

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

Jezebel And Ahab

By

Rev. Todd W. Allen

Villa Rica 8/22/04

1 Kings 21:1-7

An-elect lady told me after one of my sermons that in any discussion of marriage we should always bring in the concept of oneness. Marriage creates a oneness. Two people become one flesh. What a thought to ponder! What a marriage becomes determines what two people become. Their lives are so intertwined, so united, so merged that what happens to one happens to both. Both have a contribution to make to the success or failure of the marriage, but even more important than that the marriage produces an impact, for good or for evil on the family, on the community, on the nation and on the world. The lives of the two individuals become homogenized, for better or for worse, so that their combined witness makes a distinct impression on the lives of others.

Adam and Eve are never thought of separately. We get a witness from their marriage that overshadows their individual lives so when Eve sinned she drew Adam into sin. When Adam sinned he plunged the whole human race into sin. Together they have a corporate and unified witness that will last throughout eternity.

How important that we marry right, that we marry in the Lord. Who you marry will determine a lot more than you suppose. It is a decision that has importance far beyond what you imagine.

But a marriage can be directed toward good ends or evil ends, as we see so clearly in the lives of Ahab and Jezebel. What these two people did is inscrutable forever as exceedingly evil. Like two polluted streams running together their lives merged and their evil characteristics combined to make a horrible combination of evil. Instead of restraining each other in the evil of their corrupt desires they joined forces to become a worse force for evil together than they would have been separately.

The world would have considered their marriage a happy one. There was no quarreling between Jezebel and Ahab. They both got what they wanted out of their marriage. Ahab got a woman who was beautiful and sensuous, resourceful and cunning. Jezebel became Ahab's partner in life. She was all he wanted in a woman. She had pagan nobility. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. She was well taught in the ways of the world. She kept up with all the fashions. She had an air of mystery. She was very religious, a zealous worshipper of Baal. She knew many secrets of the occult. She was proud, well educated, and sophisticated.

And Jezebel got what she wanted in a man. A man born to power and wealth; a man she believed she could handle. A man who was worldly enough to let her do her thing so long as she babied him and kept him convinced that she loved him. He didn't care if she maintained 450 prophets of Baal or if she introduced the ways of the world into the palace. All she had to do was keep him happy and she had everything she wanted in life. She had luxury, power, and wealth. That is exactly what she wanted from marriage. She was happy. Ahab was happy. They never had a cross word. If they did the Scripture says nothing about it. Outwardly to the nation they were happy, united, devoted to each other's interests-- and why not? What helped one helped the other. Ahab's covetousness never conflicted with Jezebel's vanity and false worship. And Jezebel's ruthlessness and deceit never cost Ahab the loss of a single prize he sought. She helped him gather wealth. Her false worship brought in money. She was sought after as a priestess of Baal. She had friends all over the world that consulted her and the prophets she commanded. She was never a liability to Ahab. She was an asset. He knew she was wicked. But she was beautiful and she pampered him. They had an understanding. She got what she wanted and he got what he wanted.

I. Ahab Wanted Naboth's Vineyard.

Some people might think that Ahab acted correctly toward Naboth. He was courteous and made Naboth a reasonable offer. Ahab spoke to Naboth saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden because it is close beside my house, and I will give you a better vineyard than it in its place; or, if you like I will give you the price of it in money. But Naboth said to Ahab, "The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers." (1 kgs. 21: 2,3)

Covetousness is often cloaked in sweet words and a pretended concern for the rights of others. Ahab was outwardly a gentle man. He never threatened people. He wanted people to think he was restrained and gentlemanly.

But he was willing to let his wife threaten and even murder his enemies. He let his wife do the scheming and the conniving. His wickedness manifested itself by her hand. But it was not done without his knowledge. He did not tell her what to do; he just gave her a free hand to do her thing.

Sometimes the roles are reversed in a marriage. The husband does the wickedness but the wife is aware of it and keeps silent. Ananias and Sapphira are a case of two Christians who collaborated in deceit. Ananias sold the land and kept back a part of the price for himself and the Scriptures says it was with his wife's full knowledge. (Acts 5:2).

The Scripture exposes Ahab's true attitude.

⁴So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food.

⁵But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, "How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?" ⁶So he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you a vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" 1 Kin. 21:4-6 (NASB)

Ahab acts like a big baby, a spoiled brat.

He misquotes Naboth -- What Naboth said was, The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers. Naboth was obeying the Word of God. God commanded Moses to establish the law of the land as follows: **²³The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me. Lev. 25:23 (NASB)**

⁷Thus no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. Num. 36:7 (NASB)

Naboth's land was not for sale or trade. Ahab's proposition could be considered a temptation for him, but he refused to give in to the temptation. The vineyard had been in the family for generations and he had a duty to transmit it on to his posterity as it had been handed to him. He loved God and he loved his family.

We are stewards of what God puts in our hands. We must answer for how we use our possessions. It all belongs to God.

II. Jezebel Set Out To Get Naboth's Vineyard For Ahab.

Jezebel did not confide in Ahab exactly how she was going to get the vineyard, but Ahab would have been under no delusions as to the wickedness she was capable of devising. **⁷Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." 1 Kin. 21:7**

To Jezebel power was only worth having if you could use it to get what you wanted. Jezebel derived a lot of satisfaction out of being the queen behind the scenes who really ran the show. Ahab was quite willing to have it that way. Perhaps he felt that he was really using her to get what he wanted without having to worry about the details. He trusted her cleverness and if things went wrong he could always pretend to be the innocent husband.

A lot of marriages are based upon the same kind of unspoken understanding in manipulating circumstances to the advantage of the marriage partners. Perhaps there is no murder committed but much evil is perpetrated in the name of love.

Evil usually involves others. In this case Jezebel put the pressure on the elders and politicians in power to make them co-conspirators in her evil plan. See **1 Kin. 21:8-16 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city. ⁹Now she wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; ¹⁰and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death."**

¹¹So the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the

letters which she had sent them. ¹²They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people. ¹³Then the two worthless men came in and sat before him; and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth, before the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. ¹⁴Then they sent word to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."

¹⁵When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead."

¹⁶When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

1 Kin. 21:8-16

Jezebel had so spun her web of deceit and intrigue that she knew she could depend on those crooked politicians to join her in wickedness. Jezebel intimidated these men. But this does not excuse their wickedness. They acted as agents for the murder of Naboth.

The corruption of Baal worship is to be seen in the wickedness it spawned in the nation. There was no justice. It corrupted the highest officials in the government of the nation.

III. Judgment Is Certain For The Wicked.

God sees all things. Nothing is hidden from his eyes. God sent Elijah to pronounce judgment on Ahab -- 1 Kin. 21:18 -24 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it. ¹⁹"You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you murdered and also taken possession?"' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours."'"

²⁰Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD. ²¹"Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; ²²and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin. ²³"Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' ²⁴"The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat."

(1 Kin. 21:18 -24)

Ahab's marriage was an alliance in wickedness. The Bible says that Jezebel incited Ahab to sin. The fruits of their marriage were idolatry, deceit, conspiracy and murder. And just as the Word of God predicted, both died violent deaths. Dogs licked their blood and in the case of Jezebel dogs ate her body leaving nothing but her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands.

Ahab met his death trying to recover land from Syria. He ignored the warning of the prophet Micaiah and went out to battle with Jehoshaphat against the Syrians to recover Ramoth-Gilead. Trying to escape death, he put off his royal robes and went to battle disguised as a private soldier. But there is no disguise that can hide the sinner from God's judgment. A random arrow shot by an unknown soldier struck him and became the arrow of divine retribution. His sons too met violent deaths. Jezebel escaped death for eleven years after the death of her husband but her day of reckoning came. Jehu ordered her thrown down from her tower in Jezreel and drove over her body with his chariot; her blood spattered the horses and the wall. Later he gave orders to have her buried but all they found was her palms, her feet and her skull (2 Kgs. 9:7, 30-37).

Several questions present themselves by the marriage of Jezebel and Ahab.

- (1) What kind of a witness is your marriage having? Is it to the glory of God or just to the satisfaction of the two of you~
- (2) Have you considered the serious implications of your marriage and determined that, by God's grace your part in the marriage will be pleasing to God and worthy of Christ? What is your contribution to your marriage – is it selfless or selfish, good or evil?
- (3) Is there a need for repentance for sins of commission and sins of omission?
- (4) If you are not married and are considering marriage in the future, are you putting as the first consideration the Christian testimony of your future husband or wife? What do you expect from marriage?
- (5) The apostle Paul advises that a single person may have a greater opportunity to serve the Lord simply because there is single-mindedness and less distraction from total dedication.

The paper and sermon manuscripts from **Pastor Todd W. Allen** are made freely available for review and distribution. We only request that proper web page attribution be provided if distributed for any reason. Please be gracious to forgive typos and errors of expression. These notes are faithful approximations of what has been preached. May God be glorified in the preaching of His Word.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA
519 MAIN STREET
VILLA RICA, GA. 30180
770-459-5276

Developed and Maintained by: eAirCommunications

