

People of Promise
Ahab and Jezebel
603 words

An Unfortunate Promise

Ahab and Jezebel:
Israel's Adult Delinquents

1 Kings 21:19-24

“There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife” (1 Kings 21:25). What promise could you imagine God making Israel's two adult delinquents? Unfortunately, God's promises to them reveal a sobering side of his role as Lord.

Ahab inherited the throne of Israel from his father, king Omri. But Ahab was a prodigy as well as a progeny--he bested his father's record for evil in every category: “Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him” (16:30). The Bible says he considered sin “trivial” (16:31) and proved it by marrying Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, Israel's pagan neighbor. Ahab established the worship of Baal and Asherah idols, and did more to provoke God's anger than any other king in Israel's history.

Besides influencing Ahab to build temples for Baal, Jezebel had all of the prophets of God in Israel killed except for 100 who were hidden in caves by a godly man named Obadiah (18:4). She also had an innocent Israelite named Naboth framed and murdered because Ahab wanted Naboth's garden plot. She was a terrifying woman--even Elijah the prophet ran for his life when he heard she had made an oath to kill him within 24 hours (19:1-3). She and Ahab lived in an ivory-inlaid palace (22:39) where they plotted their idolatrous and murderous ways--most of their ways, that is. Some of their destiny was being worked out by Someone else.

Another way to look at the impact of Ahab's and Jezebel's lives is to consider this: nearly one-third of the books of 1 and 2 Kings concerns the 34 year period of the reign of Ahab and his two sons, Ahaziah and Joram. What a legacy! The effort expended to chronicle and counteract the evil of this family might be compared to the tens of millions of dollars spent today to combat crime in the world, or to rebuild cities destroyed by dictators, or to rehabilitate those captured by the power of drugs. How are we to think about people who inflict such harm in our world? Seeing how God thought about them is a sobering--but realistic--place to begin.

God made promises to Ahab and Jezebel that should have brought them to their knees (Ahab, to his credit, did lapse into repentance briefly at one point; 21:28-29). God promised them they would die gruesome deaths and that their descendants would be judged mercilessly as well (21:19-24; 2 Kings 9:7-8). While no one likes to think of the destruction of anyone, even the certifiably wicked, we can be thankful that God speaks

plainly. His promises about the fate of evildoers are no less clear than his promises about the redeemed (John 3:36).

God warned Ahab and Jezebel through Elijah and other prophets, but they would not listen. If you ever have cause to wonder how serious God is about sin, think of Ahab and Jezebel:

- Is there any sin which I have grown comfortable tolerating in my life?
- Have I forgotten that part of God's love for me means training me to be holy?
- Am I being influenced in unholy ways by anyone I am spending time with?

God has made promises to judge all the world's evil in due time. But an even greater promise is that he forgives those who repent of their sin. If Ahab and Jezebel motivate you, let it be toward the cross of Christ and the promise of eternal life (John 3:16).