



CHAPTER 21

When

- According to the timeline we are using for this study, the kingdom of Israel and Judah divided in 975 B.C.
- The period that followed, called the period of the “Divided Kingdom,” lasted the next few centuries. Israel remained a cohesive nation until 721 B.C. (Assyrian captivity), while Judah lasted until 607 B.C. (Babylonian exile).
- King Ahab’s reign over Israel (22 years) probably fits somewhere between 920-890 B.C.

Key Characters

- **Ahab** – King of Israel. “There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. He acted very abominably in going after idols” (21:25-26).

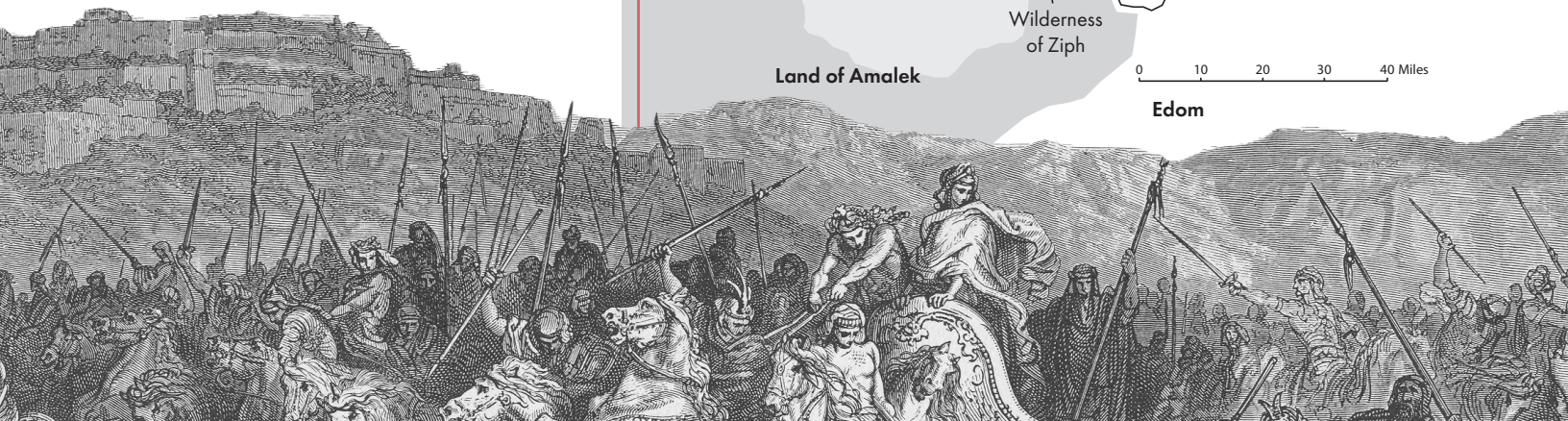
- **Jezebel** – Ahab’s wicked wife. She was a Sidonian.

- **Naboth** – A man who owned a vineyard near Ahab’s palace.

- **Elijah** – The prophet of God. Ahab hated him because God often used Elijah to rebuke him.

Where

- Naboth’s vineyard was in Jezreel.



Outline

- THE TRAGEDY OF NABOTH'S VINEYARD (21:1-16):

- + A man named Naboth lived in Jezreel and owned a vineyard near Ahab's palace.
- + Ahab wanted the vineyard to use as a garden, so he offered to give Naboth a better vineyard or to pay him for the property.
- + Naboth didn't want to sell because the land belonged to his family by inheritance.
- + Ahab angrily returned to his house and told Jezebel what had happened.
- + She reassured her husband she would get Naboth's vineyard for him.
- + She wrote letters to the rulers of Jezreel and had them hire 2 false witnesses, "worthless men," who accused Naboth of cursing God and the king.
- + The men of the city took Naboth and stoned him.
- + Jezebel gleefully went to her husband and reported Naboth's death.
- + Shortly thereafter, Ahab went to Jezreel to take possession of the vineyard.

- ELIJAH CURSES AHAB'S HOUSE FOR HIS SIN (21:17-29):

- + God told Elijah to meet Ahab at Naboth's vineyard.
- + He was to tell Ahab that God had seen his sin, and he would not escape judgement.
- + Elijah cursed Ahab and told him God would destroy his house like the houses of Jeroboam and Baasha.
- + "Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat" (21:24).
- + Jezebel was also cursed. Elijah said she would be eaten by dogs in Jezreel.
- + After hearing this condemnation, Ahab tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and humbled himself.
- + God took notice of his humility, and although He didn't withdraw the curse, He delayed punishing the house of Ahab until after Ahab's death.

Application

- Does God see the oppression of the weak by the powerful?
- Sometimes it doesn't appear that He does, but texts like this show us God is always taking account of the injustices done by the powerful, and they will not escape His judgement.
- Sometimes His judgment comes quickly, sometimes it is delayed, but you can be sure it will come.
- In the Old Testament, we'll read various condemnation directed towards powerful people who oppressed the weak.
- God is a defender of the weak and a He is a humbling force that will distribute justice to all abusers of power.

