

Verse 4. His house. Probably at Samaria. Possibly the "ivory house" of 1 Kings 22, 39 and Amos 3, 15. **Heavy and displeased.** That is, sullen and angry. **Naboth.** From his reference to Jehovah (verse 3) he was probably one of the seven thousand faithful ones (1 Kings 19, 18). **Had said.** His refusal was based upon the divine law (Num. 36, 7). He refused because it was wrong. **His bed.** The couch upon which he reclined at the table. He lay down flat, turned away from the table, and would not eat. Such a manifestation of ill-temper is even now characteristic of oriental monarchs.

5. Jezebel his wife. Her character as a strong, unscrupulous, and ambitious woman is clearly brought out in this narrative. "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (Prov. 19, 14), but Ahab did not seek his from that source. His marriage was one of his great sins (1 Kings 16, 31).

6. Give me. Ahab had offered the full value in money, or a better vineyard for Naboth's. He could not legally take it by force. (See Ezek. 46, 18.) His avaricious heart could not see why another should not do wrong for gain, and his petulance was partly chagrin at Naboth's implied reproach.

7. Dost thou not govern. Jezebel's contempt for her weak husband is evident. Educated under a more despotic rule than even Ahab dare assume, she has no sympathy for his want of spirit. **I will give.** Quick to conceive a plan, and knowing her power, she hesitates at no wickedness to accomplish her purpose.

8. Wrote letters. These had all the authority of the king. The impress of his seal upon them (not to seal up) was by his permission, and thus the crime was shared by him. **Seal.** Signet rings are very ancient, as shown by Egyptian and Chaldean remains. Pharaoh's ring (Gen. 41, 42) was one. Judah's is mentioned in Gen. 38, 18. The impress was probably made in clay. (See Job 38, 14.) **Elders . . . nobles.** Doubtless the city tribunal (Deut. 16, 18). **His city.** Naboth was an inhabitant of Jezreel, the letters were written from Samaria. (See 1 Kings 20, 43.)

9. A fast. To atone for some supposed disgrace, and thus create a prejudice against Naboth when he is accused. It is also a religious cloak to cover crime, not used alone by Jezebel. **On high.** Not in honor, but in the sight of the people, to be tried for crime.

10. Two men. Two witnesses were necessary to convict. **Sons of Belial.** Hebrew, *Belig'ad*. Not a proper name, but signifies worthlessness, lawlessness—hence "a worthless, lawless fellow." In the New Testament it appears

as a name for Satan, or all that is bad (2 Cor. 6, 15). **Blasphemed God.** Jezebel knew the people would not stone Naboth for blaspheming Baal. Even in their idolatry they respected the honored NAME, and would punish the convicted blasphemer with death. **The king.** So that his possessions, as those of a traitor, might be forfeited to the king (verses 15, 16, 19, and 2 Sam. 16, 14).

11. Elders and . . . nobles . . . did. Their alacrity in carrying out the infamous designs of their wicked queen shows how low they had fallen. "Like king, like people." Oriental justice is little better at the present time. How much more noble the Christian standard, "We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5, 29).

13. There came two men. Satan is always ready with tools when they are needed by his workmen. So when Christ must be convicted (Matt. 26, 6) and Stephen was to be stoned (Acts 6, 13), **Carried him forth out of the city.** Capital punishment always took place out of the city. (See Acts 7, 28; Lev. 24, 14.) **Stoned him.** A punishment common with mobs (Exod. 8, 26; Num. 14, 10, etc.), and made the lawful mode of executing blasphemers, sacrificers to Moloch, wizards, Sabbath-breakers, idolators and enemies to idolatry, rebellious sons, and adulterers. According to 2 Kings 9, 26 his sons suffered with him, as was not uncommon (Josh. 7, 24).

14. Sent to Jezebel. Having imbued their hands in blood to please her, they hasten to send her word, hoping to receive some reward. Their readiness to commit the crime and to send her word, her manner of receiving it and telling Ahab, and his in proceeding immediately to profit by it, all show an utter recklessness and hardness of heart, the direct outcome of the infamous and debasing idolatry which she had introduced. **Is dead.** In verse 19 the murder is charged upon Ahab. He, his house, and Jezebel were condemned for the crime. He was guilty because his apostasy from the Lord opened a way for the crime; he could have prevented it and did not; he willingly lent his authority to it, and he gladly accepted the result.

15. Take possession of the vineyard. Enjoy the results of crime. **Which he refused to give thee for money.** The bitter spirit of the tyrant is shown in this sneer. **Naboth is not alive, but dead.** She is as contemptuous of her husband as of the poor corpse of Naboth.

16. Ahab rose up. The Septuagint, the ancient Greek version which we have already quoted, says that when the news of Naboth's murder was brought to Ahab he burst out into horror and remorse. It was from this that he

"rose up." **Naboth.** connection chariots of

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