

Payday Someday

by R.G. Lee

The sermon 'Payday Someday' explores the tragic consequences of wickedness and manipulation as seen in the story of Naboth, Ahab, and Jezebel.

Duration: 54:55

Scripture: 2 Kings 9:30

Topics: "Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a man who is in desperate need of rescue. The man is trapped in a pit of his own making, and his body is trembling and convulsing. The preacher then explains that the man's predicament is not caused by a tiger or an eagle, but by his own sinful actions. However, there is hope for redemption when the man encounters a picture of the living God. The preacher also warns against the dangers of worldly pursuits and urges listeners to use their abilities and talents for the glory of God.

Transcript

I introduce to you Mabooff. Mabooff was a citizen of the little town of Jezreel. He was a good man.

He abhorred that which is evil. He craved that which is good. This good man had a little vineyard which was close by a palace of the king.

This vineyard had come to him as a cherished inheritance from his forefathers. Because of this, all of it was very dear to his heart. I introduce to you Ahab, the vile human toad who squatted on the throne of a nation.

He had command of a nation's wealth and a nation's army, but no command of his lusts and appetites. He wore fine clothes, but had underneath these clothes a wicked heart. He ate good food, but he had a starved soul.

He lived in palaces, yet he tormented himself for one little bit of land more. He was a king with a crown, a throne, a great army and a fat treasury. Yet he lived nearly all of his life under the thumb of a wicked woman.

The Bible says this to us about him. There was none like unto Ahab, the son of Amasai, who sold himself to wake wickedness from the sight of the Lord. He did abominably in falling at the idolatrous of the Amorites.

I introduce to you Jezebel, the daughter of Abel, king of Tyre, the wife of Ahab, king of Israel. Infinitely more daring and reckless was she in her wickedness than was her wicked husband. She was a devout worshiper of Baal and hated everybody who did not worship her pagan god.

She had all the beauty and all the brazen lewdness of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, all the subtle scheming of Lady Macbeth, all the cruelty of the Catherine of Russia. She and her maidens engaged in lust worship unto Astaroth in scenes of most forbidding vulgarity. She was a beautiful adder called upon the throne of the nation.

I introduce to you Elijah, God's preacher. He wore rough clothes, but he had underneath these clothes a righteous and courageous heart. He ate bird's food and wood as fare, but was a great physical and spiritual athlete.

He was God's strong wall that stood out against the rising tides of the wickedness of this day. He was a seer who saw clearly, a great heart who felt deeply, a hero who dared valiantly. Then God took him home to heaven without the touch of a deaf dew upon his brow. And with the introduction of these four characters, Naboth, the devout Jezreelite, Ahab, the vile human toad who occupied the throne, Jezebel, the beautiful adder coiled beside the toad, and Elijah, God's preacher, I bring you as best I can tonight, pleased with the help of your prayer, the tragedy of payday some days we find it in this book, 1 Kings 21 and 2 Kings 9. The first scene in this tragedy is the real estate request.

Ahab the king said unto Naboth, Let me have our vineyard for a garden of herbs, because it is close to my palace, and I will give it its worth in money, or if it please thee, I'll give thee a better vineyard. Thus far Ahab is perfectly within his rights. He had no intention of cheating Naboth out of his vineyard, of killing him to get it.

Honestly did he offer him its worth in money or better vineyard, and under ordinary circumstances we might expect Naboth to put away any sentimental attachment which he had for his vineyard, it might please the king of his nation. But Ahab forgot that he had ever known it God's commandment, whereby every tribe receiveth its inheritance, and every family is lot from God with this commandment, The land shall not be sold for ever, the land is mine, saith the Lord. And so, standing upon the commandment of God, and with true-hearted loyalty to God, and preferring the duty which he owed to God, any danger which might come from man, Naboth said, God forbid it me that I should let thee have my vineyard.

He believed that he held that land in peace, simple from God. Besides this, many tender memories of his childhood were tangled in those vines. His father, sleeping now in some obscure grave, had loved that vineyard and worked it.

His mother, sleeping in some dust-stained shroud, had worked in that vineyard and had loved it. And whenever Naboth thought of his little vineyard so sanctified by sweet and holy memories, so rich in prayer and fellowship, coming to the hands of Ahab and Jezebel, his soul rose in quick and righteous revulsion under the courage of a bird that dares astonish sea. He said, God forbid it me that I should let thee have my vineyard.

The second scene is the pouting king. Naboth's refusal took all the spokes out of the wheels of Ahab's desires. His refusal was a strong barrier against which the string of Ahab's desire dashed and was turned into a sullen pool of socks.

There angry, he went to his house in the daytime and went to bed and turned his face to the wall and would not eat. Look at the king there, whining like a whipped hound, pouting like a spoiled child that has been denied one trinket in the midst of a thousand toys. And when his servants brought him his food, he drove them from his presence as though they had carried in garbage.

What an ancient person we have here of great talents and abilities, prostituted to the service of Satan and withheld in the service of God. Look at the king here, made captive by corporal murkiness, made prisoner by private pouts. Yes, look at this old whale, wallowing spout about because he has denied men a food.

Listen to this old eagle sleep because he has denied the crumbs that sparrows eat. Listen to this old lion roar for a little bit of cheese. And get the ancient portrait of men and women, boys and girls, as well as the portrait of Ahab in the olden days and the portrait of men and women today who have diamond and ruby abilities who have no more to guard through his churches than a punch of Japanese nickel in a Chinese bazaar.

Yes, think of the men and women today who have incandescent light powers making no more light for Christ than a smoky lantern on a stormy night. Yes, listen to this old wooded bull, bellow a little bit of grass outside his own vast pasture lands. And get a duplicate of that portrait of men and women today who withhold our trust, our love, our service, and our sacrifice and our bodies from Christ Jesus who bore our sins in his own body on the cross.

The third sin in this tragedy is the wicked wife, Jezebel. We do not know all that the servants said to her when they went back to the dining room and told her that the king was lying there in bed with his face turned to the wall and would not eat. We do not know anything which she said to the servants.

But we do know something which she said to Ahab when, trickingly, like a dead dancer, she went running into the king's room, found him lying there in bed with his face turned to the wall, his lips swollen with mucus, smoking his eyes, burning with devilish anger, fire in his wicked heart, stubborn in disobedience to the commandment of God. And as is the custom of the women until this day, I suppose she put her hand on his forehead to see if he had temperature. If he had temperature, he was set on fire of hell.

And first, in a voice of sweet solicitation, she saw the reason of his anger. And in my inelegant translation of her words, she said, What's the matter with you, big boy? Why is thy face so sad, and why dost thou not eat? And Ahab, with his face turned to the wall, with his mouth filled with grudges, said, Because, I said unto Naboth, let me have thy vineyard for a garden of oil, because it is good for my palace, and I'll give thee its worth in money. If it please thee, I'll give thee a better vineyard for it.

And he said to me, I will not let thee have my vineyard. Every word he said stung like a whip upon a naked back. This wicked woman who never had any regard for the welfare of anybody who loved God.

You can hear her devilish laugh ring throughout the palace halls like the cackle of a wild fowl that has returned and found a serpent in its nest. And then, with her sharp, wicked tongue, she began to appraise her husband. This gay, gaudy guinea of the devil strutted up and down beside the king's couch and derided him as a buffoon and as a coward.

And his horned-like sting and wolf-mouthed fierceness and serpent-mouse hiss in the teasing taunts she heard of him for his scrupulous timidity. And then, with more noise and worsening in her words, she said, Aren't you the king? Can you not command and have it done? Can you not seize and take, arise, eat, be

happy? I'll get thee, nay, boss of a vineyard. He had knew her well enough to know she'd do her wicked worst to keep her evil promise.

For like an old turtle that's been asleep in the cold winter's mud and the warm sunshine warms the mud, he began slowly to crawl out of the slime of his throats. Jezebel, no doubt, tickled him on the chin with her bejeweled fingers and said, That's right, I'll be happy. I'll get thee, the vineyard of neighbor.

Which brings us to ask this question. Who can so degrade a man as a woman of unworldly tendencies? And who can so elevate a man as a woman of noble purposes? But back to the statement, There was none like unto Ahab, the son of Ammai, who sold himself to wickedness in the sight of the Lord. And back to the statement that he did abominably in falling act, the idolaters of his days.

This statement, Whom Jezebel, his wife, stirred up. She was a polluted reservoir at which the streams of his own iniquity found mighty increase. She was the devil's grindstone on which he sharpened his wicked reference.

Yes, who can so degrade a man as a woman of unworthy purposes? You can read this blessed word of God, all you who are reading 60 pages of history, all you pleased, and you'll find that the spiritual life of no nation, no country, no community, no town, no village, no home, no school, no church ever rises any higher than the spiritual life of women. And when women sag morally and spiritually, men sag morally and spiritually. And when women slump morally and spiritually, men slip and slide morally and spiritually.

That's the testimony of this marvelous book. That's the testimony of thousands of pages of history. Who was it that dominated the papacy in its most shameful days? Lucretia Bozzio, a woman.

Who was it that tried to ruin Joseph, whom God put in Egypt to take famine and fear from the heart of the nation? It was a woman, Potiphar's wife. Who was it that told Job, in the midst of his physical afflictions and financial calamities, to curse God and kill himself? It was a woman, his own wife. Who was it that suggested to Haman that he build a high gallows on which to hang Mordecai the Jew? It was Zeres, a woman, his own wife.

Who was it that danced King Herod completely into hell? Herodas, a woman. Who was it that was like a heavy chain around the neck of God from the Felix for life or death to time through eternity? Drusilla, a woman. And on and on I might go, showing you from God's book this truth that some of the foulest plots that have ever been hatched out of the devil's incubators have been hatched out of them by eggs placed in them by women's hands.

But while that is true, it is also gloriously true that some of the most beautiful and spiritually fragrant flowers that blossom in God's kingdom gardens, some of the most blessed spiritual fruit that ripens in God's kingdom orchards, and some of the most potent streams that flow out to make gardens out of desert spots of the world are realities because of women's chastity, faith, service, sacrifice, and devotion. But as for Ahab, this book tells us it was Jezebel who stirred him up so greater wickedness than his own wicked mind could conceive or his own wicked hand could execute. The next scene in this tragedy is a message meaning murder.

Jezebel got the piece of paper and a pen and wrote this letter. Listen to it carefully. To the elders and nobles of Jezreel, proclaim a fast.

Set Naboth on high among the people. Have two men, sons of Deliah, placed before him. Have them rise and say Naboth birthed him, God and the King.

Then take him out and scorn him that he may die. And she signed Ahab's name to that. And so that since writing has been known to men, no file or prop was ever written by a woman's hand.

Every drop of ink she used was fatal poison to be injected into Naboth's veins. Every line she wrote was a little rope which united with other little ropes made a noose for Naboth's neck. And she had put that death warrant in what we call the envelope.

She melted some wax at the mouth of a hot candle and when that wax had fallen warm and soft upon the envelope, she asked Ahab for his ring on which was a seal of the nation. He gave her his ring and she sealed it with a king's seal. And back of that seal was all the authority of the throne.

She gave that death warrant to the royal curers and told them to take it down to Jezreel. And her purpose was to put Naboth out of the way by judicial murder rather than by private assassination. I do not know where Naboth was when that death warrant arrived in his little town.

Maybe he and his wife had gone for a stroll. Maybe he was playing a game with his little sons. Maybe he was working in his vineyard.

I do not know, but I do know this, that that night when he ate supper with his family, that night when he slept with the wife of his bosom, he did not know that the hounds of death let loose from the kennels of hell by the bejeweled hands of a king's daughter and a king's wife were close upon his heels, ready to take his life. I can hear Naboth make his righteous and perhaps indignant protests when these men came down to his little house and made known to him the contents, only half the contents, of that message which meant murder. But his protests, whatever they were, while they had nothing, they made known to him very firmly that on a certain day he would sit in the seat on high among the people, in the seat of accused, wherever I could watch him, under suspicion and accusation that he had committed a crime which was about to bring punishment from God upon the people.

The next thing you know, this tragedy is a fatal fiasco. The proclamation has gone out. People have gathered, there were thousands, little children, there were hundreds running here and there with their gay clothes laughing and playing.

Here are these young men and young women not knowing the evil potent of the day, dread for the day, because it gave them the chance to speak the love of their hearts to each other. But the older people had the fears of their hearts written in the seriousness of their faces and sounding forth in the solemnness of the tones of their conversations because they trusted not a heaven, Jezebel, that when it came to anything like a religious fast observance in the name of Jehovah God, that the people had gathered and there's Naboth sitting on high among the people, wherever I could watch him, under suspicion and accusation that he's the guilty one who has done something which is about to bring punishment from God upon the community. As he sat there, in came these base sons of Belial and sat down close to where he was.

There they are, the devil's hoax! Ready to put their beaks into God's power. The devil's eagles ready to thrust their talons into God's dove. The devil's hobo wolves ready to tear to shreds God's noble stag.

They sat there a little while and then they sprang to their feet and they cried aloud, Naboth, birth from God! Naboth, birth from the King! In strong hands, dragged him out of the seat of the accused, dragged him out

to the throngs of people while little children swept and women screamed and strong men stood horrified at what they knew was going to be done, which awful thing they were helpless to prevent. These bloody butchers of the Queen dragged Naboth out from among the people out along the street, out through the gate to the town and hauled his body down upon the ground and picked up the stones they had gathered for his killing and threw them at his head and threw them at his body and threw them and threw them and threw them until his head was crushed like an egg beneath a giant's heel. His feet and legs were broken all to pieces, his arms were shattered into fragments, his chest was all beaten in and bones stuck out from his body like ivory fingers from pots of red paint, blood splattered, brains scattered and with convulsive jolts of his body and groans coming from between his broken jaws and just a little bit, Naboth was dead.

God's mother did die by the hailstones of hell. And these butchers of the bloody Queen said, Now, that his sons may not inherit the vineyard, let's kill them. So they brought his little sons out and stoned them to death.

Oh, quite brutally have they obeyed the bloody orders of that bloody Queen. So they sent word back to somebody. To whom? They sent word back to Jezebel and Naboth is stoned and is dead.

I do not know where she was when she got that news. Maybe she's out on the lawn, the palace lawn, watching the fountains splash. Maybe she's out in the garden watching the royal gardener cut bouquets for the palace rooms.

Maybe she's down there in the music hall listening to King's Orchestra play. I do not know, but I do know this, that when she received the news of Naboth's death she received it with jubilant joy. She received it with devilish delight and went running to tell Ahab the good news.

What did it matter to her that down yonder, sixty-odd miles away, sat a little woman freshly rooted? What did it matter to her that down there, sixty-odd miles away, sat a little mother washing the faces of her dead sons with the tears and beating the dogs back from their buttocks? What did it matter to her that murder had been done, that God had been defied, just so she and her husband had a little vineyard for a garden of herbs? And with an air of elation and victory she went running into where the King was, found him lying there, sitting there, and she said, Arise, arise, get thee down to Jezreel and take possession. I told you I would get you Naboth's vineyard, and I got for nothing what you were going to give good money for. I got for nothing what you were going to give a better vineyard for.

Arise, get thee down, take possession. Naboth is not alive, Naboth is dead. That last statement was true because the wicked prop conceived in her wicked mind and written out with her little white bejeweled queen's hand.

The next scene in this chapter is a visit to the vineyard. He had the royals, gave orders to his royal woe-billed people to get out his King's clothes, a little goodness trip to make him while he was dressed up for the occasion. While they had himself, it had no direct part in the killing of Naboth, he was perfectly willing to receive the benefit of his dying, and he had not one word of sensual condemnation for that tragic plot that had culminated in such a murderous horror.

So he gave orders out to the liberal stables to Jehu and Bidka, the King's charioteers, lift the King's horses to the King's chariot, tell the King's outriders to put on their gorgeous garments and saddle their horses and give him a cavalcade to come to him down to Jezreel. Jehu is a speed-breaking driver to this day.

When people heard chariot wheels whirling faster along the highways than other chariot wheels, or heard horses galloping faster than other horses, they said, As old Jehu, he drives furiously! You must have some kinfolks in America.

We remember that last year 50,000 people were killed on our highways. But anyway, Jehu and Bidka put their bridles and harnesses on the fine horses such as King's had in those days and such as they have had to hitch them up to the King's chariot. The outriders put on their gorgeous garments, saddled their horses out from the liberal stables came this cavalcade up to that great, gorgeous, ivory palace in Samaria, the ruins of which I have walked over and the ruins of which I have taken pictures of.

Look at these wonderful horses hitched to the King's chariot there, ears are moving, their eyes are bright and alert, they have a prance and aspect and their lungs and muscles and hearts are ready for any piece that Master Jehu here shall demand by whatever whip that they take. This cavalcade drove up to this gorgeous ivory palace with its solid ivory doors and solid ivory steps. Out from those solid ivory doors down the solid ivory steps came the King, perhaps accompanied part of the way by the Queen.

Maybe she stopped him, drew him a kiss or waved a hand at him. But did God open the chariot door? The King stepped in, the outriders are ready, Jehu and his horses are ready, they're all ready! Maybe hissing his whip above the ears of his horses and certainly commanding them with his voice, Jehu sent the cavalcade away. There they go, away from this gorgeous ivory palace, out through the gates to the King's estate, on down the highway to Jezreel.

Where is God? Where is God? Is he blind that he cannot see? Is he deaf that he cannot hear? Is he dumb that he cannot speak? Is he paralyzed that he cannot move? Where is God? Wait a minute, we shall find out. Over in the palace, Jezebel said to him, have a rest, get thee down to Jezreel. Over there in the wilderness where he had no human voices at all, only hooting owls and howling wolves in the nighttime, and the cattle that killed these and the reckless call of the crows in the daytime, out there in the wilderness.

Where? From the moon-blossomed yonder in the ancient garden of the stars like a huge yellow jungle where the tall cedars in some breeze waved against that full moon like green plumes against the golden shield. Out there in the wilderness, God said to his preacher, Ahab, Elijah, go down and see Ahab at Jezreel. He used to be there, and tell him this from me.

I'm so glad that in this world when the devil has his Ahab to whom he can say arise, God Almighty has his Elijah to whom he can say arise, and so I'll give another king's character. Ahab rode to Jezreel down the dusty highways, barefoot, and walked Elijah to Jezreel. That brings us to this theme, the alarming appearance.

Jehu drove these horses up to the gate to the little vineyard right there in the shadow of the gorgeous palace of the king, his summer palace. These horses pranced around a little bit. Well did they stand the fewest pace that their master Jehu demanded that they take for those 50 miles.

Saul did call open the chariot door. Ahab stepped out of the chariot into the little vineyard, his vineyard now, the gift of his queen, right here in the shadow of his palace. There they saw Saul and Naboth's footprints, perhaps the smaller footprints of his wife and the still smaller footprints of their little sons.

There the rose of vines rustling in the sunlight, maybe rustling in a quiet breeze. He had walked in among these vines planning how he was going to have them all pulled up and plant herbs there and eat those herbs up there in his big dining room in the palace. He walks among these vines planning that all out.

What is it appears? Did some green-eyed tiger fix to pounce upon him and take his eyes? No, no tiger. Some fierce eagle swooping from the sky threatening to pull his eyes from their sockets? No, no fierce eagle. Well, what is it then? As he walks among these vines, suddenly there's a shadow falls across in front of him.

He holds on his heels and he finds himself face to face with Elijah, the preacher of the living God. He cowers in Elijah's presence and his face turns pale and his voice is hoarse like that of a hunted animal. Looking up at the preacher, he said, Hath thou fooled me, O mine enemy? Hath thou fooled me? Holy Lord! Just then that old sheep-skin man looked across his sun-kissed shoulders, that old leather girdle around his loins, and his eyes burning like coals of fire in their sockets, and his voice as calm as an inland lake, looked down upon the cowering, cowardly king and said, Ahab, hast thou killed and taken possession? Ahab, as the Lord liveth before whom I stand, God sent me here to say to you that someday where the dogs lick Naboth's blood, will the dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

May have God sent me here to tell you that someday the dogs will eat Jezebel here by the ramparts of Jezreel. Having pronounced God's judgment sentence upon the gift of two, God's preacher walked out to the dimes, out to the gate, out by Jehud, did come out right, as whose eyes were wide with amazement, whose ears were tingling with God's judgment sentence, as they had heard it passed upon their king and their queen. God said it! Did he mean it? Or was he joking? Or playing a prank on royalty? We shall see if we consider this last theme, payday itself.

Did payday come as God said it would? Listen to me tonight, please. Listen to me. Payday someday is written in the Constitution of God's universe by God himself.

For every nation and every individual, it says, No to Jesus, who said yes to the cross for humanity. I say payday someday is written in the Constitution of God's universe for every nation and every individual that is disobedient to God's commandments. No legislative man can enact it out.

No educational system can pull it out or teach it out. No scientific power can eliminate it. No infidelity can revile it out.

No atheism can laugh it out. Payday someday is written in the Constitution of God's universe. Oh, you can take God's name in vain if you will.

But what does this book say about the payday for those who take God's name in vain? It says, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for God will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain. You can tell lies, if you will, like many people do, forgetting that lying licks an abomination unto God. But this book says that the payday for liars is this.

Listen. All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. You can drink your rotten booze, if you will, and go home and not know the key holds the door from the mouth of Mammoth Cave or your wife from a baboon on the railroad track from the coastline.

But this book says something about payday for the boozer. What does it say? It says, Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raising, and whosoever deceives thereby is a fool. At last it bites like a serpent and stings

like an adder.

That's a payday. You can live to affliction and stakes, if you will, like many do. But I have a book that talks about the works of affliction, the works of stakes, and God's payday for it.

What does this book say? The works of affliction are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, mass cynicness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, reverence, and such like. What's a payday for that? God says, He that soweth to his flesh shall of his flesh reap rotten flesh, corruption, charring, which birtheth love. Whatsoever man soweth, says this book, that shall he also reap.

Payday someday is what God Almighty says. I was pastor of the First Baptist Church in New Orleans for some very blessed years. I had a little radio station on my own, had a federal license to operate it.

I used to get letters from a young man who signed himself the chief of the kangaroo court. Oh, what caustic, cruel, critical letters he did write me! Once in a while I'd find a nice line in his letters, and if I did so, it was like finding a fragrant gardenia in a garbage can. One day a little nurse phoned me from the Charity Hospital and said, Dr. Lee, I know you're busy.

I said, Yes, ma'am, I'm always busy. I even wake my toes when I sleep. But I noticed that there wasn't any letters in her poems and her words at all.

She said, Dr. Lee, this young man down here won't tell us his name. All he'll tell us is that he's the chief of the kangaroo court. He's going to die.

Ask me to phone you and ask you if you'd come to see him, because you're the only preacher in New Orleans he ever heard and he has something he wants to tell you. Will you come? I said, I will, and I did. That blessed little nurse took me in that great big charity ward, men on every cot in it, put me up to one narrow bed on which was stretched this young fellow about 18 or 20 years of age, maybe a little more, maybe a little less, six footer.

She said, This sir is the chief of the kangaroo court. I found myself looking down in two of the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen in all my life. As kind as I knew how to talk, I said, How do you do? How do you do? He snarled at me.

And as kind as I could talk again, I said, Is there anything I can do for you? No, nothing, nothing, nothing, unless you throw my body out to the bosoms when I'm dead. It's a burden to have it. And his voice lost much of its snarl.

He said, I ask them of you, sir, because I want you to tell these men in here something for me. I'm the chief of the kangaroo court. I've sent for you because I know you grew up down in this country and talked to a lot of young people.

I want you to tell them from me that the devil always pays in counterfeit money. I wish I could get these boys and girls and you young folks and all the rest of you tonight to believe me when I say that after I have dealt with people as a preacher for years and years and years, I have found out that the devil's purse is a paste purse. His diamonds are lustrous plastic.

His nectar turns out to be hog slop. And if you eat his corn, you choke to what it's called. Yes, you will.

Yes, you will. But who has the power to get any average American congregation to believe that today? Wish I had that power. I stayed with that young man like I stayed with many people when they died.

I stayed over two hours. I can see him now with his big hand reaching out, trying to grab mine like a drowning man grabbing at a life belt. His eyes began to look like glass marbles.

He gazed up at the ceiling, just kept gazing as though he were hoping some rescue hand would reach down and take him out of the pit he had dugged for himself. His body was jerking, jumping, quivering like it had a convulsive chill. After about two hours, a pile of old black stuff sprouted out of his mouth, forming a rumble in his potent chest.

Some of it got on my clothes and some on my hand. Foul stuff. But the young man was dead.

The tornado had died. The whisper in the whisper had died. The little nurse came running in excitement and said, Oh, come here quickly, come here quickly.

I said, What do you want, my child? She said, I want to wash your hands. Meaning she wanted to wash them with a disinfectant. She took me back in her room, and she seemed to be talking to herself as much as she was to me.

And she washed my hands. She said, It's dangerous to touch him. Just a touch is dangerous.

A touch is dangerous. And if he wasn't out of the teenage area, if I'm able to judge of age. But the devil had paid him off in counterfeit money.

Paid him off with paste cards that had no value in life and death or time and eternity. Payday someday. No wonder Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote what he did.

Listen. This is the price I pay. Just for one riotous day.

Years of regret and grief and sorrow without relief. Suffered I will, my friend. Suffered until the end.

Until the grave shall give me release. Small is the thing I bought. Small is the thing it best.

Small is the debt I fought. But oh God, the interest. This is the price I pay.

Just for one riotous day. Years of regret and grief. Young woman came to my office about eight years ago from Memphis State University.

She sat in a chair across from my desk. And she said, Dr. Lee, somebody's got to help me. Somebody's got to help me.

She said, Oh, Dr. Lee. If I had a million dollars in my lap, I'd give it away as quick as I could drop it to the floor. If I could call back just two hours of my life.

Well, I can't do it, can I? I said, No, dear. No river ever runs around and goes to its source. Young man wouldn't sit down in my office.

Right here in Memphis. He inherited everything his father left him, which was quite a bit. He was successful as a businessman.

He said to me, Preacher, you don't have to preach to me to get me to believe that there's a hell hereafter. But I know there's a hell on earth because I've been walking up and down avenues of hell for 11 months. I said, Oh, Preacher, I'd give all I have, all my father left and all I have, all I'd expect is if I could call back two days and two nights of my life.

Well, I can't do it. I said, No, son. Nobody can put an egg back when you step on it.

Payday is Sunday. This is the price I pay just for one riotous day, years of regret and grief. Oh, young people, listen to me tonight.

Don't ever so live, don't ever so yield your bodies to anybody or anything. But you'd have to say, this is the price I pay just for one riotous day, years of regret and grief. I love Louisiana.

I've preached all over that state. Jimmy Davis, who served eight years as governor of that state, started a Christian life under my preaching. I love that lovely Louisiana.

Down there we had a very beautiful young woman by the name of Pony Jo Henry. She had her lover, supposedly, but not a lover. She had her sweetheart, supposedly, but not a sweetheart.

These supposed lovers would stretch out her long and spread out her long, beautiful hair and say, oh, Pony Jo, your hair's so gorgeous. No girl has hair like you, Pony. And some dance floor, some fellow would pull her up to him and look down her eyes and say, Pony, your eyes sparkle like the stars tonight and you dance so divinely, Pony.

Oh, she had her lover, supposedly, but not a lover. And one day she killed a man who begged her not to kill him. He was arrested, tried, found guilty of murder in the first degree, sentenced to die in an electric chair.

When people tried to get our governor to pardon him, he said he had no ground for such. One morning, Pony Jo Henry, sitting on the edge of a cart in her cell, her beautiful hair is all shaven off, and I have a picture in my office of her sitting like that, her little cross slippers on her bare feet. She's bare-legged and has on a denim skirting waist, and she has her face and her hands looking down at the cement floor.

Not a bit harder was than her heart was when she killed a man who begged her not to kill him. There's a creak in the lock. The door opened.

Two guards in uniforms stood there, and one of them said, It's time to go, Pony Jo. It's time to go. She rose from the edge of her cart and walked down the hall with those two guards.

There she goes, her last walk on earth. Nobody now to tell her she dances divinely. Nobody now to tell her her eyes sparkle like the stars.

Nobody now to talk about her luxuriant, beautiful hair. Nobody now to tell her she dances divinely or that's where she got that new perfume. Where are all her lovers? She stopped.

There's a chair there, grinning at her like a skeleton from the closet. The Times-Picayune wrote this about it, and what he wrote I have on file in my office. Pony Jo Henry stopped, looked at the chair and said, Somehow, I knew all along God ran the whole show, but I tried to steal just one little act.

The guards nudged her along. She sat down in the chair with a strange tone the devil had gotten ready for her. She pulled her cloth slippers off her bare feet and put the soles of her little feet on the electrodes.

They put stools to the throne the devil provided. They fastened little hands into the palms on the electrodes, the carnation bracelets Satan had provided. They slipped the electrode over her head, her shaven head, the crown the devil had gotten ready for.

They buckled her beautiful young body in with a heavy leather belt. A man pushed a lever and that sudden surge of electricity hit her young body. It jerked and it quivered and convulsively twisted.

Her eyes almost popped out of her head. The smell of burnt flesh. The whisper of smoke came out from between her toes and between her fingers and from under the edges of the electrode on her head and circled toward the ceiling like little imps of hell laughing at the girl who laughed at the Bible and cursed preachers and laughed at churches and heard a sermon that you listen to tonight.

Payday someday hath come for Tony Joe. And it'll come to you if you say no to Jesus who said yes to the cross. Then somebody says, whatever happened to Ahab, did payday come to him after three years went by? Three years! And still he's a king.

I think sometimes up there in the dining room in the palace, Jezebel poked a little fun at him when they had some of the herbs on the table. Here, here, Ahab, have a sip of these herbs. All of them came out of the vineyard I got for you.

Got for nothing. Oh, have a sip, Ahab. I thought all Elijah said, the dogs are going to lick your blood.

I thought he said, the dogs are going to eat me. Have yourself, Ahab. But I think in all those three years only he had never heard a dog bark.

He didn't jump. One day out of this, the King Jehoshaphat of Judah gave Jehoshaphat a banquet. At the close of the banquet he said, Jehoshaphat, you're the King of Judah, I'm the King of Israel, and we've taken that out of the hands of the Syrians.

Will you go out with me and have me take it out of their hands? Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, said, yeah, yeah, my horses should be as thy horses, my soldiers as thy soldiers. We will help thee. And so it was planned and decided.

The King of Syria found it out and he called 30 of his best men to him and said, now listen here, fellas. And this battle comes on. Don't you fight with the little, don't you fight with the great.

You just get ahead. That's all we want. Just ahead.

So the battle day came on. The King of Syria knew the battle plans just as Ahab and Jehoshaphat knew them. And on the day when the battle was to be, Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, Jehoshaphat, when you go into battle, wear your king's clothes.

But not I, I'm going to disguise myself. I'm going to put armor over my naked body. And over that armor I'm going to put ordinary citizens' clothes.

I'm going to put some bridesmaids' suit. But you go in in your king's clothes, I'm going in in disguise. And so it was.

The battle came on, shields crashing, shields crashing, arrows flying, spears thrown, war chariots rolling, men fighting. And over yonder are these men of the King of Syria and they see Jehoshaphat in his king's clothes and they grab him. When Jehoshaphat cried out, they said, ah, this is not Ahab.

We want Ahab. Where is Ahab? And where was Ahab? Over yonder in the chariot driven by Jehu. Oh, here's a man whose name we do not know.

He did not even take aim. I call him the aimless, nameless woman. The Bible says he drew aboard a venture.

That hour of death went out over the heads of those fighting forces. He found the crevice in Ahab's armor, punched a jagged hole near his heart through his body. And he fell over on the chariot rim and cried out and said, Jehu, Jehu, turn your hand, Jehu.

I won't. Turn your hand and hold me up. And his heart was pumping out his blood until the bottom of his chariot was filled with his wicked blood.

And they stayed him up on the chariot rim till he died. And then before they could wash his chariot out, get the blood out of it, the dogs came and licked up his blood according to the word of God spoken by Elijah the teachback, saying, Someday the dogs will lick thy blood. God said it, and it was done.

What about Jezebel? Twenty years went by. There she is, the queen. Twenty years is a long time for anybody to teach school and never get any pay.

A long time for a nurse to nurse sick people and never get any pay. Twenty years is a long time for a man to run a store and never sell any good. Twenty years is a long time for a man to work a field and never gather a crop.

Twenty years! And still she is the queen. Holy Elijah had gone home to heaven without even dying. And succeeded by Elisha, marvelous servant of God.

One day Elisha called a young preacher to him and he said, Look here, my son. There's a little horn of oil. You take it and you go down to Ramoth, Gilead, to a certain street and to a certain house.

You walk in that house and you find Jehu sitting amongst some soldiers. And you call him into a room aside and shut the door and anoint him the king of Israel and tell him what I tell you to tell him. And then you run.

The young man did what he liked and said he found the street and guided the Lord as he was. He found the house and walked in it. And there's Jehu sitting amongst some soldiers.

He said, I'd like to speak with thee, sir. Jehu ruffled and answered, To which one of us do you want to speak to thee, O captain? Jehu arose and followed the young man into a room aside. He shut the door and opened the little horn of oil and poured it upon Jehu's head and maybe patted it gently with his fingertips and said with terrific significance and solemnity, I do hereby by the word of the Lord anoint thee king of Israel.

The Lord hath said that thy business is to blot out the house that they had because the Lord hath sworn that the dogs shall eat Jezebel. And the young man opened the door and did what he liked and told him to do. He ran and Jehu went back to his soldiers and they said, Is everything all right? What did that mad

young fellow want? Jehu said, You know what he wanted.

We do not know. What did he want? Jehu the male of Elisha said, I am the king of Israel. And these soldiers arose and cried aloud, Jehu is king! And did other things that went along with such a royal announcement.

Jehu said, Come, we ride. Horses were hitched to chariots for some of them, and others startled the horses. This cavalcade started on that long drive down the valley of Israel and to Jezreel, up and down which valley I've gone a half dozen times.

And at Jezreel was Jezebel Joram her son and his uncle. The watchman on the tower saw this cavalcade coming when it got him six or seven miles of Jezreel, no doubt. He called out to Joram, Jezebel's son, and said, There's a company coming! Joram said, Send out a horseman and ask him if his mission's peace.

The horseman rode out, not knowing Jehu, not knowing it was Jehu, and let Jehu and his cavalcade in the highway, and said, Is our mission peace? Jehu said, Fall in, you and ride with my company! And he did it. The watchman on the tower called out to Joram, Jezebel's son, and said, The horseman cometh not back. He rides with the company.

Joram said, Send out another horseman and ask him if his mission's peace. The second horseman rode out, not knowing Jehu, not knowing that it was Jehu, met him in the highway and cried aloud, Is our mission peace? Jehu said, Fall in, you and ride with me! The horseman did it, and the cavalcade kept coming toward Jezreel, and the watchman on the tower called out to Joram, Jezebel's son, and said, The second horseman cometh not back. He rides with the approaching company, and the one who leads that company drives as furiously like Jehu, the son of Nehushah.

And Joram said, There is our, his uncle. Ah, we shall go meet Jehu. And the horses were hitched up to a chariot for each one of these men, and they drove out through the gate to the little town, and met Jehu right outside the gate, right near the ramparts of Jezreel.

And Joram said, Jehu, is our mission peace? Jehu, the new king, answered, How can there be peace as long as our mother lives, and our heart, and our witchcraft exists? And Joram cried out to his uncle, Treason, treason! And he pulled his horses around, and whipped them up, and whipped them up, and tried to get back inside the protective walls of Jezreel. And when he got right opposite Naboth's vineyard, Jehu had been a skillful Bowman for years, picked up a bow and arrow, and shot an arrow through his body, and Joram fell out of the chariot while the horses went on with it. When they drove up, Jehu stopped and said to Bidkar, Pick up his body and put it in the vineyard.

And Bidkar picked up the warm, bloody, but dead body of Joram, the son of Ahab and Jezebel, and put it in the vineyard they had gotten by killing Naboth. And the vineyard they got by shedding Naboth's blood is now stained with our own blood, as it fell in the veins of our son Joram. Listen! God's payday train is coming into the station, and all the powers of hell can't take out the steam or put on the brakes.

And when Jezebel knew that it was Jehu, she tied her head, painted her face, put in her earrings, put on her necklaces, and her bracelets, and her shirts, and Jehu drove in the gate. She looked out from way up there in the upstairs window of the palace, and in horrid disdain she said to Jehu, Hadst thou not peace through so his master? Jehu, looking up at this painted Bible of the nation, said, Who is on my side? Who? And he saw some eunuchs with another woman. He said, Take her and tore her down.

These men ran and put their strong men's fingers in a soft woman in the face and picked her up, tied her head and all painted face and all jewels and all silks and all, and picked out the woman down to the street, and down she came, and her body broke and burst, and some of her blood dashed on the legs of Jehu's horses, and some of them, some of it on the walls of the town, and he tore her underfoot. That is, he drove his horses and charred over her, and stopped to look at her. It seemed like a serpent in the fire in her death agonies.

And he went in to eat. While he was eating, he suddenly stopped and said to some of his soldiers, Go out there and get that cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter. And these soldiers, in obedience to the command of their new king, went out to pick up the body of Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbael, king of Tyre, to bury it.

When they got out on the streets, they were greeted by these yellow-eyed, mangy, lousy, dirty, hungry dogs with back alleys in the countryside, and they had eaten her, all except her head, her hands, and her feet. God Almighty saw to it that lousy, dirty, hungry dogs despised the feet that had walked in Baal's courts and then in Naboth's vineyard. God Almighty saw to it that lousy, dirty, hungry dogs despised the brains that conceived the prophets that took Naboth's life.

God Almighty saw to it that lousy, mangy, dirty, hungry dogs despised the hands that wrote the prophets that took Naboth's life. And these soldiers looked at these dogs, starting to have their stomachs swollen with their queen's flesh, their tongues licking some of her blood from their hair and mouths. And they looked at Jezebel's head and feet and hands, despised her, the dogs.

They went back to their new king, and they said, We went to bury her, sir. But the dogs had eaten her, all except her head, her hands, and her feet. And Jehu, the new king, said with terrific significance and solemnity, This is the word of the Lord, spoken by Elijah the Christ-Baptist, saying, Someday the dogs will eat Jezebel to the ramparts of Jezreel.

God said it, and it was done. When I see Ahab dead on the chariot rim, see Jezebel eating the dogs in the street, twenty years after God said they'd eat her, three years after God said the dogs would lick Ahab's blood. I say that the judgments of God sometimes have leaden heels and trouble their soul, but they always have iron hands and they're crushed completely.

I see them again, Ahab dead on the chariot rim, Jezebel eating the dogs, her head and feet and hands, despised the dogs. I say, O Ahab, O Jezebel, O hath thou hearkened to the commandments of God? Then hath thy peace been like a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea, and thine eternity a blessed one through the host of heaven. The only way I know for anybody in this world, any nation in this world, to escape the sinner's payday and the sinner's hell beyond it, is through Jesus Christ, who took the sinner's place on the cross, and on that cross became for sinners all that God must judge, that we through faith in him might become all that God cannot judge.

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