

What's Your Destiny

Study 4: 1 Kings 19:1 – 21

How can this study help me?

Everyone is interested in the future. They show this when they consult the stars, dabble with mediums and clairvoyants and position themselves to take advantage of the stock market.

Even Christians succumb to thinking their future is wrapped up in the present. So we acquire things and clutter up our life so we can't hear God speak. We also persist in imagining that possessions will make us happy. Remember Jesus' words about the seed which was strangled by weeds. They represent the cares and worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and in the end they compete, successfully so it seems, with the word of God.

We need to gain a stronger impression that "it is a dreadful thing to fall into hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31) because "we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth" (Heb. 10:26).

What's going on in this Story?

Read carefully 1 Kings 21:1-29. This is the fourth episode where Elijah and Ahab go 'head-to-head.' This time Elijah prophesies about the future: Ahab and his family's future. Again, this story is more than just an interesting tale of despotic corruption. But it takes time to appreciate this.

What does this chapter tell you about the character and religious commitments of

- **Naboth?:** What perspective and commitment lies behind Naboth's refusal to even consider selling his land? Lev. 25:23-24.
- **Ahab?** What had Ahab's father done that set a precedent and an expectation for him? (1 Kings 16:23-24; cf. 16:29)
- **Jezebel?** This chapter of Kings only tells us of Naboth's death. But what does 2 Kings 9:26 imply about Jezebel's plan to secure the vineyard for her husband AND her children?

Elijah's reputation as a prophet is on the line and, given Jezebel's character, quite possibly his life, when he confronts Ahab (verses 17-24). In line with what Elijah said, what ultimately happened to

- Ahab (22:29-38)? How do you explain Ahab's change of mind (21:27-29)?
- Ahab's son, Joram (2 Kings 9:14-26)?
- Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30-37)?

For the first time the Prophet Elijah clearly foretells the future (21:17-24), the traditional activity associated with prophecy.

- But what is the nature of this prophecy? (Hint: Is it like that of Nostradamus?)
- Why is this idea of prophecy not popular with people?
- It may have been this encounter over Naboth's vineyard that reinforced the connection between announcing judgement and the role of the prophet. Can you think of incidents in the life of both John the Baptist and Jesus that illustrate this connection?
- Can you think of a New Testament book which makes this connection even more strongly?

What about us – here and now?

Naboth joins a string of people who lose their lives obeying God.

- Can you think of others in the story line of the Bible?
- Why is this?
- Why doesn't God always bless people who obey him?
- A real prophet's words come true, all the time. Elijah set the benchmark for this. If anyone claims to be a Prophet today, what could we expect to be their credentials?

So what can I do?

- Unlike Naboth, we today don't have a piece of land that's a down payment on a promised inheritance (cf., Lev. 20:22-24). But if we look at the promises of "inheritance" in the New Testament, what can we expect as an "inheritance" and what could we do to forfeit it?