

MONDAY

Confronting King Ahab in Naboth's vineyard, Elijah informs him that the Lord is going to cut off his family line. None of his male off-spring will survive. That is the result of Ahab selling himself to do evil and causing Israel to sin.

READ: I Kings 21:20-22

The references to Jereboam and Nebat are enlightening. In years past, God brought the same sort of judgment upon both of them, so in a sense, the text is saying that Ahab had been twice warned that such consequences await those kings who do evil. Yet he chose to ignore the warnings. We all need to learn from the example of others - that's why we are right to study the Scriptures and to apply the lessons to our own lives. Sometimes those examples stir us on to greater heights for God; sometimes they warn us away from the paths which lead to sorrow and regret. Let us take heed and live for God.

TUESDAY

Elijah continues telling Ahab what God has for him in the days ahead: not only will the dogs lick up his blood when he dies, but the same thing will happen to Jezebel and others in the royal family.

READ: I Kings 21:23-26

Ahab lied and stole and murdered and more. Yet the sin which is listed here which qualifies Ahab as more evil than those who went before him was what? It was that he went after idols. Do you get the significance of this condemnation? As evil as a man may be, it is that he robs God of his place as the one we worship and follow, which brings the greater condemnation. Let's be careful how much energy we expend trying to correct the behavior problems of mankind and society, and let us never lose sight of his greatest need - to turn to the Lord and seek Him with all their heart. Let us put all our energies and efforts and prayers and words into the great task of making Him known!

WEDNESDAY

Hearing the severe words which Elijah spoke concerning judgment, Ahab humbles himself before the Lord and his own people. The Lord acknowledges his response and promises to delay the punishment He had announced.

READ: I Kings 21:27-29

God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble, James tells us. This account in Ahab's life illustrates that. Even Ahab, more wicked than any of the kings who went to the throne before him, experienced a measure of grace when he humbled himself - even temporarily - before God. The believer has it better than that - better than the postponement of judgment; the believer's punishment is paid for in full by Another, the Lord Jesus Himself! And the believer who humbles himself in the sight of the Lord is lifted up.

THURSDAY

Later, Ahab decides that he wants to re-take Ramoth-Gilead, a city which Assyria had captured from Israel in a war three years before. He goes to ask Jehoshaphat, king of

Judah (the southern kingdom), to join forces with him in this endeavor. Jehoshaphat promises to help him in every way.

READ: I Kings 22:1-4

What strikes me as I read these few verses is the determination of King Ahab to reclaim a part of his territory, while, at the same time, showing no such determination to "right the ship" in his own life. Despite a brief flash of humility some time earlier, Ahab does not commit his way to the Lord. He does not turn from idols to serve the living God. Ahab misses the most important thing in life and gives attention to something lesser. *Rise up, O men of God, be done with lesser things! Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of Kings!*

FRIDAY

As Jehoshaphat promises his help in retaking Ramoth-Gilead, he also tells Ahab to seek the will of God, which means that he should consult a prophet. Apparently, Ahab calls together all the prophets in Israel - 400 of them - and asks them as a group what God's will in this manner is. They tell him that God wants them to go and fight. But Jehoshaphat, for some reason, is uneasy with that explanation and asks Ahab for a prophet of the Lord.

READ: I Kings 22:5-7

Ahab has seemingly substituted one set of false prophets for another. The first - 450 strong - was destroyed on Mt. Carmel years earlier. The second, 400 strong, was re-named as prophets, not of Baal but as prophets of Jehovah, but not even such a great name as that can change the heart. These 400 new prophets were not true prophets of God. It takes discernment to tell a false prophet from a true one. In a world filled with false prophets, we must exercise discernment. It's a good thing to pray for!

SATURDAY

When asked to produce a true prophet of God, Ahab thinks of Micaiah. But the problem with him, Ahab says, is that he never prophesies anything good for Ahab! While the search was on for Micaiah, the false prophets continue to declare the Lord's blessing on Ahab's plan to fight Assyria again.

READ: I Kings 22:8-12

Interesting passage: Ahab is able to distinguish that Micaiah is not like the other 400 prophets! You know, that is exactly what God intends for all who are believers - that we would be identifiable by our speech as those who speak for the Lord, and by our behavior as those who live for the Lord. That is quite a challenge, but Micaiah was up to it. How about you and me, I wonder?