

## JUSTICE CORRUPTED

Over the last decade our nation has seen the rise of militias. When these groups were formed, I thought they were concerned about protecting our nation in the event of an attack by some foreign power such as the USSR. In the late 1980s with the demise of the USSR, that threat has lessened considerably. In the mid-1990s the concern of such groups is the rise in power of “one-world” government headed by the United Nations. They claim that plans have already been made to institute the “New World Order” which would include the abrogation of many (if not most) of our Constitutionally-based freedoms. They cite such incidences as the Waco attack on the Branch Davidians and the governments attack on the family in Montana where a man’s wife and son were killed in a raid on his farm as evidence of justification for their concern. They have pictures of Russian-made tanks and aircraft on US soil which they claim are there for the use of United Nations’ forces when the “take over” is tried. This sounds really far-fetched. We tend to think of such groups are being populated with wackos and most of us dismiss their concerns.

However, history has shown that governments can be worse to those they govern than enemy oppressors. Therefore, diligences and remaining watchful to protect our freedoms are a necessary price to pay for liberty. It may not be necessary for the ordinary citizen to arm himself and join a paramilitary organization, but being informed and knowledgeable is a minimum requirement. A step further is to exercise the right to have our voices heard and to get involved to influence what happens. We should let our representatives know what we think, what we like and what we dislike. Erosion of our freedom is the price for non-involvement.

Historically, abuse of those in power was not confined to the heathen nations. Even the nation of Israel had situations in which the king abused his subjects. One could probably correlate the judgement of history as to whether a king was “good” or “evil” relative to the fairness he used in dealing with his people. One of the kings of Israel who has been judged to be evil was Ahab. His evil was exceeded by that of his wife Jezebel whose name has come to mean “a wicked and bold woman” in our present day language. A prime example of their wickedness is the way they treated Naboth.

**1 KINGS 21:1-2** The incident with Naboth happened after the events of Mount Carmel in which Elijah had proven to the people there was only one true God. Apparently, the people had turned back to God and God had delivered the nation from two attacks from the Arameans. In the last battle with them, God had instructed Ahab to kill Ben-Hadad the Aramean king. Instead Ben-Hadad made a deal with Ahab and he was turned loose. God then sent a prophet to Ahab to pronounce God’s judgement that Ahab would pay with his own life for not carrying out the death sentence on Ben-Hadad. Though God had been shown to be to be “real” and powerful at Mount Carmel and though God had intervened on Israel’s behalf in the confrontation with the Arameans, Ahab just could not bring himself to be obedient to what God commanded. He had no reason to doubt the authenticity of God nor his goodness and mercy and, yet, his rebellious nature kept him from being obedient.

The sources of rebellion are typically pride and greed. Ahab suffered from both these afflictions. In his *greed* for more and more, he desired to have the vineyard that belonged to a neighbor of the winter palace in Jezreel. In his *pride*, Ahab thought that just because he was king, he could have whatever he wanted. To his credit, he did not attempt to just take the property, but offer to trade a better vineyard or to pay money for it. One could question Ahab’s sense of value in that his plan was to destroy mature grape vines which took years to develop in order to grow a vegetable garden. Likely the vegetable garden was only a passing fancy of his and would likely be abandoned after several seasons.

**1 KINGS 21:3-4** Ahab had wanted to buy something that was “not for sale.” In Israel, the land had been assigned to families and it could be leased and passed on by inheritance to the families’ descendants. However, it could not (according to the plan God had given them through Moses) be sold outright to someone outside of the family. Ahab, in his disregard for God, did not take such concerns into consideration. Naboth, on the other hand, was conscious of the law that God had given to Moses and was trying to live his life in accordance with this particular part of the law. He was very much determined to follow what he knew God original intent was. This was the reason for his refusal of the king’s offer.

Ahab showed his true colors and his level of immaturity by the way he behaved. His response reveals a lot about his character. Being king, he was probably used to getting whatever he wanted. This may have been the first time anyone had ever said “no” to him. He did not know how to deal with disappointment. He went home, went to his room, got in bed facing the wall and refused to eat. That’s something you might expect a spoiled three-year-old child to do. He was totally selfish and

absolutely immature. We do not want such people in positions of power.

Ahab failed to realize that his happiness did not depend on what he did or what he possessed but was a by-product of "who he was as a person." Ahab could have found joy in the fact that one of his subjects had the intestinal fortitude to stand up for what was right and even say "no" to the king. If you have a nation with people like that, then the job of governing will be a lot easier.

Ahab was not that noble and most certainly his wife Jezebel was not noble. She was a ruthless person, having grown up in the family of the king of Phoenicia. In such a Godless society, the king had absolute authority and whatever he wanted to do was, by definition, right. She was a Baal worshiper and had no regard for the laws of God. She probably saw Ahab for the weak, immature, and selfish person he was and took it upon herself to run the nation in the same manner as she had seen her father do. She essentially told Ahab to not worry about the situation, he could go about his daily routine of public appearances, parading around in his finery, and being a cheerleader (rather than a real leader) and she would take care of the important issues.

The way Jezebel used to "take care of this issue" was to have some people in the town lie about Naboth by accusing him of blasphemy against God and against the king. She engaged the leaders of the city to declare a fast and arrange to have Naboth at the head table with the false witnesses. The leaders of Jezreel were as guilty as Jezebel in carrying out the crime against Naboth. They apparently did not question the rightness of what they had been asked to do. The accusations were made and Naboth was immediately taken out and stoned to death.

**1 KINGS 21:15-16** As soon as word came back to Jezebel that Naboth was dead, she went to Ahab and told him to go to Jezreel and claim the vineyard. He apparently did not question how it happened and it is likely that he did not care. He had gotten what he wanted and that was all that mattered to him. Ahab and Jezebel were not the only ones who found out about what had been done.

**1 KINGS 21:17-20** Nothing is hidden from God. People may do things and think that no one knows what has happened, but God knows and He has promised to bring to light all things done in secret. He has also promised to bring judgement on everything that has been done, even the idle words we speak. God gave Elijah the details of what had happened to Naboth and He sent Elijah to confront the king. People will argue that we should not try to bring the influence of our "religion" to bear on what the government does. I'm not sure God would agree with that position. If we are called to be "salt and light" in our world, then we really have no choice except to bring light to the injustices and demand change so that those things that cause degradation in our society are removed and immobilized in the same way salt preserves meat.