

## **STANDING AGAINST**

Friday, September 15

Reading: 1 Kings 21-22

**1 Kings 21:20** Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me, my enemy!" "I have found you," he answered, "because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD. **21** 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel--slave or free. **22** I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked Me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.'

In 1 Kings 20, we read that Ahab did at times listen to the Lord's instructions. But it never lasted long. The final straw for this selfish king and his wicked queen occurred over a vineyard. Naboth's vineyard was close to the palace and Ahab wanted it! However, Naboth would not give up the inheritance that had been passed down in his family from generation to generation. The land belonged to the Lord and Naboth would not let go of God's allotment to him at any price (see Leviticus 25:23).

After this rejection, Ahab goes home and sulks like a little child. Jezebel responds by using the law against cursing God and His appointed ruler (Exodus 22:28) to eliminate Naboth. The wicked queen knows enough about God's Law to twist it to her own advantage. At her command, the city elders present two false witnesses against Naboth and have him stoned to death.

Elated over this turn of events, Ahab goes down to celebrate in his new vineyard, acquired by treachery and murder, only to find Elijah there to confront him. Ahab's true attitude toward God is displayed in his identification of God's prophet as "my enemy." This attitude is also expressed in the next chapter when Ahab complains about another prophet of God: "I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad" (22:8). Obviously there was nothing good God could say about Ahab!

This was the final nail in Ahab's coffin. In the place where Naboth had been killed, the blood of Ahab would also be licked up by the dogs. 1 Kings 22 describes the fulfillment of this prophecy as Ahab is killed in battle and as they wash out his chariot the dogs lick up his blood (22:37-38).

### **POINTS TO PONDER:**

1. The depressed and fearful Elijah of chapter 19 is gone! Now he boldly confronts Ahab for his sin and pronounces God's judgment. God can use times of discouragement to strengthen our trust in Him and prepare us to do greater things.
2. Ahab's response to God's judgment is one of humility (quite out of character for this king). While it was only temporary (see chapter 22), God in His grace postpones His judgment on the king's family until after his death. Ahab will die a warrior's death and will not have to suffer the torment of seeing his children destroyed. The definition of God's grace is getting what we don't deserve. Ahab and his family deserved immediate judgment, but Ahab's act of humility gained them a few more years. Jesus proclaimed that God is gracious to the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). He displayed His grace and mercy most clearly on the cross where "Christ suffered once for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).