

The Worst King

Scripture Reading — 1 Kings 21:1-22

“I have found you . . . because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord.” — 1 Kings 21:20

Throughout the Old Testament most of the kings are bad. But the worst is King Ahab. In his 22 years as king he does “more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him” (1 Kings 16:30). With the help of his queen, Jezebel, he vigorously and violently promotes the worship of other gods in Israel.

In today’s reading we hear of one of Ahab’s most dastardly acts. And his greed gets magnified by Jezebel’s drive for power. Along with this we also see the cooperation of the elders and nobles and the lies of two scoundrels. It’s as if the whole government is participating in this plot to kill an innocent man and steal his land.

This is a dark chapter in Israel’s history. But into that darkness comes the lightning flash of Elijah, who speaks God’s word to all the people. Again and again, he confronts Ahab and Israel with their sins and calls them to repent. The Lord will not allow this vile king to lead his people astray forever.

Sometimes we have to be sufficiently disgusted with our sinful ways in order to gain an appetite for grace. Sometimes it takes an honest assessment of the corruption and idolatry of our leaders to make us hunger afresh for the goodness of our true King, Jesus.

Prayer

O God, help us to see the evil in our world and in our lives. Give us the leadership that we need more than we deserve. And please grant us a hunger to know Christ as King. Amen.

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