promise to us!

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” (1 Peter 4:12–14 ESV)

To the church at Smyrna:

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10 [ESV](#))

Principle: The path to gain victory over sin is the path of voluntary suffering for doing God's will. There is still a fight to be won and God ordains persecution to help us win it.

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God." (1 Peter 4:1–2 [ESV](#))

God's plan for His people is far greater than a short-lived temporal life of earthly ease. God's plan is for us to enjoy His glory forever and ever.

Applications: Listen carefully to Jesus' call to follow Him. It is a call to trust Him with life and death.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24–26 [ESV](#))

The Pain of Judgment

Ahab and Jezebel did not immediately experience the judgment of God for their sin. They lived for quite some time without any consequences, enjoying the fruit of their evil actions. **But God's judgment did fall upon them in the most painful of ways.**

STORY: In 1 Kings 22 God judges Ahab by killing him in battle.

*"And they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, **according to the word of the LORD that he had spoken.**" (1 Kings 22:38 [ESV](#))*

Years later Jezebel is slain by Jehu in 2 Kings 9 to fulfill the prophecy of God's judgment upon her:

He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down. And some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled on her. Then he went in and ate and drank. And he said, "See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet 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 Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel, and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jezebel.'"** (2 Kings 9:33–37 [ESV](#))

Principle: God's justice is slow, but sure. God is never mocked. God often bears patiently with those marked for judgment. But it is certain that whatever a person sows; that is what he will reap.

Man has an aversion to thinking much about the wrath of God against sin, yet this theme runs from Genesis to revelation. Even here in this story, the ending where God declares judgment upon wicked Ahab and Jezebel is hard to contemplate. Maybe this is the "God of the OT" who is at work. Yet when we open the NT, we find that Jesus and the apostles teach us more about God's ultimate judgment of an eternal hell for all who sin.

Our time does not allow for a complete discussion of hell and God's judgment, but I set a couple of ideas to consider:

1. The truth about hell is difficult because we do not share God's hatred of sin.
2. The truth about hell is difficult because we do not share God's concern for His glory.
3. The truth about hell is difficult because we do not share God's sense of justice. This is not an indictment of us as it is a statement of fact.

Because our thoughts are so small compared to God we have a hard time approving of God's justice UNLESS God's sense of justice matches ours. I like Francis Chan's question in His book entitled Erasing Hell. He knows that many refuse to believe the doctrine of hell because an eternal hell conflicts with their own thoughts about justice. **Chan asks, "Do you ever even consider the possibility that maybe the creator's sense of justice is actually more developed than yours?"**

Truth: Our disagreement with God's judgment does not change it.

The problem of rebellion against the LORD is our most fundamental concern. Nothing threatens to bring misery and hopelessness into our lives like unforgiven sin.

Like Ahab and Jezebel, we do not consider our sins to be a big deal. We think that we should be able decide for ourselves what we do or don't do. So we consider His commands and think of them as "suggestions". Our disobedience does not seem that terrible to us. We have good reasons for doing what we decide to do.

Application: Let us ask God to root out all rationalizations, all excuses, all arguments that minimize our sin right now. God will do that in the future judgment. Ask Him to do it now so that we might benefit from His mercy!

Today, most anything can be done if we say we are doing it out of love. But on the day of judgment, our opinions about sin will not matter. We will not have a defense that God will listen to.

"For there is no distinction (between Jews and Gentiles): for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:22–23 ESV)

We often think that our greatest problem is some other person's sin. **Friends, if we ever find ourselves fixated upon another person's sin more than we are upon our own sin, we have lost our grasp of the Gospel.** Our greatest problem is NOT that another person is sinning against us. Our greatest problem is that WE are sinning against God! The answer to the world's problems begins with each person coming to Jesus to receive the answer to his/her own problem.

The Gospel reminds us of our condemned condition. We have nothing to say in our own defense other than to cry out, "Mercy! O God, mercy!"

"Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God." (Romans 3:19 ESV)

On the Day of Judgment. No one thinking, "What about that guy?"

What must we do in view of God's righteous judgment? Humble yourself before the LORD and repent now!

*"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. **For** my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isaiah 55:6–9 [ESV](#))

To Thyatira: 'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.'" (Revelation 2:19–23 [ESV](#))

The Path of Life

Naboth points us to Jesus and His saving love. Naboth serves as an OT type of Christ. Consider the similarities between these two:

Both men were hated because of their righteous deeds.

Both were unjustly accused.

Both were rightful owners of the vineyard.

Both of these men had worthless men lie about them.

Both were approved by God, yet were accused of blasphemy against God.

Both of these men were condemned to die by a human court.

Both suffered death by execution.

Both appeared to have lost everything.

Both are honored by the Father with eternal glory.

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit," (1 Peter 3:18 [ESV](#))

Jesus suffered injustice so that we could avoid the justice our sins deserve. **Let us quiet our hearts today and give thanks for the salvation secured for us by Jesus as He willingly endured the penalty that we deserve.**

Truth: The answer to our sin is God's salvation. We need God to forgive us our sins. We need God to change our hearts so that we worship Him and not ourselves.

The path of life is marked “Repentance and faith”. Ahab looked at this path, but ultimately did not choose to walk on it. He responded enough for God in patience to DELAY judgment, but not enough for God to REMOVE judgment.

Jesus tells a shocking story that is very similar to this story of Naboth and Ahab:

“Luke 20:9 And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. Luke 20:10 When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Luke 20:11 And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. Luke 20:12 And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Luke 20:13 Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ Luke 20:14 But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ Luke 20:15 And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? Luke 20:16 He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!”

Luke 20:17 But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’?

Luke 20:18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”” (Luke 20:9–18 [ESV](#))

Main Idea: God calls us to live by faith. Faith chooses the goodness of God over sinful pleasures. Faith perseveres in the face of persecution for righteousness.