

**TEXT – I Kings 21:18,19**

*“The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.” (I Kings 21:23)*

**INTRO – Dr. Robert G. Lee was the pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee for thirty-two years. It is said that he developed this sermon following the suggestion of a deacon at a prayer meeting in 1919 and that he preached it at least once a year at his home church. All total, it is believed that he preached the message 1,275 times. This sermon is considered a classic.**

**I introduce to you Naboth.** Naboth was a devout Israelite who lived in the town of Jezreel in the northern kingdom. Naboth was a good man. He abhorred that which is evil. He claved to that which is good. He would not change his heavenly principles for loose expediencies. And this good man who loved God, his family and his nation, had a little vineyard which was close by the summer palace of Ahab, the king. This little vineyard was a cherished inheritance from his forefathers and all of it was dear to his heart.

**I introduce to you Ahab,** the vile human toad who squatted upon the throne of his nation — the worst of Israel’s kings. King Ahab had command of a nation’s wealth and a nation’s army, but he had no command of his lusts and appetites. Ahab wore rich robes, but he had a sinning and wicked and troubled heart beneath them. He ate the finest food the world could supply — and this food was served to him in dishes splendid by servants obedient to his every beck and nod — but he had a starved soul. Ahab was a king with a throne and a crown and a scepter, yet he lived nearly all of his life under the thumb of a wicked woman as a tool in her hands.

*But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. . . . And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him I Kings 21:25,26; 16:33.*

**I introduce to you Jezebel,** daughter of Ethbaal, King of Tyre and wife of Ahab, the King of Israel — a king’s daughter and a king’s wife. Infinitely more daring and reckless was she in her wickedness than was her wicked husband. Masterful, indomitable, implacable, a devout worshiper of Baal, she hated anyone and everyone who spoke against or refused to worship her pagan god. Most of that which is bad in all evil women found expression through this painted viper of Israel. This idolatrous daughter of an idolatrous king of an idolatrous people engaging with her maidens in worship unto

Ashtoreth. She was the beautiful and malicious adder coiled upon the throne of the nation.

**I introduce to you Elijah,** the Tishbite, prophet of God at a time when by tens of thousands the people had forsaken God’s covenants, thrown down God’s altars, slain God’s prophets with the sword **I Kings 19:10.**

He wore the roughest kind of clothes, but he had underneath these clothes a righteous and courageous heart. He ate bird’s food and widow’s fare, but he was a great physical and spiritual athlete. He was God’s tall cedar that wrestled with the paganistic cyclones of his day without bending or breaking. He was God’s granite wall that stood up and out against the rising tides of the apostasy of his day. Everywhere courage is admired and manhood honored and service appreciated, he is honored as one of earth’s greatest heroes and one of heaven’s greatest saints.

**Naboth,** the devout Jezreelite

**Ahab,** the vile human toad who squatted on the throne of Israel

**Jezebel,** the beautiful viper beside the toad

**Elijah,** the prophet of the living God

And the first scene in the tragedy of “Payday Someday” is:

**THE REAL ESTATE REQUEST**

**“Give me thy vineyard.”**

*And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money I Kings 21:1,2.*

Honestly did he offer to give him its worth in money.

Honestly did he offer him a better vineyard for it. Ahab had not, however, counted upon the reluctance of all Jews to part with their inheritance of land. So, though he was Ahab’s nearest neighbor, Naboth, refused to sell or swap his vineyard to the king. He said: *“The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee” I Kings 21:3.*

All the memories of childhood were tangled in its grapevines. The ties of sentiment, of religion and of family pride bound and endeared him to the place. So, his refusal to sell was quick, firm, final and courteous. He felt that his little plot of ground, so rich in prayer and fellowship, so sanctified with sweet and holy memories, would be tainted and befouled and cursed forever if it came into the hands of Jezebel.

**THE POUTING POTENTATE**

*“He came into his house heavy and displeased.”*



*And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread (I Kings 21:4).*

A king pouting like a spoiled child who has been denied one trinket in the midst of one thousand play-things! A king, in a chamber “*cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion*” **Jer. 22:14**

Ahab went into his ivory house, while the sun was shining and went to bed and “*turned his face to the wall*. Servants brought him his meal but he “*would eat no bread.*” Doubtless, musicians came to play skillfully on stringed instruments, but he drove them all away.

A monarch moaning and growlingly refusing to eat. Ahab had lost nothing — had gained nothing. No one had injured him.

What a likeness to him in conduct today are many talented men and women! So many there are who, like Ahab, withhold their talents from God — using them in the service of the devil. Now look at this overfed bull bellowing for a little spot of grass outside his own vast pasture lands — and, if you are withholding talents and powers from the service of God, receive the rebuke of the tragic and ludicrous picture.

And now, the third scene in this tragedy of “Payday Someday.”

**THE WICKED WIFE** “*And Jezebel his wife.*”

When Ahab would “eat no bread,” the servants went and told Jezebel. What she said to them, we do not know. Something of what she said to Ahab we do know. Puzzled and provoked at the news that her husband would not eat — that he had gone to bed when it was not bedtime — Jezebel went to investigate. She found him in bed with his face turned to the wall.

Then, in a voice of “Sweet” solicitation, she sought the reason of his anger. “*Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?*” **I Kings 21:5-6**

*Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard*

Every word he said stung like a whip upon a naked back this wickedly unscrupulous woman. With her tongue, sharp as a razor, she prods Ahab as an ox driver prods with sharp goad the ox .

“*Are you not the king of this country?*” she chides. “*Can you not command and have it done?*” “*Can you not seize and keep?*” she cries with reproach. Leave it to me! I will get the vineyard for you, and all that I require is that you ask no questions. leave it to me, Ahab!”

*And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite* **I Kings 21:7.**

Now, let us ask, who can so inspire a man to noble purposes as a noble woman? And who can so thoroughly degrade a man as a wife of unworthy tendencies? Back of the statement, “*And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him*” **I Kings 16:30**, and back of what Elijah spoke, “*Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*” **I Kings 21:20**, “*Whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.*” She was the polluted reservoir from which the streams of his own iniquity found mighty increase. She was the poisonous pocket from which his cruel fangs fed/ Yes — we ask again — who can so degrade a man as a woman of wicked tendencies and purposes?

What a tragedy when any woman thinks more of paint than purity, of vulgarity than virtue, of pearls than principles of adornment with righteous adoration, of dress than duty! What a tragedy when any woman sacrifices decency on the altar of degradation.

**A MESSAGE MEANING MURDER** “*She wrote letters.*”

Jezebel wrote letters to the elders of Jezreel. And in these letters she made definite and subtle declaration that some terrible sin had been committed in their city, for which it was needful that a fast should be proclaimed. *So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters* **I Kgs 21:8-10**

“*Set Naboth on high!*” “*On high*” meant before the bar of justice, not in the seat of honor. “*And set two men, base fellows, before him.*”

**THE FATAL FAST**

“**They proclaimed a fast.**”

And what concern they must have created in the household of Naboth, when they knew that Naboth was to be “set on high,” even in the “seat of the accused,” even before the bar of “justice,” because of a ferocious message calling religion in to attest a lie.

“*And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat down before him*” **I Kings 21:13.**

“*And the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king*” **I Kings 21:13** They dragged him roughly to a place outside the walls of the city and with stones they beat his body to the ground.

Naboth fell to the ground as a lily by hailstones beaten to earth, as a stately cedar uprooted by furious storm. His head by stones is crushed, as eggs crushed by the heel of a giant. His legs are splintered! His arms are broken! And we learn from II Kings 9:26, that by the savage law of those days his innocent sons were involved in his overthrow. They, too, that they might not claim the inheritance, were slain. And Naboth’s property, left without heirs, reverted to the crown.



To the nation which forgets God, payday will come in the awful realization of the truth that the “*nations which forget God shall be turned into hell.*”

- *Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them (Prov. 1:31,32).*
- *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same (Job 4:8).*
- *For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind Hos. 8:7*

*“This, sir, is the Chief of the Kangaroo Court.”*

*I found myself looking into two of the wildest, weirdest eyes I have ever seen. I sent for you because I know you go up and down the land and talk to many young people. And I want you to tell 'em, and tell 'em every chance you get, that the Devil pays only in counterfeit money.”*

Three years went by. Ahab was still king.

One day Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, visited Ahab. The Bible tells us what took place — what was said, what was done:

*And the king of Israel said unto his servants, . . . Gilead I Kings 22:3,4.*

Ahab, after Jehoshaphat had promised to go with him, in his heart was afraid. Remembering the words of Elijah three years before, he disguised himself — put armor on his body and covered this armor with ordinary citizen’s clothes.

*And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle I Kings 22:30.*

The Syrian general had given orders to slay only the king of Israel — Ahab. *But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel I Kings 22:31.*

Jehoshaphat was not injured, although he wore his royal clothes.

*And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, I Kings 22:32,33.*

A death-carrying arrow, shot by an aimless and nameless archer, found the crack in Ahab’s armor.

*And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel I Kings 22:34, 35, 38*

Thus we learn that no man can evade God’s laws with impunity. But what about Jezebel? Did her payday come? Yes — after twenty years. After Ahab’s death, after the dogs had licked his blood, she virtually ruled the kingdom. Elijah had been taken home to heaven without the touch of the death dew upon his brow. Elisha had succeeded him.

*And Elisha the prophet called, II Kings 9:1- 7,9,10*

*Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: . . . II Kings 9:11-13.*

Mounting his chariot, furiously did he drive nearly sixty miles to Jezreel.

*So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; . . . II Kings 9:16-26.*

*“And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.”*

And as Jehu, the new king by the will and word of the lord, entered in at the gate, she asked: *“Had Zimri peace who slew his master?”* And Jehu said, *“Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down” II Kings 9:30-33*

These men threw her down. Her body hit the street and burst open. Some of her blood splattered on the legs of Jehu’s horses, dishonoring them. Some of her blood splattered on the walls of the city, disgracing them.

And Jehu drove his horses and chariot over her. There she lies, twisting in death agony in the street. Her body is crushed by the chariot wheels. On her white bosom are the black crescent-shapes of horses’ hoofs. Jehu drove away and left her there. *And when he was come in he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king’s daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands II Kings 9:34, 35.*

God Almighty saw to it that the hungry dogs despised the brains that conceived the plot that took Naboth’s life. God Almighty saw to it that the mangy lean dogs of the back alleys despised the hands that wrote the plot that took Naboth’s life. God Almighty saw to it that the dogs which ate her body despised the feet that walked in Baal’s courts and then in Naboth’s vineyard. These soldiers of Jehu went back to Jehu and said: *“We went to bury her, O king, but the dogs had eaten her!”*

And Jehu replied:

*This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel. And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel II Kings 9:36, 37 “Payday Someday!”* God said it — and it was done! Yes, and from this we learn the power and certainty of God in carrying out His own retributive

providence, that men might know that His justice slumbereth not. Even though the mill of God grinds slowly, it grinds to powder.

The judgments of God often have leaden heels and travel slowly. But they always have iron hands and crush completely.

*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” (Isa. 55:2).*

And the only way I know for any man or woman to escape the sinner’s payday—is through Christ Jesus,

**CONCL -**



“Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead” (I Kings 21:14). I do not know where Jezebel was when she received the news of Naboth’s death. In her words and manner there was jubilant elation bordering on the satanic. “Arise!” she said. “Get thee down and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth. I told thee I would get his vineyard for thee. And I got for nothing what thou wast going to give a better vineyard for!” And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead I Kings 21:15.

It was the plot hatched in her own mind and it was her lily-white hand that wrote the letters that made this tragic statement true. The next scene is:

### THE VISIT TO THE VINEYARD

“Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard.”

How Jezebel must have paraded with pride before Ahab when she went with tidings that the vineyard which he wanted to buy was now his for nothing! “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it” I Kings 21:16. Ahab rose up to go down to Jezreel Naboth, the good man who “feared the lord,” is dead; and Ahab expresses no condemnation of this awful conspiracy. Jehu made ready the great horses such as kings had in those days. Jehu was the speed-breaking driver, known as the one who drove furiously. — Jehu drives the horses and the chariot up to the palace steps. Then, with the crack of his whip or a sharp command by word of mouth, Jehu sends the great horses on their way 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? Well, wait a minute, and we shall see.

Over there in the palace Jezebel said to Ahab her husband:

“Arise! Get thee down and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth.” God had an eagle-eyed, hairy, stout-hearted prophet, a great physical and spiritual athlete, Elijah. “And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah.” And God said to Elijah: “Arise, go down.”

Over here, in the palace, Jezebel said to Ahab: “Arise, get thee down!” And out there, near Carmel, God said to Elijah: “Arise!” I am so glad that I live in a universe where, when the Devil has his Ahab to whom he can say, “Arise,” God has His Elijah to whom He can say, “Arise!”

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken

possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine I Kings 21:17-19

Would Ahab learn that sin buys pleasure at the price of peace? And that brings us to the other scene in his tragedy of “Payday Someday.”

### THE ALARMING APPEARANCE

“The word of the Lord came to Elijah.”

The journey of twenty-odd miles from Samaria to Jezreel is over. Jehu brings the horses to a stop outside the gate to the vineyard.

And while Ahab strolls among the vines that Naboth tended, what is it that appears? Suddenly a shadow falls across his path. Quick as a flash Ahab whirls on his heels, and there, before him, stands Elijah, prophet of the living God. His only weapon is a staff: his only robe a sheepskin, and a leather girdle about his loins. Elijah, with suddenness terrifying, stands before Ahab. Ahab had not seen Elijah for five years. Ahab thought Elijah had been silenced by Jezebel, but now the prophet confronts him with his death warrant from the Lord God Almighty and there he is face to face with righteousness, face to face with honor, face to face with judgment.

“And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” (I Kings 21:20) and Elijah, answered: “I have found thee: because thou has sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.” Elijah continued: Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? . . . Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine . . . Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity . . . And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin! I Kings 21:19, 21,22 Elijah said: And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat: and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat I Kings 21:23,24.

And when Ahab got back in the chariot to go back to Jezebel—the hoofs of the horses pounding the road pounded into his guilty soul Elijah’s words: “Someday — the dogs will lick thy blood! Someday the dogs will eat Jezebel by the ramparts of Jezreel.” God had spoken!

And now we come to the last scene in this tragedy

### PAYDAY ITSELF

Did God mean what He said?

And to Ahab and Jezebel, payday came as certainly as night follows day, because sin carries in itself the seed of its own fatal penalty.