

THE BLOOD OF AHAB: REEVALUATING AHAB'S DEATH AND ELIJAH'S PROPHECY

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Though evangelicals rightly deny that the prophets erred in their predictions concerning the future, this does not mean that it is always easy to understand how their prophecies relate to the actual historical events of which they spoke. Elijah's prophecy concerning Ahab's death is a case in point. In 1 Kgs 21:19 Elijah foretold, "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your [Ahab's] blood."¹ Since most scholars assume that Naboth was stoned in the city of Jezreel, it is surprising to read in 1 Kgs 22:38 that "they washed the chariot [of Ahab] by the pool of *Samaria*; the dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, according to the word of the Lord that he had spoken" (*italics mine*). If Ahab's blood was licked up by the dogs in Samaria and Naboth was stoned in Jezreel, then how was Elijah's prophecy "fulfilled"?

This question is not new. As we shall see, even the translator of the Septuagint struggled to understand how the licking up of Ahab's blood in Samaria (1 Kgs 22:38) fulfilled Elijah's prophecy concerning Ahab's death (1 Kgs 21:19). And recent interpreters have been puzzled as well. Some argue that we simply have misunderstood the Hebrew of Elijah's prediction (references will be given throughout the article below). Others assert that Elijah was not necessarily referring to a specific location but to a particular situation (i.e. simply that dogs would lick up Ahab's blood just as they licked up Naboth's). Still others contend that Elijah's prognostication was modified after Ahab repented (1 Kgs 21:27–29). Other suggestions have also been advanced.

Given the lack of consensus concerning how this prophecy relates to its fulfillment, it is surprising that there has not, until now, been a study which examines the strengths and weaknesses of each of these explanations. In this paper I will show how six proposals that relate the account of Ahab's death to Elijah's prophecy all fall short in one way or another. In the end I will propose a new solution that resolves the apparent discrepancy.²

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¹ Verses are quoted from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

² Due to space limitations, I will not deal with the question of why dogs are not mentioned in the narrative of Naboth's death.

I. THE PROPHECY IS NOT LOCATION-SPECIFIC

The oldest attempt to resolve the difficulty between 1 Kgs 21:19 and 22:38 can be found in the Septuagint.³ As can be seen from the table below, there are three main differences between the Greek and the Hebrew (highlighted in bold):

Table 1

1 Kgs 21:19 – LXX	1 Kgs 21:19 – MT
τοῦτο τάδε λέγει κύριος ἐν παντί τόπῳ ᾧ ἔλειξαν αἱ ὕες καὶ οἱ κύνες τὸ αἷμα Ναβουθα ἐκεῖ λείξουσιν οἱ κύνες τὸ αἷμά σου καὶ αἱ πόρνοι λούσονται ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου.	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּמִקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר לָקְחוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת־דַּם נָבוֹת יִלְקֻוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת־דַּמְךָ גַּם־אֶת־הַ:
“This what the Lord says, ‘In every place where the sows and the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, there the dogs will lick up your blood and the prosti- tutes will wash in your blood. ”	“This is what the Lord says, ‘In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick up your blood—even yours!’”

A closer look at these three differences makes it clear that the Greek is an expansion upon the Hebrew and not the other way around.⁴ First, the phrase which predicts that the prostitutes will wash themselves in Ahab’s blood is clearly a gloss which is intended to ease the harmonization between this prediction and its fulfillment in 1 Kgs 22:38, which states that the prostitutes washed themselves in Ahab’s blood.⁵ Second, the reference to the pigs is undoubtedly an addition which is intended to further taint Jezebel’s image.⁶ Finally—and most importantly—the LXX adds the word “every” (παντί) to Elijah’s prophecy so that it becomes: “In *every* place where dogs...” This supplement is also motivated by the desire to harmonize the prediction with the fulfillment since it despecifics the location where Ahab’s blood will be licked up by the dogs.⁷ Thus the reader of 1 Kgs 22:38 is not troubled

³ There are no major differences in the Aramaic Targum of 1 Kgs 21:19 and 22:38. The only variance in the relevant verses is that the Targum reads “implements of war” instead of “prostitutes.” See Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1959).

⁴ Simon J. DeVries, *Prophet Against Prophet* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 18.

⁵ The MT does not, however, specify whether they prostitutes were simply washing themselves in the pool, near the pool, or in Ahab’s blood. It simply reads: “And the prostitutes washed.”

⁶ Note also that this is a typical ancient Mesopotamian curse, e.g., “Let dogs and pigs eat your flesh, and may your spirit have no one to take care of and pour libations to him” (*ANET*³ 538). For further examples, see D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the OT Prophets* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964) 68–69.

⁷ Some scholars have advocated a similar interpretation as well (though not on the basis of the LXX). Ralph Davis, for instance, notes that Naboth was stoned *outside* Jezreel, and tentatively suggests that the pool of Samaria may have been outside the city. Thus: “We could understand the ‘place’ of 21:19 as indicating not a precise but a generic location. That is, dogs would also lick Ahab’s blood outside of town (not necessarily Jezreel)” (*1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly* [Fearn, U.K.: Christian Focus,

by the fact that Ahab was brought to Samaria since the location was not specified in the prophecy to begin with. In short, these three additions divert the reader's attention away from the *location* of fulfillment, and direct it toward the *circumstances* of the event: it will involve sows, dogs, and prostitutes.⁸

Although this may well have been the intent of the LXX translator, this ultimately does not settle the issue because several verses before this prophecy, Naboth is executed, but there is nothing in the text which suggests that his body was brought to more than one location. The careful reader of 1 Kgs 22:38, therefore, is left with more questions than answers in the LXX: was Naboth's blood licked up by dogs in more than one city as the LXX suggests? If so, which ones and when? And what about Ahab? Where else—besides Samaria—did the dogs lick up his blood? In short, although the LXX translator attempted to smooth out the two texts, he created new difficulties in the process.

II. THE PROPHECY WAS NOT FULFILLED

Perhaps the most common explanation given by scholars is simply that the prophecy was not fulfilled. According to the traditional understanding of the texts, Elijah predicts that dogs will lick up the blood of Ahab in *Jezreel* (1 Kgs 21:19), but as it turns out they lick up his blood in *Samaria* (1 Kgs 22:38). Highlighting this incongruence, John Skinner, for instance, asserts that “there was no literal fulfillment of this threat.”⁹ More recently, Cogan has argued that the account of Ahab's death in 1 Kgs 22:38 is an “alternate tradition” which “was not harmonized with the Elijah tales [i.e. 1 Kgs 21:19].”¹⁰

Of all the views which will be discussed here, this understanding is the most problematic for evangelicals who have a high view of Scripture. If Elijah was wrong, then he was not speaking in YHWH's name (Deut 18:22) and thus is no better than the 400 lying prophets of the Micaiah narrative (1 Kgs 22:1–28). But this explanation is highly unlikely given Elijah's positive portrayal in the rest of the Elijah narratives. Additionally, the editor himself would also prove to be untrustworthy since he asserts that the licking up of Ahab's blood by the dogs in the pool of Samaria *was* according to the word of YHWH which he spoke (1 Kgs 21:19).

2002] 326). As he notes, this is also the view of K. C. W. F. Bähr, *The Books of the Kings* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1872) 244; and J. R. Lumby, *The First and Second Books of Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909) 225, 238–39. Rabbi Levi Ben Gershon, a medieval commentator, also argues for a similar interpretation. According to him, the idea behind Elijah's prophecy was that Ahab would die in the same way that Naboth died—i.e. not a death of his own. See his commentary in *Mikra'ot Gedolot*.

⁸ The only surprise in the LXX of 1 Kgs 22:38 is that Ahab's chariot is washed near the *spring* of Samaria. Why the spring is explicitly mentioned is not clear.

⁹ John Skinner, *Kings* (The Century Bible; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1904) 259.

¹⁰ Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 495. Cf. James A. Montgomery, *The Book of Kings: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986) 332: “There is no reason to doubt the originality of this item in the story [prophecy of Ahab's death] on the ground that it was not exactly fulfilled in subsequent history.”

But aside from the theological problems that arise from this understanding, this explanation is improbable since the author adds that this “was in accordance with the word of the Lord that he had spoken” (1 Kgs 22:38). If, as Cogan states, the licking up of Ahab’s blood in Samaria was an “alternate tradition” from what had been prophesied in 1 Kgs 21:19, the author could have—at the very least—refrained from saying that this was in accordance with the word of YHWH since this phrase intentionally steers the attention of the reader back to the prophecy. Moreover, the editor could very easily have harmonized the two traditions by simply omitting the notice that the pool was *in Samaria* in 1 Kgs 22:38, and by placing verse 38 before verse 37. This would have left enough ambiguity in the text for the two verses to be adequately matched. Clearly, the author believed that Elijah’s prophecy *was* fulfilled when the dogs licked up Ahab’s blood at the pool in Samaria.

III. AHAB’S BLOOD WAS LICKED UP BY DOGS IN JEZREEL

A third solution goes back at least as far as Josephus. In his rewritten biblical narrative, Josephus states that Ahab was buried in Samaria and then adds: “And when they washed his chariot, which was stained with the king’s blood, in the spring of Jezraēl, they acknowledged the truth of Elijah’s prophecy, for the dogs licked up his blood” (*Ant.* 8.417).¹¹ More recently, B. D. Napier has advanced the same explanation:

The implication of Micaiah’s statement in 1 Kgs xxii 17, the summary remark of the Chronicler, the proximity of Ahab’s family in Jezreel, the reasonable inference that some attempt would be made to save the king’s life, and the authentic character of xxi 19—all, together with a critical analysis of the present form of the narrative, lead to one conclusion: Ahab was taken to Jezreel, mortally wounded—and there, in Jezreel, he died.¹²

Although the text does not explicitly say that Ahab was first brought to Jezreel before being interred in Samaria, Napier believes that this is extremely likely since, in his opinion, Jezreel was Ahab’s primary—not secondary—royal residence. He asserts, however, that this historical detail has been blurred by a later editor who, supposing that Samaria was the main home of the Omride dynasty, heavily redacted 1 Kings 20, 21, 22, and 2 Kings 10 to make it look like Samaria was their primary abode. Thus, although 1 Kgs 22:38 states that Ahab’s blood was licked up by dogs in Samaria, this notice is, in Napier’s view, a textual intrusion that was added by a later hand.¹³ In reality, the dogs licked up Ahab’s blood in Jezreel.

Recent scholarship has shown that Jezreel was not merely a “winter palace” to which the Omrides could come for some respite from the cold winters of Sa-

¹¹ Translation quoted from Ralph Marcus, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Books VII–VIII* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934/1998) 439.

¹² B. D. Napier, “The Omrides of Jezreel,” *VT* 9 (1959) 376.

¹³ *Ibid.* 377.

maria.¹⁴ The city's location in the Harod Valley, rather, made it strategically important, for it guarded one of the main eastern entrances into the kingdom of Israel. From Ramoth-Gilead, the quickest route to Samaria passed through Jezreel. Thus, it is not entirely unlikely that Ahab's entourage would have stopped at Jezreel on their way to Samaria. However, the contention that Elijah's prophecy was fulfilled at this stop in Jezreel requires the assumption that 1 Kgs 22:38 is for some reason or another not accurate since the verse states explicitly that the prophet's word was fulfilled in Samaria. If this is the case, then there are two possible ways to account for the "erroneous" report that Ahab's blood was licked up by dogs in Samaria. The first is simply to assume that a scribe mistakenly wrote "Samaria" instead of "Jezreel." But this is extremely unlikely since verse 38 reads most naturally as the continuation of verse 37 which states that Ahab's body was brought to Samaria and then buried there. If Ahab's body was first taken to Jezreel and there his chariot was washed out by the pool, then verse 38 would have preceded verse 37. Moreover, none of the ancient translations or manuscripts read "Jezreel" in verse 38, which means that if a scribal error occurred, it was made very early in the transmission history of 1 Kings (even before the LXX). The second explanation for the presence of the word "Samaria" in verse 38 is to postulate that a redactor purposefully changed the text in order to make it look like Ahab's blood was licked up by dogs in Samaria rather than in Jezreel. This is Napier's view, though it too is entirely unconvincing. His argument that a "Samaria redactor" reworked much of 1 Kings 20, 21, 22, and 2 Kings 10 is based on such a large number of emendations, deletions, and rewriting of the biblical text that it is unrealistic.¹⁵ Additionally, if the reference in verse 37 to Ahab's burial in Samaria is authentic (as Napier posits),¹⁶ then again the question that needs to be answered is why verse 38 follows verse 37 if the latter happened chronologically before the former.

In short, the explanation that Ahab's blood was licked up by dogs in Jezreel can only be sustained if 1 Kgs 22:38 is significantly emended: Samaria must be deleted, and the verse must be placed before verse 37. Since there is no convincing reason for such a modification, this solution must be abandoned.¹⁷

IV. ELIJAH'S PROPHECY WAS MODIFIED

Another way to approach the problem is to recognize that prophecy is often—and maybe even usually—contingent. As Robert Chisholm has aptly demonstrated, prophetic statements about the future are often conditional, and "sometimes conditions are explicitly stated (e.g. Isa 1:19–20), but more often they are

¹⁴ See for example David Ussishkin, "Samaria, Jezreel and Megiddo: Royal Centers of Omri and Ahab," in *Ahab Agonistes: The Rise and Fall of the Omri Dynasty* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; London: T&T Clark, 2007) 293–309.

¹⁵ Unfortunately there is not enough space for me here to deal with the details of Napier's argument.

¹⁶ Napier, "Omrides of Jezreel" 375.

¹⁷ The argument that dogs licked up Ahab's blood in *both* Jezreel and Samaria is not only nonsensical but also contradicts the text since the author believed that Elijah's prophecy was fulfilled in Samaria.

unstated and implicit.”¹⁸ Jeremiah 18 is a crucial text in this discussion, since YHWH’s universal principle is plainly stated (Jer 18:7–10): if the Lord intends to destroy a nation, but it repents, then he will relent of the disaster he intended to bring upon it. And the opposite is also true: if YHWH intends to bless a nation, but it does evil in his sight, he will suppress his blessing upon that nation.¹⁹

Although Chisholm does not apply the principle of contingency to the prophecy of Ahab’s death in his article, others scholars have appealed to a similar argument when dealing with this problem.²⁰ R. D. Patterson, for instance, maintains, “The fact that the prophecy was not literally fulfilled [in 1 Kgs 22:38] is *conditioned* by vv. 27–29 [of 1 Kgs 21]; the *modified* prophecy was fulfilled in Jehu’s slaughter of Ahab’s sons (2 Kgs 9:26) and in the licking up of Ahab’s blood by dogs at the pool in Samaria (1 Kgs 22:37–38)” (italics mine).²¹

Though Chisholm and others have persuasively shown that prophecy *is* often provisional, this is not a satisfactory answer with regard to 1 Kgs 22:38. First, 1 Kgs 21:27–29 relates not to the content of Elijah’s prophecy, but to the *timing* of the judgment: “I will not bring the disaster in his days; but *in his son’s days* I will bring the disaster on his house” (v. 29b, italics mine). And indeed, as the narrative plays out, Ahab’s house is wiped out *after* Ahab dies (2 Kings 9–10). But most instructive in this regard is the fulfillment of the prophecy against Jezebel. In 1 Kgs 21:23, Elijah predicts that her death will be very similar to that of Ahab’s: “The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel.” The fulfillment of this prophecy is indeed delayed until after Ahab dies (à la 1 Kgs 21:29), but the *content* is not modified at all: dogs eat up the corpse of Jezebel within the territory of Jezreel, exactly as was foretold. In the case of Ahab, however, we seemingly have a change in the content of Elijah’s prophecy: his blood is licked up by dogs in Samaria, not in Jezreel as 1 Kgs 21:19 is typically understood to predict. More importantly, 1 Kgs 21:27–29 has nothing to do with Ahab’s death in the first place.²² YHWH states that he will delay the disaster that he will bring upon Ahab’s *house* until the days of his sons.

¹⁸ Robert Chisholm, “When Prophecy Appears to Fail, Check Your Hermeneutic,” *JETS* 53 (2010) 563.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 563–64. Further examples and references relating to the discussion of the contingency of prophecy can be found in the rest of his article.

²⁰ In fact, Chisholm seems to agree with solution #5 (below) because he later states: “Analysis of prophetic fulfillment in Kings shows that a prophecy could be understood as fulfilled, even if some details were not realized exactly (e.g. 1 Kgs 21:19 with 22:38)” (*Ibid.* 575).

²¹ R. D. Patterson and H. J. Austel, “1 and 2 Kings,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 3: *1 Samuel–2 Kings* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009) 796. Simon J. DeVries interprets Elijah’s statement concerning Ahab’s repentance (1 Kgs 21:29) as an announcement that “the disaster of v. 19 shall not occur in Ahab’s days but in the days of Joram” (*1 Kings* [WBC 12; Waco, TX: Word, 1985] 258). This is basically the same interpretation given by D. J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993) 196: “The fulfillment of prophecy is sometimes by stages. Here it was partially fulfilled by the dead body of Ahab being exposed at Samaria (22:38) and then, *due to the deferment* promised by God (v. 29), when the body of his son Joram was left on Naboth’s ground (2 Kgs 9:25–26)” (italics mine).

²² Cf. D. W. Gooding, “Ahab According to the Septuagint,” *ZAW* (1964) 277, who correctly notes that “the respite granted upon Ahab’s contrition was ... concerned altogether and only with the judgment on Ahab’s house,” and then makes a compelling case that the different order of the LXX (chap. 21

Second Kings 9:25–26 is the more difficult text to deal with, however, because here Jehu says concerning *Joram* (Ahab's son):

Lift him out, and throw him on the plot of ground belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I rode side by side behind his father Ahab how the Lord uttered this oracle against him: 'For the blood of Naboth and for the blood of his children that I saw yesterday, says the Lord, I swear I will repay you on this very plot of ground.' Now therefore lift him [i.e. Joram] out and throw him on the plot of ground, in accordance with the word of the Lord.

Clearly Jehu is here alluding to Elijah's prediction concerning Ahab's death in 1 Kgs 21:19. Does not this text, then, prove that Elijah's prophecy *has* been modified (as Patterson argues), that is, the judgment pronounced upon Ahab has been transferred to his son Joram? Indeed, this passage is difficult to understand and numerous interpretations have been proposed.²³ Its ultimate resolution, however, is beyond the scope of this paper because even if one were to argue that the prophecy of Ahab's death *was* modified and fulfilled in his son Joram, one still cannot avoid the editorial note in 1 Kgs 22:38 which states that Ahab's death was "in accordance with the word of the Lord." At the very least, therefore, Elijah's prophecy concerning Ahab's death had a *dual* fulfillment in both Ahab and Joram. Patterson's solution, therefore, that the prophecy was conditioned and modified on the heels of Ahab's repentance is insufficient.

V. THE PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED GENERALLY, NOT SPECIFICALLY

Another solution to the problem is simply to argue that the main purpose of prophecy is not to give specific details about the future, but to "make the prosecution and persuasion more convincing."²⁴ Thus, we should not expect every minute detail of a prediction to match up exactly with its fulfillment, because as Brent Sandy notes,

fulfilled prophecies demonstrate a pattern of translucence rather than transparency. The intent was apparently not to give specific information about the future. Rather than predict with precision, the prophets sought to prosecute with power. In some cases pronouncements were fulfilled explicitly. But even then it

precedes chap. 20) is based on a misunderstanding of the respite (i.e. the LXX translator believed that the reprieve of judgment granted to Ahab included relief from the judgment upon Ahab himself).

²³ Some have suggested that Jehu might be referring to an unrecorded prophecy (e.g. Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury* [Fearn, U.K.: Christian Focus, 2005] 155 n. 15), or to a different incident (e.g. Iain W. Provan, *1 & 2 Kings* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995] 213). It is also possible that Jehu deliberately twisted Elijah's words in order to gain prophetic backing for his actions. Note, for example, Peter Miscall's interpretation: "I read Jehu's proclamations of fulfillment as self-serving interpretations that may or may not display a hazy grasp of previous events and prophecies. Jehu probably remembers the past well and adapts his assertions about it to fit his present purposes" ("Elijah, Ahab, and Jehu: A Prophecy Fulfilled," *Prooftexts* 9/1 [1989] 79).

²⁴ Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002) 131.

had not been possible to know before fulfillment what would be fulfilled transparently.²⁵

With regard to Elijah's prediction concerning Ahab's death, Sandy concludes that it too was a translucent rather than a transparent prophecy.²⁶ Thus, the licking up of Ahab's blood in Samaria *generally* fulfilled Elijah's prophecy (i.e. dogs *did* lick up Ahab's blood) even though not *all* of the details of the fulfillment matched up to the prediction (i.e. it occurred in Samaria rather than Jezreel as expected). Other scholars have made the same argument.²⁷

While it may be true that it is difficult at times to determine in advance which elements of a prophecy are met with a literal and specific fulfillment,²⁸ the argument that this forecast was fulfilled generally rather than specifically is not convincing in this instance because just four verses later (in the same conversation), Elijah delivers a very specific prediction about Jezebel's death which is subsequently fulfilled *exactly* as foretold (1 Kgs 21:23; 2 Kgs 9:30–37). Thus, if the details of Jezebel's prophecy were fulfilled with precision, should not the same be true of the statement concerning Ahab's death made in the same conversation? Since the prophecy of Jezebel's death is so important to this discussion, we will take a minute to examine the text in closer detail.

Jezebel's death is mentioned three times in the OT: twice as a prediction and once when it is fulfilled. In all three accounts of her death, the same two elements appear: (1) a description of *what* will happen/has happened to Jezebel's body: she will be/has been eaten by dogs; and (2) a comment on *where* this will happen (or has happened): Jezreel.

Table 2

Speaker	Passage	Reference	Type
Elijah	הַכְּלָבִים יֹאכְלוּ אֶת־אִיזָבֵל בְּחֶלֶק יִרְעָאֵל	1 Kgs 21:23	Prediction
Elisha's servant	וְאֶת־אִיזָבֵל יֹאכְלוּ הַכְּלָבִים בְּחֶלֶק יִרְעָאֵל וְאִין קָבֵר	2 Kgs 9:10	Prediction
Jehu	בְּחֶלֶק יִרְעָאֵל יֹאכְלוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת־בֶּשֶׂר אִיזָבֵל וְהָיְתָה גְבֻלַת אִיזָבֵל כְּדָמֹן עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה בְּחֶלֶק יִרְעָאֵל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֵאמְרוּ זֹאת אִיזָבֵל	2 Kgs 9:36	Fulfillment

²⁵ Ibid. 146.

²⁶ Ibid. 144.

²⁷ E.g. R. W. L. Moberly: "On any reckoning, something not quite straightforward seems to be going on in relation to the fate of Ahab and his descendants in relation to a prophetic oracle of divine judgment" ("Does God Lie to His Prophets? The Story of Micaiah ben Imlah as a Test Case," *HTR* 96 [2003] 19). Richard Nelson (quoted by Moberly): "The prophetic word does not come 'true' in a literalistic sense" (*First and Second Kings* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1987] 147). Jerome T. Walsh: "If the central thrust of the prophecy is realized, variations in circumstantial detail are irrelevant" (*1 Kings* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996] 358).

²⁸ Probably the best example is that of the Messiah. See Sandy, *Plowshares* 152–53, for examples.

As can be seen in the chart above, the language of the two predictions and fulfillment is very similar, but there is one main difference. In 1 Kgs 21:23, Elijah predicts that Jezebel will be eaten by dogs “within the walls of Jezreel” (בְּחֵל יִזְרְעֵל), whereas the other two references read “in the territory of Jezreel” (בְּחֵלְקָ יִזְרְעֵל).²⁹ Some scholars have seen this latter reading as a reference to Naboth’s vineyard (i.e. that Jezebel died in Naboth’s vineyard).³⁰ If this were the case, then an argument could be made that Elijah’s prophecy was *not* fulfilled exactly as predicted: he foretold that Jezebel would be eaten *in* Jezreel, but she was devoured *outside* of the city.³¹

Although חֵלְקָ is unusual in 2 Kgs 9:10, 36, the word does not occur here in order to forge a link with Naboth’s vineyard, because the term which is consistently used for his plot of land is חֵלְקָה (2 Kgs 9:21, 25, 26 [2x]). If the intention were to designate the same place, then the same term would have been used.³² The word חֵלְקָ in 2 Kgs 9:10, 36, rather, simply means “territory” (cf. ESV, NRSV) or “area.”³³ In other words, all that Elisha’s servant predicted (and Jehu said) was that Jezebel will be eaten/was eaten by dogs in the territory of Jezreel. From the story, however, it is clear that Elijah’s prophecy was fulfilled even more specifically than what Elisha’s servant and Jehu recognized.³⁴ Exactly as Elijah had prophesied, Jezebel was eaten by dogs³⁵ *within the walls* of Jezreel.³⁶ In fact, the canine feast even occurred *near* the city wall (v. 33).³⁷ Elijah’s prophecy concerning Jezebel’s death, therefore, was fulfilled exactly as predicted.

²⁹ Cogan and Tadmor apparently favor Eissfeldt’s reading of חֵל יִזְרְעֵל in 2 Kgs 9:10, 36: “If Eissfeldt is followed, then the present reading *blq* may be the result of careless writing, *blqt* having appeared twice earlier in the chapter in vv. 21, 25” (Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988] 112–13). It seems unlikely to me, however, that חֵלְקָ rather than חֵל was mistakenly written two different times, and that on the basis of חֵלְקָה.

³⁰ Provan, *1 & 2 Kings* 211. Cf. Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings* 112.

³¹ Cf. Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings* 112. Provan’s suggestion that Naboth’s vineyard extended outward from the wall does not solve the issue because even if that were the case (which is unlikely given 2 Kgs 9:21), Naboth’s vineyard is still by any reckoning *outside* the city walls.

³² Cf. Provan, *1 & 2 Kings* 211 who says just as much. Note also that neither חֵלְקָ nor חֵלְקָה occur in 1 Kings 21.

³³ This is the common meaning of the term (e.g. Josh 19:9).

³⁴ The phrase “territory of Jezreel” does not necessarily mean “inside the city of Jezreel” since the territory of cities extended beyond the city walls.

³⁵ There are no dogs mentioned in fulfillment of Jezebel’s death, only horses. But dogs are implied (*pau* Miscall, “Elijah, Ahab, and Jehu” 80). If the intention of the author were to say that there were only horses that trampled her, how is it that only her hands and feet were left? Horses are not carnivorous and could not have eaten her body.

³⁶ This is clear from v. 31 which says that Jehu entered the gate. The reference to horses trampling Jezebel’s body also makes it impossible to argue that though Jehu was inside the city, Jezebel was thrown from the wall outside the city. From v. 16 and onward Jehu has been riding his chariot and killing people. It is only natural to assume that if Jehu entered the city, then his horses did too. Provan’s theory, therefore, that Jezebel was “eaten up *both* on Naboth’s plot *and* by the wall” (p. 211) cannot be sustained.

³⁷ Note that קִיר is used in 2 Kgs 9:33 and חֵל in 1 Kgs 21:23.

Thus far, the argument against the general—and not specific—fulfillment of the prophecy concerning Ahab’s death has been that if the prophecy against Jezebel was fulfilled precisely as foretold, then we should expect the prophecy against Ahab to be fulfilled exactly as predicted as well, especially since both prophecies include the same two elements: (1) a description of *what* will happen to the individual’s body; and (2) a comment on *where* this will happen. But in order for this premise to hold, it must also be shown that Elijah’s final prediction (1 Kgs 21:24) was also fulfilled as intended. In this verse Elijah prophesies that “anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the air shall eat.” Were the details of this prophecy fulfilled as well? Were Ahab’s descendants eaten by dogs and birds?

Mention of the fulfillment of 1 Kgs 21:24 is made by Jehu in 2 Kgs 10:10: “Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the Lord has done what he said through his servant Elijah.” This comment comes on the heels of the beheading of Ahab’s sons in Samaria and his arranging for them to be heaped up in two piles near the gate in Jezreel. Thus, Jehu’s comment in 2 Kgs 10:10 is clearly meant to inform the reader that Jehu’s slaughter of Ahab’s sons is a fulfillment of 1 Kgs 21:24. But where are the birds and the dogs? Although there is no reference in the narrative to the birds of the air and dogs of the field eating up the corpses of Ahab’s descendants, this does not undermine my argument because in saying that Elijah’s prophecies of 1 Kings 21 were fulfilled exactly as predicted, I am also assuming the normal conventions of language. The declaration that the birds of the air and the beasts of the field will eat up the corpse of an individual is an extremely common curse in biblical and extra-biblical literature.³⁸ The phrase occurs at least sixteen times³⁹ in the OT and is a stock phrase for judgment.⁴⁰ Thus, this phrase was never intended to be interpreted in a literalistic fashion. What Elijah meant by this expression was that Ahab’s house would be wiped out (cf. 1 Kgs 21:21–22). This is clear from the fact that this exact same sentence⁴¹ is used in 1 Kgs 14:11 and 16:4 to mean that the house of Jeroboam and the house of Baasha will be completely destroyed. This is the meaning in 1 Kgs 21:24 (i.e. Ahab’s house will be wiped out), and that is exactly what happened.

In summary, Elijah’s prophecy concerning Jezebel’s death was fulfilled precisely as predicted, as was his prophecy against Ahab’s house. This strongly sug-

³⁸ See Dillers, *Treaty-Curses* 68–69.

³⁹ Deut 28:26; 1 Sam 17:44, 46; 1 Kgs 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; Jer 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezek 29:5; 32:4; 33:27 (no birds); 39:4, 17–18.

⁴⁰ See Sandy, *Plowshares* 97, 221–222. Though Sandy implies that the reference to dogs licking up Ahab’s blood and devouring Jezebel’s body is also stock language, this is not the case. Every time this language occurs as a stock phrase, both birds *and* animals (sometimes dogs, sometimes wild animals) appear in the curse (the only exception is Ezek 33:27). The prophecies against Ahab and Jezebel, however, are different: (1) only dogs are mentioned; (2) a specific place concerning where the eating/licking will occur is indicated; and (3) the prophecy is directed toward a specific individual. None of the other references has all three of these elements.

⁴¹ The only difference is that 1 Kgs 16:4 has an added לֵב in the second half of the verse.

gests, therefore, that the prediction concerning Ahab should be fulfilled exactly as foretold as well. This is what I will argue below, but one more proposal must first be considered.

VI. 1 KINGS 21:19 HAS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD

Ian Provan resolves the tension between the prediction and fulfillment of Ahab's death in a different way. According to him, Elijah's prophecy in 1 Kgs 21:19 has been misunderstood by most scholars. Elijah's statement should not be translated, "In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth"; rather, the phrase *בְּמִקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר* means "instead of." Thus, according to Provan's interpretation, Elijah is not talking about a specific place in 1 Kgs 21:19, but is only saying: "Instead of dogs licking up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!" (translation his).⁴²

Although this might initially sound like a promising explanation, this solution also does not stand up to further inquiry. While it may be true that *מִקְוֹם* (construct of *מִקְוֶה*) before a relative clause *might* (though it is not certain that it ever does) sometimes mean "instead of," a close reading of all these texts reveals that this is only rarely the case (see table).⁴³

Table 3

Hebrew Construct	Translation	Reference
<i>meqom</i> + noun (rel. pronoun omitted)	"the place [physical] where..."	Job 18:21; Isa 33:21
<i>meqom</i> + <i>asher</i> + noun	"the [physical] place where..."	Gen 39:20; 40:3; Esth 4:3; 8:17
<i>meqom</i> + <i>she</i> + noun	"the [physical] place where..."	Ecc 1:7
<i>meqom</i> + <i>ba</i> _____ (<i>ba</i> functions as rel. pronoun)	"the [physical] place where..." or "instead of..."	<u>Ecc 3:16</u>
<i>bimeqom</i> + <i>asher</i> + pf. verb	"in the [physical] place where..." (action occurred in the past)	Jer 22:12; Ezek 21:35
<i>bimeqom</i> + <i>asher</i> + impf. verb	"in the [physical] place where..." (continual action)	Lev 4:24, 33; 6:18; 7:2; 14:13; Num 9:17; Neh 4:14; Ezek 6:13
<i>bimeqom</i> + <i>asher</i> + impf. verb	"in the [physical] place where..." or "instead of..."	<u>Hos 2:1</u> (= Eng 1:10)

⁴² Provan, *1 & 2 Kings* 160. This is also the interpretation of S. Hartom, *Sefer Melachim* (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1957) 90 [Hebrew].

⁴³ The common way of saying "instead of" in Biblical Hebrew is *תחת* or *אשר תחת*. For references see BDB 1065–66; *HALOT* 1723.

There are only two *possible* instances where מקום before a relative clause takes the meaning “instead of.” The first is in Eccl 3:16, where Qohelet pessimistically reflects on the unfairness of life and says:

מקום המשפט שמה הרשע
ומקום הצדק שמה הרשע

But in this verse, ... מקום can be translated either “in the place where there was [justice],” or “instead of [justice].”⁴⁴ Both translations would fit the context. The only other example is found in Hos 2:1b (= Eng 1:10):

והיה במקום אשר-יאמר להם לא-עמי אתם
יאמר להם בני אל-הי

Like the previous example, however, this verse could also be translated either: (1) “In the place where it was said, ‘You are not my people’...”; or (2) “Instead of it being said, ‘You are not my people’...”⁴⁵ In the final analysis, the second translation is probably slightly more likely in this verse because the point that Hosea is trying to make is not, “In the same *location* where Israel was disavowed they will be readopted.” The verse does not allude to a particular event which occurred at a specific location; rather it is a reversal of Hos 1:9 where Israel is symbolically disowned by God through the naming of Hosea’s son.

But though there may be one instance in the Hebrew Bible where במקום אשר means “instead of,” it is important to note that the accompanying verb (יאמר) in that verse occurs in the imperfect. In our text, however, במקום אשר is followed by a perfect verb (לקקו). This is significant because in the two other instances where this same grammatical construct occurs, (i.e. במקום אשר + pf. verb) the phrase clearly refers to a physical place where a *past* action occurred (Jer 22:12; Ezek 21:35 [Eng=21:30]). In summary, the construct במקום אשר + pf. verb nowhere else means “instead of,” and thus is unlikely in 1 Kgs 21:19.

But even moving beyond the grammatical level, Provan’s suggestion runs into the sand at the exegetical level because “instead of” denotes a reversal, or a change in status (i.e. something that will occur no longer). In Hos 2:1, Yahweh states that his relationship with Israel is going to change: they will no longer *not* be his people—they will now become his people again. In 1 Kgs 21:19, however, “instead of” does not make sense. Naboth’s blood has *already* been licked up by the dogs (though we are only told this by Elijah) at this point. If this is the case, then how could Elijah say that *instead* of licking up the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick up Ahab’s blood?

Finally, if Elijah were only trying to say that *Ahab’s* blood—and not Naboth’s—will be licked up by dogs, why is Samaria explicitly mentioned in the subsequent fulfillment of the prophecy (1 Kgs 22:38)? The historical curiosity of the reader is already satisfied in 1 Kgs 22:37 where we are explicitly told that Ahab was

⁴⁴ All of the major English translations translate the Hebrew as, “In the place of” (e.g. ESV, JPS, NASB, KJV, NET, NRSV, RSV).

⁴⁵ Most of the major English translations render, “In the place of”: ESV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV. Notable exceptions include: JPS, TNK, NET.

brought to Samaria after he died, and then buried in *Samaria* (again mentioned). If Samaria was not part of the original prophecy in 1 Kgs 21:19, then why is this city mentioned (yet again!) in 1 Kgs 22:38 after it has just been mentioned twice in verse 37? The reference to Samaria would not have been needed in verse 38 if it had not originally been part of the prophecy in 1 Kgs 21:19.

As we have seen, none of the proposals mentioned above provide an adequate answer to the question of how the prophecy concerning Ahab's death relates to its claimed fulfillment in 1 Kgs 22:38. There is, however, another explanation which has not been seriously considered by scholars.

VII. A NEW PROPOSAL: NABOTH WAS TRIED AND EXECUTED IN SAMARIA

Most readers of 1 Kings 21 assume that Naboth was stoned in Jezreel. One possibility which scholars have failed to seriously consider, however, is that Naboth was tried and executed in Samaria. As Peter Miscall observes, the site of Naboth's execution is not explicitly named in the narrative: "The 'trial' in 21:8–14 involves false witnesses who 'lived in his city' (vs. 11), but the trial could have been held in Samaria. 22:37–38 may not be shifting the site where 'dogs licked up the blood of Naboth.'"⁴⁶ Miscall tentatively offers this interpretation as a *possible* solution to the problem of the prediction/fulfillment of Ahab's death, but admits that further study is needed to investigate whether or not such a conclusion can be sustained. In what follows I would like to show that it is very likely that Naboth was slain in Samaria, and that this in fact offers the best answer to the question of how Elijah's prediction concerning Ahab's death relates to its fulfillment. In order to demonstrate this, it is necessary for us to take one more look at 1 Kings 21.⁴⁷

Verse one of 1 Kings 21 introduces us to the main characters of the pericope: Naboth "the Jezreelite" and Ahab "king of Samaria." These designations are significant. Naboth is branded "the Jezreelite" six times in the chapter (vv. 1, 4, 6, 7, 15, 16) and Ahab is dubbed "king of Samaria"—the only time in the OT where he is given this title.⁴⁸ From these observations it is clear that the background of these individuals is important for the narrative—Ahab is from Samaria and Naboth is from Jezreel.

The second half of verse 1 tells us that although the capital of the northern kingdom was at this time located in Samaria, Ahab also had a palace (הַיְצֵרֶל)⁴⁹ in

⁴⁶ Miscall, "Elijah, Ahab, and Jehu" 82 n. 3.

⁴⁷ There have been numerous studies of 1 Kings 21 in recent years. See, e.g., Nadav Na'aman, "Naboth's Vineyard and the Foundation of Jezreel," *JOT* 33 (2008) 197–218; Jerome Walsh, "Methods and Meanings: Multiple Studies of 1 Kings 21," *JBL* 111 (1992) 193–311; Yair Zakovitch, "The Tale of Naboth's Vineyard: 1 Kings 21," in Meir Weiss, *The Bible from Within: A Method of Total Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984) 379–405.

⁴⁸ Ahab is called either (1) the "son of Omri" (1 Kgs 16:29, 30) or (2) "king of Israel" (1 Kgs 20:2, 13, 18; 22:41; 2 Kgs 21:3; 2 Chr 18:3, 19).

⁴⁹ LXX here has "threshing floor."

Jezeel.⁵⁰ When Ahab speaks to Naboth in verse 2, however, he informs us that Naboth's vineyard was located next to his *house* (בַּיִת). The change from palace to house is significant because after Naboth refuses to give Ahab his vineyard, the narrator tells us that Ahab went to his *house* (v. 4). But which house did he go to—the one in Jezreel or in Samaria?

If verse 2 were our only indicator, we would probably conclude that Ahab went to his house in Jezreel since the בַּיִת in that verse is clearly in Jezreel. Other indications in the text, however, suggest that Ahab proceeded to his house in Samaria after his encounter with Naboth. First, the narrator tells us in 1 Kgs 21:4 that Ahab returned to his home “sullen and vexed” (סָר וְזָעַף) after failing to procure Naboth's vineyard. In 1 Kgs 20:43 Ahab is also said to have gone to his house “sullen and vexed” (וַיֵּלֶךְ...עַל-בֵּיתוֹ סָר וְזָעַף), only there it is explicitly stated that he went to his home in Samaria. The use of the same phrase in 1 Kgs 20:43 and 21:4 strongly suggests that the narrator is talking about the same house. Second, at some point in 1 Kings 21 Ahab ends up in Samaria—this is the implication of verse 18.⁵¹ If Ahab did not go to Samaria in verse 4, then he had to have traveled there sometime between verses 4–17. But there is nothing in those verses which hints to such a journey. Third, the unique mention of Ahab as “King of Samaria” implies that his home (v. 4) is in Samaria. Finally, when Jezebel hears about Naboth's refusal to give Ahab his vineyard, the narrator tells us that she wrote letters in Ahab's name to the elders and leaders who were “in *his* city” (21:8). This strongly implies that Jezebel is not writing from Jezreel but from Samaria, where she has been conversing with Ahab. Had she written the letters from Jezreel, we would have expected the narrator to say that she wrote to the leaders who were in *the* city (and cf. v. 11 where the men are twice referred to as the leaders and elders of *his* city). Thus, the flow of events is as follows: (1) Ahab attempts to buy Naboth's vineyard himself by going to Jezreel and asking him to sell the land; (2) after failing to procure the vineyard he returns to Samaria; (3) Jezebel then writes letters from Samaria to the elders of Jezreel, telling them to have two men of dubious moral integrity accuse Naboth of cursing God and the king; (4) the men produce two worthless fellows, Naboth is accused, and he is then stoned.

Again, the text does not specify where Naboth was executed and thus there is nothing in the narrative which *precludes* the conclusion that he was stoned in Samar-

⁵⁰ For preliminary reports of the excavations, see D. Ussishkin and J. Woodhead, “Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990–1991: Preliminary Report,” *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992) 3–56; D. Ussishkin and J. Woodhead, “Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1992–1993: Second Preliminary Report,” *Levant* 26 (1994) 1–48; D. Ussishkin and J. Woodhead, “Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1994–1996: Third Preliminary Report,” *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997) 6–72.

⁵¹ Some translate מֶלֶךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמְרוֹן (v. 18a) as “[Ahab] king of Israel who lives in Samaria”—e.g. JPS; NET; NIV; NKJV; NRSV; Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings* 196. However, if the author's intention was simply to highlight that Ahab was the ruler of Samaria, he would have written מֶלֶךְ שָׁמְרוֹן, as he did in v. 1. YHWH's point in v. 18, rather, is to tell Elijah where he can find Ahab: he is travelling from Samaria toward Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel (cf. v. 16)—cf. John Gray, *1 & 2 Kings: A Commentary* (2d ed.; OTL; London: SCM, 1970) 443; Provan, *1 & 2 Kings* 158. Note also that in v. 20 Ahab expresses surprise that Elijah has found him. Could it be that Elijah met Ahab somewhere on the road between Samaria and Jezreel and uttered his austere prophecy against the king somewhere outside of Jezreel?

ia. The end of verse 13 simply says, “Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, and he died” (my translation). A comparison of this verse with verses 8 and 11, however, reveals something important. The word “city” occurs four times in 1 Kings 21. In verses 8 and 11 the elders and leaders who receive letters from Jezebel are described as men of *his* (Naboth’s) city who live in *his* (Naboth’s) city (עירו). Verse 13, however, states that the men took Naboth outside of *the* city (מחוץ לעיר) and stoned him. The change in designation from *his* city (vv. 8–11) to *the* city (v. 13), may be a subtle indication that the execution did not occur outside of the city of Jezreel, but Samaria. If this was not the case, then why would the narrator suddenly say that they took him outside of *the* city after he has referred to it as *his* city three times earlier?

Historically, it makes sense that Naboth would have been brought to Samaria for his “trial” and execution because criminals, it seems, were frequently brought to capital cities for prosecution. For example, when a dispute arose between the two prostitutes concerning the dead child, the two were brought to Solomon for their judgment (1 Kgs 3:16–28). In fact, Solomon built a “hall of judgment” (אולם המשפט) in his capital for the prosecution of criminals (1 Kgs 7:7). Even more explicit is 2 Samuel 15 which says that Absalom would sit by the city gate and try to steal the hearts of the people who would “come to the king for judgment” (vv. 2, 6). Jeremiah 26:23 may also suggest such a practice, for Uriah was captured in Egypt and brought back to the king for judgment. It seems, therefore, that the common practice was to bring criminals to the capital city for judicial ruling.⁵²

Though Naboth’s character is not fully developed in 1 Kings 21, verse 3 seems to present him as a pious servant of YHWH. As most commentators note, he does not refuse to sell Ahab his vineyard because Ahab’s offering price is too low, rather “[he] refused to part with the vineyard . . . on religious grounds, because the sale of paternal inheritance was forbidden in the law (Lev. 25:23–28; Num. 36:7ff.). He was therefore not merely at liberty as a personal right to refuse the king’s proposal, but bound by the commandment of God.”⁵³ If, therefore, Naboth *was* a man of righteous moral character (as is suggested by the text), an unjust accusation against Naboth in Jezreel would run the risk of being exposed as a sham, and thus it would have been more expedient to accuse him of wrongdoing in Samaria anyways since his reputation there would have been largely unknown.

A comparison of Elijah’s prophecies against Ahab and Jezebel also suggests that Naboth died in Samaria. As I have already noted, the two prophecies are very similar. Both describe *what* will happen to the individual and *where* it will take place. Significantly, however, Elijah simply says that Ahab’s blood will be licked up by dogs *in the place* where Naboth’s blood was licked up, but when he pronounces the verdict on Jezebel he explicitly names the city in which her body will be devoured by dogs—Jezreel. The specification of *Jezreel* as the city in which the prophecy

⁵² I am not arguing that *every* criminal was brought to the capital city for sentencing, only that some of them clearly were.

⁵³ C. F. Keil, *The Books of the Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 269–70.

against Jezebel will be fulfilled suggests that Elijah did not want his audience to think that she would be eaten by dogs in the same place that the blood of her husband would be licked up by dogs (as would have been the natural assumption).

Finally, two points mentioned above also buttress the theory that Naboth was stoned in Samaria. First, the fact that Samaria is mentioned three times in the fulfillment of this prophecy (1 Kgs 22:37–38) strongly suggests that the author believed that Samaria was part of the original prophecy. Again, had this not been the case the author could simply have placed verse 38 before verse 37 and left out the reference to Samaria in verse 38. This would have left enough ambiguity in the text for the reader to draw his/her own conclusion about where the blood-licking took place. Second, the fact that the prophecy concerning Jezebel's death was fulfilled exactly as Elijah predicted is also a strong indication that Elijah's word vis-à-vis the death of Ahab was fulfilled exactly as he prophesied.

While none of these points may be decisive on their own, the cumulative evidence suggests that Naboth was tried and executed in Samaria. If this is correct, then the events can be reconstructed as follows: (1) the elders and leaders of Jezreel proclaim a fast in Jezreel while Naboth is brought to Samaria for sentencing; (2) as Naboth is sitting before the people (בְּיָמָיו) in Samaria two scoundrels from Jezreel accuse him of cursing God and the king; (3) the people gather together for the "trial" take Naboth outside of Samaria and stone him; (4) after hearing from Jezebel that Naboth has been stoned, Ahab travels from Samaria to Jezreel in order to take possession of Naboth's vineyard; (5) Ahab is met by Elijah along the way and is informed that his blood will be licked by dogs in the same place that dogs licked up the blood of Naboth. Thus, when Ahab's blood was subsequently licked up by the dogs near the pool of Samaria, the author could confidently say that this happened "according to the word of the Lord that he had spoken."⁵⁴

⁵⁴ I would like to thank all those who read earlier drafts of this paper and offered helpful comments. Their constructive feedback has greatly benefited this essay.