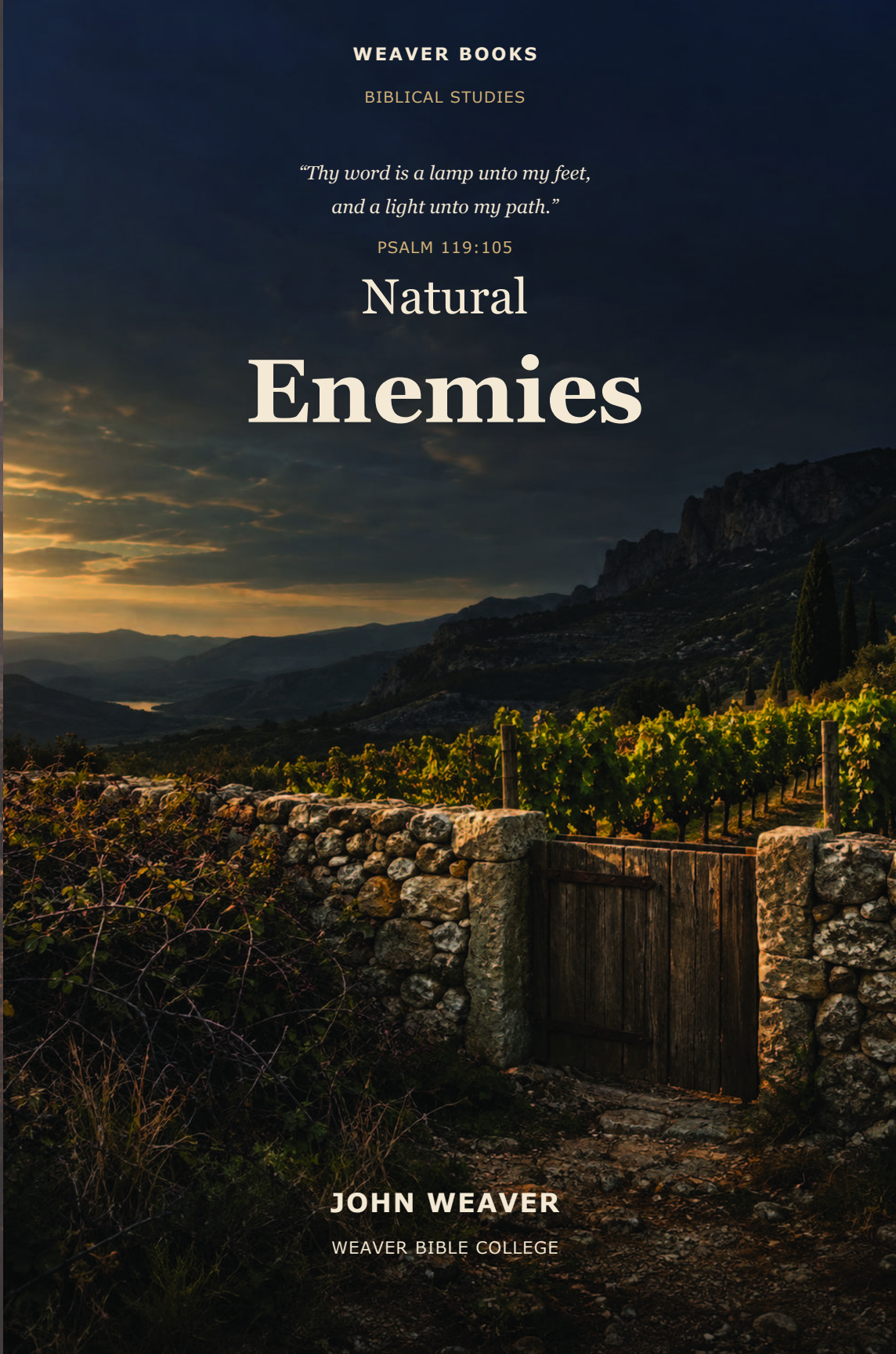
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"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

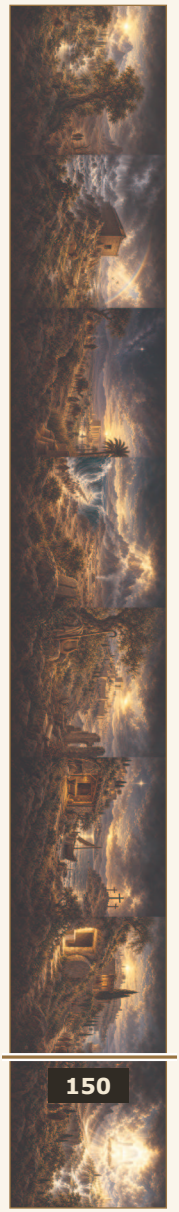
PSALM 119:105

Natural Enemies



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



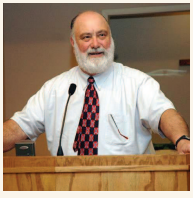
Be sober, be vigilant.

1 PETER 5:8, EXCERPT

Biblical faithfulness can bring conflict with competing loyalties and unjust authority. John Weaver draws on Elijah, Ahab, and Naboth to examine discernment, the misuse of law, and the cost of refusing compromise. These messages explore spiritual opposition while calling readers to judge conduct and authority by the standards of Scripture.

“Thus Ahab's question is a classic statement of the opposition between good and evil, light and darkness, and tyranny and freedom.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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CHAPTER 1

Natural Enemies

Part One of Two

Introduction: The Concept of Natural Enemies

In 1 Kings chapter 21, beginning with verse 17, we read: “And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, hast thou killed, and hast thou also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.”

Everyone understands the concept of natural enemies. All you have to do is look around in the animal world, first of all, and you will see natural enemies on every hand.

If you were to place a mongoose and a cobra together, there's going to be a fight, and a fight to the death. Usually the mongoose is going to win. I never will forget, as a boy, going out early one morning into the fields to work. I happened to look in the ditch, and here was a king snake fighting with a rattlesnake. I don't know how long they had already been fighting, but this was probably six-thirty or something like that in the morning. When I came back in at dinner, they were still fighting. When I went back after dinner, about one o'clock, to return to the field, the king snake had just killed the rattlesnake. When I came back in from the field that evening, about seven o'clock, the king snake had him halfway down.

It took him, I guess, twenty-four hours to kill and eat that snake, but they are natural enemies. You find natural enemies in every realm, even in the insect realm. Let me mention two of those. Did you realize that ladybugs are very important? In particular, their larvae, which are active during May through July, are voracious predators concerning aphids, and they will also consume mites, scale insects, and caterpillars.

And then, of course, there are dragonflies. Did you know that dragonflies eat mosquitoes? Even their naiads in the water live off the mosquito larva, and in the air the dragonfly catches the mosquito and eats it as well. We could simply say that every sphere of life has what you and I would refer to as natural enemies. In fact, every organism has a natural enemy. I suppose that we could correctly state that death is the natural enemy of life. The truth of the matter is, there are natural enemies in every realm and in every sphere, and that is also true in the spiritual realm.

Spiritual Natural Enemies in Scripture

In 2 Corinthians chapter 6, beginning with verse 14, God says: “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty."

Righteousness is the natural enemy of unrighteousness. Righteousness and unrighteousness cannot coexist together. One is going to dispel and displace the other. Likewise, light and darkness are natural enemies. Either the light will dispel the darkness or the darkness will dispel the light. God says right here that the temple of God, which, of course, refers to Christians, has no agreement with idols. They are natural enemies. Truth is the natural enemy of error. The true God is the natural enemy of all false gods. The Bible also teaches us that Christ and Belial, or Satan, are natural enemies. Satan seeks to overthrow and conquer Christ, even though Christ has already overthrown and defeated Satan. Theologically, you could say that Satan is indeed a defeated enemy.

Romans 16:20 says, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." Notice that he said the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet. Satan is already defeated; therefore, those Roman Christians are going to walk all over him.

Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." It is only through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that we have victory over the evil one and the forces of evil. Christ gives us victory in time and in history. That is why, in Romans 8:37, the Apostle Paul said, "Nay, in all these things we're more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Those who follow Christ are natural enemies to those who follow Satan, and the reverse is also true. Those who follow Satan are natural enemies to those who follow Christ. Do you know what our Lord said to those Jews who rejected Him in John 8:42-45? Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and

abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."

Here are followers of Christ and followers of Satan, children of Christ and children of Belial, or children of the evil one. We are enemies. You do not believe me, and you will not listen to me, because you are of your father the devil. I have quoted this passage often, but I hope you remember John 15:18-20: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the master."

"If they've persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they've kept my saying, they'll keep yours also." So what is our Lord doing? He says, here are some natural enemies. They are antagonistic toward each other. Satan, the world, the flesh, and those that hate Christ are natural enemies to the saints of God. Therefore, it should not surprise us to find natural enemies not only to God's saints, but to God's preachers as well.

Ahab and Elijah: A Case Study in Natural Enemies

If you look back in our text, in 1 Kings chapter 21 and verse 20, notice what Ahab said to Elijah: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Here is an excellent example of natural enemies. We discover that this example is tyranny versus freedom, or governmental power versus spiritual power.

I can boil it down more succinctly. It is the king versus the preacher. It is God versus man. It is a theocracy versus an autocracy—self-law, self-rule. Tyranny is the natural enemy of freedom. Theft is the natural enemy of private property. Murder is the natural enemy of life. Deception is a natural enemy of openness and truth.

In 1 Kings chapter 21, we have the background for the message I am going to emphasize next week. Ahab was the most wicked and vile king of all Israel, and he wanted to possess the vineyard and land

belonging to Naboth. Naboth refused to sell or give the land to Ahab. First Kings 21:1 says, “And it came to pass after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hired by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.” Ahab said, “Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house. And I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it, or if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.” Naboth answered, “The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.”

Point 1: Natural Enemies Manifested by Righteous vs. Wicked Desires

I am only going to cover two points this morning. Here is my first point: natural enemies are manifested when one desires to act wickedly and the other desires to act righteously. In these first three verses, you have Ahab, the king of Israel, who desired to act wickedly; and you have Naboth, an ordinary believer, who desired to act righteously.

The enmity and wickedness that exists in unbelievers, and the enmity that exists between non-believers and believers, should manifest itself in something so common and ordinary as a garden or piece of land. But stop and think about something: that is usually the way it works. It does not have to be complex or hard to grasp.

Here it is very simple. Naboth had a garden, a vineyard, a piece of property, and the king wanted it. God's law forbade the king from taking the property of the people. In Ezekiel 46:18, God says, “Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his son's inheritance out of his own possession, that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.”

I guess you could say here is a passage against imminent domain. God forbids the king or prince from obtaining or confiscating the possessions of his people. If the king wants to give his children a possession, fine; he must give it out of his own possession, not out of his people's.

Ahab coveted his neighbor's vineyard, which lay close to the palace, and it was convenient for him to have it as an herb garden. He set his eye on the vineyard and determined that he must have it. He was not interested in leasing it; he wanted it for his own. His covetousness was a violation of the tenth commandment.

Originally, Naboth may have been pleased to have a vineyard so close to the royal palace. It may have given him easy access to the palace and an opportunity to sell the fruits of his vineyard there. However, in this instance, the nearness to the palace proved fatal for Naboth and his sons. If the vineyard had been far from the palace, his life may have been preserved. But since it was close by, Naboth was coveted. I think we can learn a simple truth here: the farther we can distance ourselves from tyrants and tyranny, humanly speaking, the safer we are going to be.

Notice something about Ahab. As wicked, vile, and cruel as he was, he at least offered to buy the vineyard or swap Naboth another piece of property for it.

Whether the buying price would have been reasonable, I do not know, nor whether the swap would have been reasonable. Whatever the offer, Naboth immediately rejected it because it was his right to do so. When Naboth rejected the king’s offer, he was not fishing for a better price or holding out for a better deal.

Naboth was not being recalcitrant, stubborn, or rebellious. He simply spoke the truth: “The Lord forbid it me, that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers.” Naboth was a worshipper of the one true God, not of Baal. Because he worshipped the one true and living God, he considered it unlawful to comply with the king’s request. He understood that it would violate the law of God.

His refusal, then, did not arise from stubbornness, rebellion, or even sentimentality based upon ancestral estates. No! His refusal was based squarely upon the law of God.

Naboth understood government, and more particularly, wicked government. He realized that if Ahab ever got his hands upon this property, it would never revert back to his family. Therefore, out of regard for God and His law, and for the good of his family, Naboth was not willing to part with his property at any rate.

Stop and think about this. Ahab and Jezebel, and most of the people in the land, were now worshippers of Baal. You remember when Elijah fled and desired that the Lord would take his life because he only was left? What did the Lord say? “I have 7,000 that have that I've reserved that have not bowed the knee to Baal.” The vast majority of the people had gone into Baal worship, and Ahab and Jezebel were doing absolutely everything they could to exterminate all the true preachers of God, as well as the people of God.

Naboth was one of those seven thousand. He was one of those few individuals who still worshipped the one true and living God and honored God. Therefore, it was his faith that singled him out to be a martyr.

Why did Naboth say to Ahab, when Ahab said, “Sell me the property or I'll trade your bed of peace for it,” “The Lord forbid it me”? The answer is found in God’s law. Hold 1 Kings 21, but look back in your Bibles to Leviticus 25, verse 28.

Leviticus 25:23 says, “The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.” God says you cannot permanently sell the land. The land was not to leave the tribe or the family; it was the inheritance given to the fathers when the land of Canaan was divided among the twelve tribes.

The fruits of the land could be sold, leased, or rented, but the land had to go back to the rightful owner in the year of Jubilee. Leviticus 25:28 says, “But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it unto the year of Jubilee: and in the Jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.” The land could not be permanently sold.

Numbers 36:7 says, “So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.” Naboth, then, was not being stubborn, rebellious, or recalcitrant. He was simply going to obey God.

It should be noticed that natural enemies are manifested when one is going to try to do what is right and the other is going to do that

which is wicked and wrong. There is always a natural enmity that surfaces.

Do you remember when we read 2 Corinthians 6:14–18, where God said, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”? He is writing that to believers. Do you know why God forbids a Christian to marry a non-Christian? Because of the natural enmity. It will not work. That is why God forbids Christians from entering into covenants and contracts with non-Christians. Inevitably, the non-Christian is going to want to do something contrary to the Word of God, and the Christian is going to want to do something in line with the Word of God. There will be a fuss and a fight—a natural enmity that manifests itself. It will always happen when one is willing to do what is right and one is willing to do what is wrong.

I have often said this in marriage counseling. People have asked me, “Can you help me?” My response is always, “That depends.” It depends on whether or not you want to do what is right.

If you want to do what is right, I can help you. But if you have a husband and a wife, and one wants to do what is right while the other wants to do what is wrong—one wants to save the marriage, and the other could care less—I can only help the one who wants to do what is right. I cannot help the one who wants to do what is wrong. Natural enemies always manifest themselves when one wants to do what is right and the other wants to do that which is wrong.

Point 2: Natural Enemies Manifested by Lawful vs. Unlawful Use of the Law

Secondly, natural enemies are manifested when one uses the law unlawfully and the other uses the law in a lawful manner. Let us begin reading with 1 Kings chapter 21, verse 4, through verse 11. Watch carefully: “And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him. For he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed and turned away his face and would eat no bread.”

Now you are talking about childish. “But Jezebel his wife came to him and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest no

bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money, or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it. And he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard." That is not exactly what he said. He said, "The Lord forbid it me."

But watch Jezebel: "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry. I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with a seal, and sent them to the elders and nobles in the city dwelling with Naboth. She wrote, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And set two men, sons of Belial, before him to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king, and then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die." The men of the city did as Jezebel had sent unto them, according to the letters.

Notice that Jezebel is going to do that which is unlawful, but she is going to do it legally. There is a lawful use of the law, and there is an unlawful use of the law. In 1 Timothy 1:8, the Apostle Paul said, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." The law is good if a man use it lawfully, which indicates that it may be used unlawfully. Law is designed for justice; however, when it is used unlawfully, it produces injustice. I want you to note something else. This is important.

Ahab had absolutely no regard for Naboth or for his position. He did not admire Naboth for standing clearly and unequivocally upon the Word of God. He did not admire Naboth because Naboth wanted to obey God and maintain his family inheritance. He did not admire Naboth for being a Christian. What happened when Naboth said, "The LORD forbid me"? Verse 4 says, "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him. For he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers."

"And he laid him down upon the bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." Ahab the king was not accustomed to being denied his way. It is fun, in a perverse sense of the word, to really displease someone like Ahab. He was not used to being denied, and so he threw himself down upon the bed.

He became morose and melancholic. He would not eat or entertain company. He could not personally digest the affront that he supposed Naboth had given him. His proud spirit aggravated the indignity of Naboth when Naboth denied him his property. Ahab thought that this was something that was not to be allowed. Ahab was a king. He had plenty of land, plenty of money, and whatever he wanted.

Ahab was like old Haman. Haman had been promoted over and over in the kingdom, but Mordecai would not bow to him. When Haman bragged of everything that he had, he had to say in Esther 5:13, “Yet all this availeth me nothing, as long as I see Mordecai sitting in the king's gate.” Everything that Ahab possessed was insufficient because of this one little piece of property. Ahab had more than enough, yet he coveted, wanted, desired, and determined that he had to have Naboth's vineyard, or everything else was insufficient.

We need to learn another lesson: tyrants are never satisfied. They always want more—more property, more control, more submission, more recognition. You cannot please a tyrant; it is impossible.

So Jezebel enters the picture. Jezebel was the most vile and wicked queen in the Old Testament. She began to inquire why her husband was not eating and why he was so morose and melancholy. Look in verse 5: “But Jezebel's wife came to him and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest no bread?”

Ahab told her that he had spoken to Naboth the Jezreelite, asking for his vineyard for money or offering to give him another vineyard. Naboth refused: “I will not give thee my vineyard.” Then Jezebel said, “Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry, I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

Listen. Jezebel implies—indeed, she says—that if Ahab had the courage, will, and backbone, he would simply take it, because he was the king. Since he was king, he was a law unto himself and could do whatever he pleased. “What is wrong with you?”

Matthew Henry's comment on this verse is wonderful. Interpreting Jezebel's words, “Dost thou now govern Israel?” he

writes: “Dost thou govern Israel? And shall any subject thou hast deny thee anything thou hast a mind to? Art thou a king? It is below thee to buy and pay, much more to beg and pray. Use thy prerogative and take by force what thou canst not accomplish by fair means.”

“Instead of resenting the affront, revenge it. If thou knowest not how to support the dignity of a king, let me alone to do it. Give me but leave to make use of thy name, and I will soon give thee the vineyard of Naboth. Right or wrong, it shall be thine own shortly, and cost thee nothing.” That is basically what she said: “Art not thou a king? Dost thou not govern?”

We should understand that when the law is used unlawfully, it becomes lawlessness. What Jezebel is about to do amounts to legal confiscation and legal murder. Each act is contrary to law, but it is done under the color of law.

I saw on YouTube a statement by Jerry Spence, the attorney. He said, “In sixty years of practice, I’ve never had one case against the government where they did not cheat and lie.” He acknowledged that they have a ninety-eight percent success rate, but said it is only because they violate everything imaginable.

John Trapp said, “Woman was first given to man for a comforter, but if sometimes for a counselor, yet not at all for a controller, as this wicked woman took upon herself to be.” Jezebel is no longer a comforter or counselor, but a controller. She literally took control, committing crimes with the approval and in the name of her lame and emasculated husband.

So she said in verse 8, “So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with a seal, and sent the letters to the elders and to the nobles that were in the city dwelling with Naboth.” Her plan is very exacting. She does not merely ask the elders and nobles to falsify a deed. All they would have to do is draw up a piece of paper, get someone to witness it, and then declare Naboth useless and no good. That is simple, and those cowardly elders and nobles would have done exactly that.

But it is not just the property that she wants. It is revenge.

I am trying to show you how, when one party uses the law unlawfully and one party wants to use the law lawfully, natural

enemies are manifested. What did Naboth say? “The Lord forbid it me.” God's law forbids me.

What Jezebel says is, “Give me your name, give me your seal, and I'll take care of it.” I want you to understand the three elements of her crime. First of all, her crime must be committed under the color of religion. Look in verse 9: “And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.” Why proclaim a fast? Why not a feast?

A fast is indicative that some great crime or some heavy load of guilt rests upon the city, and therefore it is absolutely necessary that everyone humble themselves before God. Let me read some Scriptures to show you this and save a little time. In Ezra 8:21, Ezra said, “Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahavah, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.” Notice what he said: “We proclaimed a fast, that we might afflict ourselves.” In Joel 1:14–15, the Word of God says, “Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.” Why? Because the judgment of God was upon the land. Finally, you remember Jonah, when he went through Nineveh preaching, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

Jonah 3:5 says, “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.” When Jezebel says, “Proclaim a fast,” she is saying, Act as though there is some heavy burden, some extreme load of guilt lying upon this city, and cry to God. In other words, it had to be done under the color of religion.

Matthew Henry says, “Proclaim a fast.” Signify to your city that you are apprehensive of some dreadful judgment coming upon you, which you must endeavor to avert only by prayer, but by finding out and by putting away the accursed thing. Pretend to be afraid that there is some great offender among you undiscovered, for whose sake God is angry in your city. Charge the people, if they know of any, on that solemn occasion to inform against him as they regard the welfare of this city.

At last, Naboth is fastened upon as a suspected person, probably because he does not join his neighbors in their worship and is not a Baal worshiper. This serves as a pretense to set him before the people and call him to the bar. That is exactly what Jezebel did. The wicked queen pretended to be religious and afraid of offending God, desiring that the offense be removed by the deaths of Naboth and his sons.

Such hypocrisy is evidenced multitudinous times even in our land today. It had to be done under the color of religion. Secondly, it had to be done under the color of law: “And set two men, sons of Belial, before him to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king,” and then carry him out and stone him, that he may die.

It's important to note that she commanded the elders and the nobles of the city. These elders and nobles were responsible for justice. She commanded them to get two witnesses to come up and testify against Naboth. Do you know why? She wanted two witnesses because of the law of God.

God says in Deuteronomy 17: “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people, so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.” So God demands two witnesses.

Again, in Deuteronomy 19: “One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth, at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

It is interesting how the wicked and the ungodly endeavor to use Scripture, endeavor to use God's law, to camouflage their sins and their crimes. Now listen carefully. Jezebel did not believe in the one true and living God at all. She was a wicked, vile, reprobate. She had no regard for God, but she was willing to use Him and His law to cover her wickedness.

There were still some people left in the land who were worshippers of God. In all probability, her reasoning was this: If I at

least use biblical law to execute him, then those who still believe in it will have no grounds to oppose me, because obviously I am following God's law. When the law is used unlawfully, it becomes lawlessness. So she covers her actions, not only under the color of religion, but under the color of law.

Thirdly, it must be done under the color of justice. Jezebel said, “Set two men, sons of Belial, before him to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king, and then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.” Obviously, Naboth did not blaspheme either God or the king. His answer to Ahab cannot be construed as blasphemy under any imagination. He simply refused to have the king confiscate his property. However, Jezebel pretended this was blasphemy. She charged him with treason and blasphemy and demanded the death penalty.

The penalty for blasphemy and seduction into idolatry was death by stoning. Deuteronomy 13 says, “Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, Neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him. Thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die, because he is sought to thrust thee away from the Lord by God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.”

She said, Take him out and stone him. It not only had to be on religion; it had to be done in the color of law and in the color of justice. Thus, blaspheming the king here was not necessarily taken to be a second crime attached to blaspheming God. But according to Jezebel’s interpretation, blaspheming the king was the same as blaspheming God, because he was ruling by divine right. He was the representative of God and therefore deserved the death penalty.

Let me put it like this: He that blasphemed God deserved to die. And he that blasphemed the king, who was supposed to be the representative of God, deserved to have his property confiscated. There is a natural enmity between someone who wants to do what is right and someone who wants to do what is wrong. Secondly, there is

a natural enmity between a man who wants to use the law lawfully and someone who wants to use the law unlawfully.

Applications and Warnings

Now let me try to make some applications. The first is this: the sins of Naboth and Jezebel were open and public, in the sense that everything was done before the eyes of men. But do you realize that sometimes there are sins and crimes so secretive that they are never found out? There was a young woman murdered in Irwin County, probably seven, eight, or ten years ago now. No one has ever been called to account, and her body has never been found. Whoever took care of her may die a natural death, and his hand will never be discovered in this life.

I want you to turn to 1 Timothy, chapter 5, and look at verse 24. The Bible says, “Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.” So God said some men's sins are open beforehand, going before the judgment.

Some folks are judged here in time and history, but not everybody. God says they will be judged, because their sins follow them. We are going to see that Ahab and Jezebel were judged in time and history. Some may escape judgment in time and history, but they will not escape judgment in eternity. Ecclesiastes 5:8 says, “If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.” In other words, God is taking note. Just because someone escapes judgment in this life does not mean that he will escape judgment in the next.

I am almost through with the book. I have one last chapter in it, and I have enjoyed reading it this week. The title is Outlaws with Badges. You would be amazed at the sheriffs, deputies, and marshals who were not only outlaws in the Old West, but, even while wearing a badge, remained outlaws. So many murders and thefts were committed by these men with badges. The badge may have protected them temporarily, but not in eternity.

Those people in positions of power who are prosecuting, persecuting, stealing, murdering, confiscating property, and destroying people's lives and freedoms may not be called into account in this life. I hope they are. But I can assure you of one thing: God will nail them in eternity. When I read how wicked some of these men were, I thought to myself, I sure don't want to be in their shoes. I've got enough sins to answer for without doing all of that. So let's mark this down: Some men's sins are opened beforehand, going before to judgment; some men's sins follow after.

Secondly, natural enemies are always seeking to disarm, outmaneuver, and conquer each other. Do you understand what is happening today? Why do you think there is such a push against the Second Amendment? Governments never disarm criminals. They just disarm honest citizens, who then can't fight back.

Years ago, I went deer hunting and sat on the ground behind a little pine tree, watching about a three-hundred-yard strip and hoping a deer would come out. I got to looking at that pine tree and saw a praying mantis. Below it was a granddaddy longlegs. I watched them for an hour because each one would maneuver. The granddaddy longlegs didn't want to be eaten, and they kept maneuvering back and forth. I finally had to leave; I don't know who won.

They were natural enemies, seeking to outmaneuver each other. The inevitable result of such posturing usually ends in death for one or the other. In order to fulfill our responsibilities, we must know our enemies, their tactics, and their strategies. We must understand that they are willing to use the law unlawfully to cover their wickedness. They are willing to use religion unlawfully and justice unlawfully. I hope you understand what our Lord meant when He said in Matthew 10:16, “Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

Something may be legal, but not lawful. Legal and lawful are two different concepts. Something may be done in authority, but not according to law or that which is right. Do you realize that in the book Outlaws with Badges, many sheriffs literally shot people? They had the authority, but it was not right. What Ahab and Jezebel did

was done under the color of law, religion, and justice, and done in authority. But it was not right. It was not lawful.

And you are going to see how God nailed their hides to the barn door. Thus may it be, always to tyrants, as the motto of Virginia: Sic Semper Tyrannis. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We are thankful for Thy Word and Thy truth. We ask, Lord, that Thou would teach us. Help us to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves, and understand tyranny, wickedness, and ungodliness, that we may fight the good fight of faith and honor Thee in every area of our lives. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Natural Enemies

Part Two of Two

Introduction and Review

This is the second part of the message entitled “Natural Enemies.” We have been working through 1 Kings chapter 21, and today we read verses 17 through 20. Notice, if you would, 1 Kings 21, verse 17:

“And the word of the LORD came unto Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet King Ahab of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs lick the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood even thine.”

And Ahab said unto Elijah, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” And he answered, “I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of God.”

Last week we began this message on natural enemies. I pointed out in the introduction that there are natural enemies in every

realm: not only in the animal realm, but in the insect realm, and certainly in the spiritual realm as well. Enemies in the natural realm oftentimes not only kill, but eat the other. Sometimes they simply kill because it is their nature to kill.

I remember that years ago my sister's family found a baby fox and raised that little fox. They fed it raw red meat. It was as cute, fine, and friendly as it could be, but it would kill every chicken it found. It did not eat the chicken; it simply did the killing. That was the fox nature in him. Out west, wolves will often get among the sheep. They may eat one, but they will kill four or five and simply leave them.

Everyone is familiar with this because everyone has probably had a cat. A cat will kill a mouse, but it will not eat it. It will bring it to you and show you what a great hunter it is. If you reject its little present, the cat is very humiliated. It does this simply because it is what it does. We tend to overlook natural enemies in the spiritual realm.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 6, beginning with verse 14. This is a classic passage on what may be called natural enemies: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be you separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons, and my daughters, saith the Lord."

God tells us that there is a natural enmity between righteousness and unrighteousness. Light will dispel darkness, or darkness will dispel light. They are natural enemies. What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? In other words, what does a Christian have in agreement with idols? Absolutely nothing. Therefore, we should understand this and be separate.

Last week, we considered two main points concerning natural enemies. We looked at 1 Kings 21, where King Ahab coveted, desired, and ultimately took the vineyard of Naboth. Naboth was a worshipper of God; Ahab was a Baal worshipper. Natural enemies are manifested when one desires to act wickedly and the other desires to act righteously. When Ahab asked Naboth for his vineyard, offering either to buy it or trade him another vineyard, Naboth answered, “God forbid it me.” Naboth was not trying to obtain a better price or a better vineyard. He was simply stating the Scripture that the land shall not be sold forever, because they were strangers and sojourners in the land and the land belonged to God. God forbade them to sell their land. They could sell the fruits thereof, but even if they rented those fruits, at the year of Jubilee all the land had to return to the original family.

Ahab was horrified and mortified because he could not get his way or have his will. He went back into the palace, turned his face to the wall, and refused to eat bread. That brings us to the second point: natural enemies are manifested when one uses the law unlawfully, while the other wants to use the law lawfully.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, simply said, "What's wrong with you? Aren't you king in Israel? Come on. If you've got the backbone and the intestinal fortitude, you don't have to buy that land or barter for it. Take it. You're king. Everything exists for you. Tell you what you do, Ahab: just let me use your seal, and I will get the land for you."

You know how she sent word to the elders of Naboth's city, Jezreel, to proclaim a fast, set Naboth up on high, and then bring two sons of Belial to witness and testify against him that he was blaspheming God and the king. Then they were to take him out and stone him.

I pointed out three things under this. First, the wicked will use religion unlawfully. Jezebel said, "Proclaim a fast," not a feast, but a fast. When a heavy burden or judgment from God was hanging upon a city, the people fasted and prayed because they knew the hand of God was going to fall. Jezebel was saying, "Pretend that some great tragedy is about to fall, religiously speaking, and we are going to search out the problem; the problem is going to be Naboth."

Then she said, "Bring two sons of Belial to testify against him." In Deuteronomy 17 and 19, the law of God requires a minimum of two witnesses before the death penalty is executed. The wicked and ungodly are not against using God's law as long as it benefits them or covers their crimes. There were some worshippers of Jehovah left in the land, and probably her reasoning was, What possible opposition could they have as long as we are following the law?

Then it was done under the color of justice: they took him and stoned him. He that blasphemes God and the king deserves to die and to have his property confiscated. Everything Jezebel did was under the color of religion, law, and justice.

Tyranny and Liberty

Natural Enemies Manifested in Tyranny vs. Liberty

Today we come to the final point in this message. Listen carefully: natural enemies are manifested when one seeks to rule through tyranny, despotism, and totalitarianism, and the other seeks liberty and freedom.

In 1 Kings 21:14-16, we read: "Then they sent to Jezebel saying, Naboth is stoned and is dead. And it came to pass when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it."

I do not know if it has occurred to you, but as you read this passage, you cannot help but come away with the impression that all Naboth really wanted was to be left alone. When I say that, you have to remember that Naboth had not sought any favors, recognitions, or rewards from Ahab. Naboth did not solicit or desire the king's favor. All Naboth wanted was simply to be left alone and to enjoy that which God had promised him and what God had given him. In other words, he simply wanted the liberty and freedom to enjoy his inheritance.

Biblical Picture of Liberty: Sitting Under Vine and Fig Tree

Now hold 1 Kings 21, and consider 1 Kings 4:25 and then Micah 4:4. I want you to see these truths. The Bible says: "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba all the days of Solomon." Now, isn't that interesting? Since Solomon was a man of peace, the Bible describes this time of peacefulness, plenty, and liberty with the illustration that every man was abiding under his vine and under his fig tree.

Micah 4:4 gives the same picture, with just a little bit more added: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Sitting under one's own vine—that is, one's grape vine—and sitting under one's own fig tree is a proverbial expression indicative of perfect peace, security, and rural comfort. Moreover, this expression denotes plenty, contentment, liberty, and freedom. God adds in Micah chapter 4 and verse 4, “and none shall make them afraid.” Here is the suggestion not only of divine blessing, but of divine protection as well.

There is no need of hiding places or places of defense of any kind, because under this proverbial expression everyone is free. They are free from hurt, free from intrusion, and free from attack.

If you would turn in your Bible, still holding 1 Kings 21, back to the book of Leviticus chapter 26, and look at verse 6, you will see how God gives basically this same promise to those who obey His law. Here are the blessings of obedience. God says, “And I will give peace in the land and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.” Add to sitting under your own vine and your fig tree this blessed promise, where God says, “ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.” It is perfect peace, perfect liberty, and perfect freedom. He said, “and I’ll rid evil beasts out of the land, and neither shall the sword go through your land.”

What God is promising is that there will not be a knock on the door and, when you open it, someone saying, “I’m from the

government and I'm here to help you." No? No, He says there is going to be perfect peace and perfect safety. No one is going to make you afraid whatsoever. All I am pointing out is that this was the desire of Naboth when he said to Ahab, "The Lord forbid it me."

The Nature of Tyranny: Control and Disregard for Life

I cannot sell this property. God has forbidden it. All I want is to exercise the liberty and freedom God has given me, and enjoy my inheritance. When God says, "every man sitting under his own vine, and every man under his own fig tree, and you shall lie down in peace, and none shall make you afraid," He is saying that the battle is already over. Victory has already been won. Freedom is here. Peace is now all that reigns. You have liberty and freedom to enjoy the blessings of God, and enjoy those blessings in peace and prosperity.

But tyranny, on the other hand, is different. The tyrant does not want peace. He wants control.

Control is usually garnered by deception, turmoil, trouble, confusion, and war. The goal of tyranny is the control of our lives, the curtailment of our liberties, and the confiscation of our lands. Pharaoh spelled this out for Joseph. You remember how Joseph was made basically second in command in Egypt? Here is what Pharaoh said in Genesis 41 and verse 44: "I am Pharaoh. I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

What was he saying? "I have total control, and I am going to put you second in command. Without you, unless I give them permission through you, no man will lift up a foot or a hand in all of Egypt." That is the ultimate goal of all tyranny.

I want you to understand that it was tyranny that deprived Naboth of his life, liberty, and family. That may surprise you. Do you understand that if a man is killed, murdered, or dies an actual death, the property goes to his heirs? It would go to my wife or to my children if both of us died. Do you realize that Naboth had sons?

Hold 1 Kings 21, but turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 9, beginning with verse 26. “Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord. And I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground according to the word of the Lord.” God said, “I have seen the blood of Naboth and his sons.”

They did not simply murder Naboth; they murdered his sons as well. Ahab believed that he should have everything he desired. By the way, this is the attitude of all tyrants. I do not care if you are talking about tyrants that are fascists, socialists, communists, democrats, or republicans. They all want what they want, and they think everyone should fall in line and fulfill their desires.

Ahab believed, listen carefully, that Naboth lived and breathed for his benefit and enjoyment. Do you realize that the life of Naboth and his family meant absolutely nothing to Ahab? Listen carefully. Not only did Naboth and his family mean nothing to Ahab; the word of God meant nothing to Ahab when Naboth said, “The Lord forbid it me.” The lines of inheritance meant nothing to Ahab. The only thing Ahab was concerned with was his will and his desires. If the lives of Naboth and his sons hindered and interfered with Ahab’s desires, then they must die.

Life means absolutely nothing to a tyrant except his own. Let me show you this from the Bible. Turn, if you would, to 2 Kings chapter 15. As you are turning there, we are going to read beginning with verse 13. I want you to see this passage where King Menahem of Israel was a murderer. He assassinated King Shallum of Israel in order that he might be king. In 2 Kings chapter 15, look at verse 13: “Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah, and he reigned a full month in Samaria.” He got a whole month in. “For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah and came to Samaria and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and slew him and reigned in his stead.” Now how did Menahem get to be king? He murdered Shallum. He just murdered him and took over the throne.

Menahem then was a usurper, an individual who took the kingdom by murder and force. Do you think everyone in the land would have been pleased with that? Do you think everyone would

have gone along with Menahem? The answer is absolutely not. They did not like the way he acquired the throne, and consequently, they did not open to him, that is, they did not recognize him. Skip down, if you would, to verse 16. Watch carefully. Here is what happened.

"Then Menahem smote Tiphsah and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah, because they opened not to him. Therefore he smote it, and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up." He took swords and knives and ripped unborn children out of the wombs of their mothers, murdering the child and the mother, as well as the people. Why? Because they opened not to him.

They did not recognize him as a king. They recognized him as a murderer and a usurper. All I am showing you is that life means nothing to tyrants. How many millions was Pol Pot supposedly responsible for killing among his own people? What about Mao Zedong? What about Joseph Stalin? Life means nothing. Years ago, everybody remembered the African dictator Idi Amin. I saw a cartoon that showed Idi Amin in the back of a jeep with a .50-caliber machine gun. The machine gun was smoking, and he was on the phone: "Yes, I want to report an accident. One jeep and 50,000 individuals." He killed his own people. What? Life means nothing.

Amos 1:13 says, "Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of the children of Ammon and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border." What did they do? They wanted more land, so they went and killed innocent people. To the tyrant, our life means nothing.

Rushdoony's book, *The One and the Many*, though difficult, would be profitable to read. It is a philosophical treatise on nominalism and realism, showing how this antagonism has continued down through the ages: the one, the government, and the many, the people. The government is always willing to sacrifice the many to keep itself going.

Too often, when we think about tyranny, despotism, and totalitarianism, we think of a single ruler such as Mao Zedong or Stalin. We fail to discern that totalitarianism, tyranny, and

despotism can be accomplished by many, not only by one individual. There may be a monarchy in which one person rules by the divine right of kings, but there may also be an oligarchy or a plutocracy. There can be all kinds of arrangements.

Tyranny Can Be Exercised by Many, Not Just One

In the movie "The Patriot," Mel Gibson says, "Does it matter if we're ruled by one tyrant 3,000 miles away or 3,000 tyrants a mile away?" Tyranny is tyranny, whether it is exercised by a king, a president, or Congress. It does not matter whether the tyranny is near or far away, benevolent or what we would call dictatorial. It is still tyranny. The tyrant who wishes to rule for my good and welfare is still a tyrant. The tyrant who wishes to control my life, my land, and my liberty is still a tyrant, whether this is done by an individual or through what is known as a democratic process.

Consider this quote from Karl Marx: "The oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them." Every two to four years, we choose who represses us and who oppresses us. From the Bible, we see that it is the habit of the tyrant, the oppressor, and the exploiter to wrap himself in the cloak of patriotism or religion, or both, in order to deceive the people. If the tyrant wraps himself in patriotism, he will say, as some of our politicians have said recently, "It's for the good of the country. It's for the safety of the country. It's for the good of the country and the safety of the country that you're spied upon."

Tyrants Cloak Themselves in Patriotism or Religion

Thus, all your emails, all your phone calls—everything—is monitored. I read yesterday that the government paid a visit to a couple; she happened to be a journalist, but she was looking for a new canner and googled pressure cookers. Her husband was looking for a backpack and googled backpacks. They received a visit from the government, which wanted to know why they were interested in pressure cookers and backpacks. Don't tell me they are not reading your emails and whatever you do. Of course they are.

You better not ever put anything in there that you are not willing to say openly, publicly, in a court of law. It is the habit of these tyrants to cloak themselves in patriotism or religion. Many times they will quote the Bible. Even George Bush said, "You're either for us or against us," taking the word of Christ out of context, naturally. They do this to make it easier to subjugate the people, because people are more easily persuaded and more easily deceived when something is done either religiously or patriotically.

Ahab was absolutely thrilled to hear that Naboth was dead and the vineyard was his to claim. In fact, Ahab went down to possess the vineyard in style. In all probability, Ahab went down to possess that garden with great pomp and circumstance, undoubtedly with many of his nobles and captains.

For instance, go back in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 9. Notice 2 Kings 9, verse 25: "Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain." Jehu was a captain as well, but Bidkar was under Jehu. "Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite. For remember how that when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him. Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord. And I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground according to the word of the Lord."

Now what did he say? He said, "Do you remember when I and thou rode after Ahab?"

If you go back in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 21 and look at verse 19, you find that this specific judgment was spoken to Ahab when he went down to possess the vineyard. Evidently Jehu and Bidkar were there, probably with many others. God told Elijah, “And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where the dogs lick the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.”

That judgment was pronounced when Ahab went down to possess Naboth’s vineyard. Jehu therefore said to Bidkar, “You remember,

when we were following Ahab, this was the burden that was laid upon him." They heard it when it was spoken.

Elijah Confronts Ahab: The Enmity Acknowledged

Ahab was undoubtedly very happy to have that vineyard, and he went down with all pomp and circumstance. But all of that was about to change very quickly. First Kings 21:17 says, "And the word of the Lord came unto Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise and go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to possess it." Elijah was to say, "Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs lick the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

"And Ahab said unto Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." In this instance, this is one of the few honest things Ahab ever revealed and said.

When Elijah went down to confront Ahab, Ahab asked, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Note that Ahab considered Elijah his enemy. They were not merely at odds with each other; they did not simply dislike each other. They were enemies. Truth and righteousness are ever the enemies of deception and tyranny. Thus Ahab's question is a classic statement of the opposition between good and evil, light and darkness, and tyranny and freedom.

Why did Ahab consider Elijah his enemy? The answer is simple: Ahab was a worshipper and follower of Baal. He and Jezebel had done everything they could to eradicate not only the worship of Jehovah, but also all the messengers and preachers of Jehovah. Ahab viewed everyone who opposed him and his will as an enemy. He also considered Elijah a troublemaker. It is true that Elijah caused trouble for the tyrant, but look back at 1 Kings chapter 18 and see who was truly troubling Israel.

There had been basically a three-and-a-half-year drought. Finally, God told Elijah to show himself to Ahab. Obadiah testified, "For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah

took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water." That is how desperate the prophets of God were: living on bread and water and hiding in caves. Why? Because Ahab and Jezebel were trying to kill them.

When Ahab met Elijah, he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Was Elijah the troublemaker? Was he the cause of all this drought? Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Elijah then commanded Ahab, "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table." Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel and gathered all the prophets together unto Mount Carmel.

When Ahab saw Elijah, he asked him, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” Basically, Elijah said, “It’s not me, you wicked reprobate; it’s you, your wicked wife, and your father’s house. And the reason is because you have forsaken God.” Why did Ahab consider Elijah his enemy? Because Elijah represented a different law system, another culture, and another kingdom—not Ahab’s law system or a humanistic law system, but God’s law system. He represented a Christian culture, not a humanistic culture; a righteous kingdom, not an unrighteous kingdom.

Elijah had dealt honestly and faithfully with Ahab. He reproved him of his sins, pronounced the judgments of God upon him, and demonstrated the power of God upon Mount Carmel. He then took those prophets of Baal and cut their heads off. Ahab could not gainsay or deny the power that Elijah had demonstrated on Mount Carmel.

Secondly, consider this. Ahab asked, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” But there is another interesting part of this question: Ahab asked, “Hast thou found me?” I am sure Ahab did not want to see Elijah; he wanted to avoid him. In all probability, Elijah had been excluded from the palace and considered persona non grata. There were probably lookouts and guards posted with orders: “Don’t let that man in here. We don’t want him. Don’t even let him in.”

He may have had guards to keep him out of the palace, but the truth of the matter is that Ahab had now left the palace and gone down to the vineyard. He was out in the open and fair game, so to speak. God told Elijah, “You go and confront the murderer.” Ahab asked, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” The answer that Elijah gave was also very revealing and to the point: “I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.”

Pay close attention to this simple fact: Elijah acknowledged the enmity that existed between himself and Ahab. He did not endeavor to water it down or minimize it. He did not say, “We’ve had our disagreements, but I don’t really consider myself your enemy,” or, “There’s a misunderstanding here. If you would just change a little, we’d get along fine.” No. “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?”

“Oh yeah, I’ve got you. I’ve nailed you. Yeah, we are enemies.” Ahab not only considered Elijah his enemy; Elijah considered Ahab his enemy. Ahab was a reprobate, a tyrant, a murderer, an idolater, and an extremely vile and wicked person. In fact, he was so wicked that he is considered the wickedest king in the northern kingdom. He had sold himself to work wickedness. It was his work, his hobby, his pastime, and his life. It was that for which he lived. He was the enemy of all righteousness.

Ahab's Wickedness and Judgment Pronounced

First Kings 21:25 says, “But there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.” Ahab had totally abandoned himself to the service of sin. Satan had become his absolute master, and Ahab had become his undivided slave. When he said, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” Elijah answered, “Yep, you’re right. I found you.”

Those who give themselves up to sin will eventually be found out. Sooner or later, to their unspeakable horror and amazement, they will be discovered. Ahab is brought to the bar; his sins are opened and revealed, and his judgment is pronounced. Numbers 32:23 says, “Be sure your sins will find you out.” Ahab is discovered and caught. He cannot escape. He must face his sins and the judgment they

bring. Elijah denounces him and tells him all the judgment that is to befall his house.

"In the place the dogs lick the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood even thine." "Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall," that is, just every male, "and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat. And him that dieth in the field, the fowls of the air shall eat. But there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."

Applications: Recognizing Spiritual Enemies and Standing Firm

So natural enemies exist—not just in the animal realm and the insect realm, but in the spiritual realm as well. Natural enemies are easily manifested when one wants to do what is right and the other wants to do what is wrong. When one wants to do that which is lawful and the other wants to do that which is unlawful, there is enmity. When one wants to be a tyrant and the other wants liberty and freedom, there is a natural enmity.

We have to understand that we are in a war. It is not just a theological war; it is a cultural war. It is indeed a war for liberty and freedom. It is humanism versus Christianity, God's law versus man's law, and man's rule versus God's rule. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" "Yea," he said, "I found you." It is a war against Christianity.

Tyranny and Christianity cannot coexist. If you look at all the countries in this world that have tyranny, they are not Christian countries. Most are Roman Catholic, some are Muslim, or some follow another religion—Hinduism, Buddhism—but not Christianity. Wherever you find Christianity, you find liberty and freedom. Christianity and tyranny cannot coexist; one will overcome and

destroy the other. They are natural enemies. We are in a war where humanism, Marxism, communism, and socialism are endeavoring as hard as they can to destroy and obliterate Christianity. It is just that simple.

We must acknowledge that all who oppose our Lord Jesus Christ, His law, and His righteousness are the enemies of the gospel. Paul said in Romans 11:28, speaking of the Jews, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake." In Philippians 3:18-19, he said, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and even now tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and they glory in their shame." We have failed to view the wicked as our enemies.

Consequently, we do not want to fight. We have gone AWOL. Why would you fight if you do not recognize someone as your enemy? Why would you fight for your life if you do not understand that someone is trying to take your life? Why would you fight for your country if you do not think your country is in danger of being overtaken? Why would you fight for your faith if you do not believe that someone is trying to destroy your faith?

You remember what the Apostle Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith." We used to sing, "Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war." No longer, because we do not have enemies anymore—or at least that is the politically correct version. I want to show you something. Elijah was not just by himself. Turn to 1 Kings chapter 22, just over a page. I love this.

Jehoshaphat has gone up to go with King Ahab to Ramoth-gilead. "And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel, and it came to pass in the third year that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said to his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead?"

I do not understand Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." He should have done this first: Jehoshaphat said to the king

of Israel, “Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today.” The king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men. They were false prophets. He said to them, “Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle? Shall I forbear?”

And they said, “Go up, go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.” And Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?” The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.” And Jehoshaphat said, “Let not the king say so.” What did he say? “But I hate him.” Why did he hate him? Because they were enemies.

Now Jehoram, the king of Israel, joins again with the wicked. In 2 Kings chapter 3, the king of Edom and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, join with him to go to war against Moab. These three kings are going up against Moab; verse 8 says so.

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 3:8-14 (KJV)

> And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel, who is Jehoram, the son of Ahab, so the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom, and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey, and there was no water for the host and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of Israel said, Alas, that the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat who poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel, watch, and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, Watch, what have I to do with thee?

“Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother.” And the king of Israel said unto him, “Nay, for the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them in the hand of Moab.” And Elisha said, “As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I

stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee."

In good South Georgia language: If it wasn't for Jehoshaphat, I wouldn't spit on you if you were on fire. Isn't that interesting? Elisha considered Jehoram, the tyrant, his enemy. He would have nothing to do with him. You'd never get Elisha or Elijah to pray at the inauguration of the king or the president. They counted them their enemies. The truth of the matter is this: We do have enemies. You just need to look at the word enemies in the Bible and see how many enemies that we really truly have.

It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading and Bible-believing people. The principles of the Word of God lead to liberty and freedom. In fact, we're told in Galatians 5 in verse 1, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Stand fast.

Conclusion: The Liberating Power of God's Word

An ex-CIA agent speaking on the internet said, "Don't watch TV." I did not listen to all of it because it was about thirty minutes. I listened to the first four or five minutes. He said it is propaganda, designed to control you. If you have to watch a program, you better watch it analytically, sit down and examine it, and tear it apart, because it is the biggest propaganda tool that the enemy has going for them.

If you spend your time in the Word of God and learn the principles of truth, you're not going to be deceived. You're going to be standing outside the camp with Christ. Everybody's going to view you as a troublemaker, a fanatic, and far off, only because you know the truth. And what did our Lord say? "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we ask for your grace and your mercy. And we ask that you would teach us, you'd build us up in the most holy faith, and you'd help us to see, Lord, that there are indeed natural enemies because of truth and righteousness. And

help us, Lord, to stand for Thee and live for Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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JW01373 | YouTube

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JW01378 | YouTube

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