

What is a Prophet?:

Or: How a Greedy King Killed an Innocent Peasant and Incurred the Wrath of God

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Summer 2014

מלכים א כא

¹וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה פָּרַם ה' לְנָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי אֲשֶׁר בִּיזְרְעֵאל אֵצֶל הַיֵּכָל אַחְזָב מֶלֶךְ שֹׁמְרוֹן. ²וַיַּדְבֵּר אַחְזָב אֶל-נָבוֹת לֵאמֹר תְּנֶה-לִּי אֶת-פְּרֶמֶךְ וַיְהִי-לִּי לְגֹן-יָרֵק כִּי הוּא קָרוֹב אֵצֶל בֵּיתִי וְאַתָּנָה לְךָ תַּחֲתָיו פָּרַם טוֹב מִמֶּנּוּ אִם טוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲתָנָה-לְךָ כֶּסֶף מַחִיר זֶה. ³וַיֹּאמֶר נָבוֹת אֶל-אַחְזָב חָלִילָה לִּי מִיִּקְנוֹךְ מִתַּתִּי אֶת-נַחֲלַת אֲבוֹתִי לְךָ. ⁴וַיָּבֹא אַחְזָב אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ סָר וְזָעַף עַל-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-דָּבַר אֵלָיו נָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא-אֶתֶן לְךָ אֶת-נַחֲלַת אֲבוֹתִי וַיִּשְׁכַּב עַל-מִטָּתוֹ וַיִּסַּב אֶת-פָּנָיו וְלֹא-אָכַל לֶחֶם. ⁵וַתָּבֹא אֵלָיו אִיזָבֵל אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּדְבֵּר אֵלָיו מֵה-זֶה רוּחַךְ סָרָה וַאֲיִנֶּךָ אָכַל לֶחֶם. ⁶וַיַּדְבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ כִּי-אֲדַבֵּר אֶל-נָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי וַאֲמַר לוֹ תְּנֶה-לִּי אֶת-פְּרֶמֶךְ בְּכֶסֶף אוֹ אִם-חֶפֶץ אַתָּה אֲתָנָה-לְךָ כָּרֶם תַּחֲתָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא-אֶתֶן לְךָ אֶת-פְּרֶמֶי. ⁷וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אִיזָבֵל אִשְׁתּוֹ אַתָּה עַתָּה תַעֲשֶׂה מְלוּכָה עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל כּוֹס אֵכָל-לֶחֶם וַיֵּטֵב לְבֶן אֲנִי אֶתֶן לְךָ אֶת-כָּרֶם נָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי. ⁸וַתִּכְתֹּב סִפְרִים בְּשֵׁם אַחְזָב וַתַּחֲתֶם בְּחַתְמוֹ וַתִּשְׁלַח סִפְרִים אֶל-הַזִּקְנִים וְאֶל-הַחֲרִים אֲשֶׁר בְּעִירוֹ הַיֹּשְׁבִים אֶת-נָבוֹת. ⁹וַתִּכְתֹּב בְּסִפְרִים לֵאמֹר קְרָאוּ-צֹם וְהִשְׁיבוּ אֶת-נָבוֹת בְּרֹאשׁ הָעָם. ¹⁰וְהוֹשִׁיבוּ שְׁנִים אֲנָשִׁים בְּנֵי-בְלִיעֵל נִגְדוֹ וַיַּעֲדוּהוּ לֵאמֹר בְּרַכְתָּ אֱלֹקִים וּמֶלֶךְ וְהוֹצִיאָהוּ וְסִקְלָהוּ וַיָּמָת. ¹¹וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֲנָשֵׁי עִירוֹ הַזִּקְנִים וְהַחֲרִים אֲשֶׁר הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעִירוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחָה אֵלֵיהֶם אִיזָבֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּתוּב בְּסִפְרִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחָה אֵלֵיהֶם. ¹²קְרָאוּ צֹם וְהִשְׁיבוּ אֶת-נָבוֹת בְּרֹאשׁ הָעָם. ¹³וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים בְּנֵי-בְלִיעֵל וַיִּשְׁבּוּ נִגְדוֹ וַיַּעֲדוּהוּ אֲנָשֵׁי הַבְּלִיעֵל אֶת-נָבוֹת נֶגֶד הָעָם לֵאמֹר בְּרַךְ נָבוֹת אֱלֹקִים וּמֶלֶךְ וַיִּצְאָהוּ מִחוּץ לְעִיר וַיִּסְקְלָהוּ בְּאֲבָנִים וַיָּמָת. ¹⁴וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶל-אִיזָבֵל לֵאמֹר סִקֵּל נָבוֹת וַיָּמָת. ¹⁵וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַ אִיזָבֵל כִּי-סִקֵּל נָבוֹת וַיָּמָת וַתֹּאמֶר אִיזָבֵל אֶל-אַחְזָב כּוֹס רֵשׁ אֶת-כָּרֶם נָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי אֲשֶׁר מֵאֵן לָתֶת-לְךָ בְּכֶסֶף כִּי אֵין נָבוֹת חַי כִּי-מָת. ¹⁶וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַ אַחְזָב כִּי מָת נָבוֹת וַיָּקָם אַחְזָב לָרֶדֶת אֶל-כָּרֶם נָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי לְרִשְׁתּוֹ.

¹⁷וַיְהִי דְבַר-יָקוֹב אֶל-אֱלֹהֵיו הַתְּשֻׁבִי לֵאמֹר. ¹⁸כּוֹס רֵד לְקִרְאָת אַחְזָב מֶלֶךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁמֵרוֹן הִנֵּה בְּכָרֶם נָבוֹת אֲשֶׁר-יָרֵד שָׁם לְרִשְׁתּוֹ. ¹⁹וַיַּדְבֵּרְתָּ אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יָקוֹב הַרְצַחְתָּ וְגַם-יָרֵשְׁתָּ וַיַּדְבֵּרְתָּ אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יָקוֹב בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר לָקָו הַכְּלָבִים אֶת-דָּם נָבוֹת יִלְקוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת-דָּמָךְ גַּם-אַתָּה. ²⁰וַיֹּאמֶר אַחְזָב אֶל-אֱלֹהֵיו הַמַּצְאֲתָנִי אֵיבִי וַיֹּאמֶר מַצְאֲתִי יַעֲזֹב הַתִּמְכָּרֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יָקוֹב. ²¹הִנְנִי מִבִּי אֶלֶיךָ רָעָה וּבַעֲרֹתִי אַחֲרֶיךָ וְהִכְרַתִּי לְאַחְזָב מִשְׁתִּין בָּקִיר וְעֶצֶר וְעֶזֶב בִּישְׂרָאֵל. ²²וַנִּתֵּן

אֶת-בֵּיתָךְ כָּבִית יָרְבֵּעַם בֶּן-נָבַט וּכְבִּית בַּעֲשָׂא בֶן-אֶחָיָה אֶל-הַפֶּעַס אֲשֶׁר הִכְעִסְתָּ וַתַּחֲטֹא אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל.²³ וְגַם-לְאִיזָבֵל דָּבָר יִקְוֶה לֵאמֹר הַכְּלָבִים יֹאכְלוּ אֶת-אִיזָבֵל בַּחֹל יִזְרְעָאֵל.²⁴ הֵמֶת לְאַחָאָב בָּעִיר יֹאכְלוּ הַכְּלָבִים וְהֵמֶת בַּשָּׂדֶה יֹאכְלוּ עֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם.²⁵ כִּי לֹא-הָיָה כְּאַחָאָב אֲשֶׁר הִתְמַכֵּר לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְקֹוֹק אֲשֶׁר-הִסְתָּה אֹתוֹ אִיזָבֵל אִשְׁתּוֹ.²⁶ וַיִּתְּעַב מְאֹד לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרֵי הַגִּלְלִים כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ יְקֹוֹק מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

²⁷וַיְהִי כְשִׁמְעַ אַחָאָב אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּקְרַע בְּגָדָיו וַיִּשֹׁם-שָׁק עַל-בָּשָׂרוֹ וַיִּצְוֶם וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּשָּׁק וַיַּהֲלֵךְ אֹט.

²⁸וַיְהִי דָבָר-יְקֹוֹק אֶל-אֱלִיהוֹ הַתְּשֻׁבִי לֵאמֹר.²⁹ הֲרָאִיתָ כִּי-נִכְנַע אַחָאָב מִלִּפְנֵי יְעֹן כִּי-נִכְנַע מִפְּנֵי לֹא-אָבִי הָרָעָה בְּיָמָיו בְּיָמֵי בְנוֹ אָבִיָּה הָרָעָה עַל-בֵּיתוֹ.

I Kings 21

¹[The following events] occurred sometime afterward: Naboth the Jezreelite owned a vineyard in Jezreel, adjoining the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. ²Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it as a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange; or, if you prefer, I will pay you the price in money.” ³But Naboth replied, “The Lord forbid that I should give up to you what I have inherited from my fathers!” ⁴Ahab went home dispirited and sullen because of the answer that Naboth the Jezreelite had given him: “I will not give up to you what I have inherited from my fathers!” He lay down on his bed and turned away his face, and he would not eat. ⁵His wife Jezebel came to him and asked him, “Why are you so dispirited that you won’t eat?” ⁶So he told her, “I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and proposed to him, ‘sell me your vineyard for money, or if you prefer, I’ll give you another vineyard in exchange’; but he answered, ‘I will not give my vineyard to you.’” ⁷His wife Jezebel said to him, “Now is the time to show yourself king over Israel. Rise and eat something, and be cheerful; I will get the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite for you.”

⁸So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who lived in the same town with Naboth. ⁹In the letters she wrote as follows: “Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the front of the assembly. ¹⁰And seat two scoundrels opposite him, and let them testify against him: ‘You have reviled God and king!’ Then take him out and stone him to death.”

¹¹His townsmen—the elders and nobles who lived in his town—did as Jezebel had instructed them, just as

was written in the letters she had sent them: ¹²They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the front of the assembly. ¹³Then the two scoundrels came and sat down opposite him; and the scoundrels testified against Naboth publicly as follows: “Naboth has reviled God and king.” Then they took him outside the town and stoned him to death. ¹⁴Word was sent to Jezebel: “Naboth has been stoned to death.” ¹⁵As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, “Go and take possession of the vineyard which Naboth the Jezreelite refused to sell you for money; for Naboth is no longer alive, he is dead.” ¹⁶When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab set out for the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.

¹⁷Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: ¹⁸“Go down and confront King Ahab of Israel who [resides] in Samaria. He is now in Naboth’s vineyard; he has gone down there to take possession of it. ¹⁹Say to him, “Thus said the Lord: Would you murder and take possession? Thus said the Lord: In the very place where the dogs lapped up Naboth’s blood, the dogs will lap up your blood too.”

²⁰Ahab said to Elijah, “So you have found me, my enemy?” “Yes, I have found you,” he replied. “Because you have committed yourself to doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord, ²¹I will bring disaster upon you. I will make a clean sweep of you, I will cut off from Israel every male belonging to Ahab, bond and free. ²²And I will make your house like the House of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the House of Baasha son of Ahijah, because of the provocation you have caused by leading Israel to sin. ²³And the Lord has also spoken concerning Jezebel: “The dogs shall devour Jezebel in the field of Jezreel. ²⁴All of Ahab’s line who die in the town shall be devoured by dogs, and all who die in the open country shall be devoured by the birds of the sky.”

²⁵(Indeed, there never was anyone like Ahab, who committed himself to doing what was displeasing to the Lord, at the instigation of his wife Jezebel. ²⁶He acted most abominably, straying after the fetishes just like the Amorites, whom the Lord had dispossessed before the Israelites.)

²⁷When Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes and put sackcloth on his body. He fasted and lay in sackcloth and walked about subdued. ²⁸Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: ²⁹“Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the disaster in his lifetime; I will bring the disaster upon his house in his son’s time.”

דברים יא:י-יב

¹⁰כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא כְּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הוּא אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ וְהִשְׁקִיתָ בְּרַגְלְךָ כְּגֹן הַיָּרֵק: ¹¹וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אָרֶץ הָרִים וּבְקָעֹת לְמִטֵּר הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתֶּה־מַּיִם: ¹²אָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ דֹּרֶשׁ אֹתָהּ תָּמִיד עֵינֵי יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּהּ מִרְשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה:

Deuteronomy 11:10-12

¹⁰For the Land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the Land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden. ¹¹But the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its waters from the rains of heaven. ¹²It is a land which the Lord your God looks after, on which the Lord your God always keeps His eye, from year's beginning to year's end.

