

## *Devotional—day 7*

### *"Learn Your Lessons Well"*

I can see a swath of sinners settin' yonder  
and they're actin' like a pack of fools  
Gazing into space, they let their minds wander,  
'stead of studying the good Lord's rules.  
Hey! You better pay attention,  
build your comprehension,  
there's gonna be a quiz at your ascension.  
Not to mention any threat of hell,  
But if you're smart, you'll learn your lessons well.

Every bright description of the promised land -  
Meant, You can reach it if you keep alert.  
Learning every line, and every last commandment  
May not help you, but it couldn't hurt.  
First you gotta read 'em,  
then you gotta heed 'em.  
You never know when you're gonna need 'em.  
Just as old Elijah said to Jezebel—You better start—to learn your lessons well.

- *Stephen Schwartz*

### *Behind the Music....*

Schwartz wrote "Learn Your Lessons Well" after rehearsals began. There was a big stretch of the show without a song. He recalls, "There was just a place where I said, 'You know John-Michael, we can't go this long.' It was based on a feeling. So much of writing for the theatre is just instinct. It's not always an incredibly conscious decision. The lyric ideas came out of what was happening in the scene. The players are enacting the parable of Lazarus. Gilmer says, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they ain't going to listen to anybody.' And that was where she had to sing, so it was about -- you should learn your lessons. It was pretty clearly indicated by the foregoing material." (from an interview with Schwartz.)

# *Introducing Jezebel....*

## **1 King 21:17-29** (The Message)

**17** Then GOD stepped in and spoke to Elijah the Tishbite, **18** "On your feet; go down and confront Ahab of Samaria, king of Israel. You'll find him in the vineyard of Naboth; he's gone there to claim it as his own. **19** Say this to him: "'GOD's word: What's going on here? First murder, then theft?' Then tell him, 'GOD's verdict: The very spot where the dogs lapped up Naboth's blood, they'll lap up your blood--that's right, your blood.'"

**20** Ahab answered Elijah, "My enemy! So, you've run me down!"

"Yes, I've found you out," said Elijah. "And because you've bought into the business of evil, defying GOD. **21** "I will most certainly bring doom upon you, make mincemeat of your descendants, kill off every sorry male wretch who's even remotely connected with the name Ahab. **22** And I'll bring down on you the same fate that fell on Jeroboam son of Nebat and Baasha son of Ahijah--you've made me that angry by making Israel sin."

**23** As for Jezebel, GOD said, "Dogs will fight over the flesh of Jezebel all over Jezreel. **24** Anyone tainted by Ahab who dies in the city will be eaten by stray dogs; corpses in the country will be eaten by carrion crows."

**25** Ahab, pushed by his wife Jezebel and in open defiance of GOD, set an all-time record in making big business of evil. **26** He indulged in outrageous obscenities in the world of idols, copying the Amorites whom GOD had earlier kicked out of Israelite territory.

**27** When Ahab heard what Elijah had to say, he ripped his clothes to shreds, dressed in penitential rough burlap, and fasted. He even slept in coarse burlap pajamas. He tiptoed around, quiet as a mouse.

**28** Then GOD spoke to Elijah the Tishbite: **29** "Do you see how penitently submissive Ahab has become to me? Because of his repentance I'll not bring the doom during his lifetime; Ahab's son, though, will get it."

## **2 King 9:30-36** (The Message)

**30** When Jezebel heard that Jehu had arrived in Jezreel, she made herself up--put on eyeshadow and arranged her hair--and posed seductively at the window. **31** When Jehu came through the city gate, she called down, "So, how are things, Zimri, you dashing king-killer?"

**32** Jehu looked up at the window and called, "Is there anybody up there on my side?" Two or three palace eunuchs looked out.

**33** He ordered, "Throw her down!" They threw her out the window. Her blood splattered the wall and the horses, and Jehu trampled her under his horse's hooves.

**34** Then Jehu went inside and ate his lunch. During lunch he gave orders, "Take care of that damned woman; give her a decent burial--she is, after all, a king's daughter."

**35** They went out to bury her, but there was nothing left of her but skull, feet, and hands. **36** They came back and told Jehu. He said, "It's GOD's word, the word spoken by Elijah the Tishbite:

In the field of Jezreel, dogs will eat Jezebel; **37** and the corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, 'This is Jezebel.'"

## *Learning Your Lessons.....*

**Psalms 119:30** (The Message)

**30** I have chosen to be faithful;

**I have determined to live by your laws**

**Psalms 119:165** (NAS)

**165** Those who love Your law have great peace,

And nothing causes them to stumble.

**Proverbs 1:5** (The Message)

**5** A wise man will hear and increase in learning,

And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.

**Jeremiah 31:33** (The Message)

**33** "This is the brand-new covenant that I will make with Israel when the time comes. **I will put my law within them - write it on their hearts!** - and be their God. And they will be my people."

**Matthew 5:17-19** (The Message)

**17** "Don't suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures - either God's Law or the Prophets. I'm not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. **18** God's Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working. **19** "Trivialize even the smallest item in God's Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom."

**James 2:8-20** (The Message)

**8** You do well when you complete the Royal Rule of the Scriptures: "Love others as you love yourself." **9** But if you play up to these so-called important people, you go against the Rule and stand convicted by it. **10** You can't pick and choose in these things, specializing in keeping one or two things in God's law and ignoring others. **11** The same God who said, "Don't commit adultery," also said, "Don't murder." If you don't commit adultery but go ahead and murder, do you think your non-adultery will cancel out your murder? No, you're a murderer, period. **12** **Talk and act like a person expecting to be judged by the Rule that sets us free.** **13** For if you refuse to act kindly, you can hardly expect to be treated kindly. Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time.

**14** Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? **15** For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved **16** and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup - where does that get you? **17** **Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?** **18** I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, "Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I'll handle the works department." Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. **Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.** **19** Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That's just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them? **20** Use your heads! Do you suppose for a minute that you can cut faith and works in two and not end up with a corpse on your hands?

## *Time for personal reflection (Day 7):*

Though Elijah never really directly warned Jezebel, he did warn her husband Ahab of the doom that would result from the actions they had chosen. In 1 Kings 21:20-27 Elijah calls Ahab out for his part in those actions. If Elijah were to visit me today, what personal actions would he call me on? Would I respond to his warning with repentance like Ahab or would I continue to ignore him like Jezebel?

In Psalms 119:30 David writes "I have determined to live by your laws," have I truly made this commitment in my life or am I still skirting around this issue? In what ways could I be allowing myself to stumble by not committing to God's laws?

"Trivialize even the smallest item in God's Law and you will only have trivialized yourself." What laws could I be trivializing as "out-of-date" and "old-fashioned"? By ignoring or paying less attention to those laws, how could I be "trivializing" myself?

Do I talk and act like a person expecting to be "quizzed at my ascension" (i.e. "judged by the Rule that sets me free")? What do I need to do on a daily basis to be prepared for the "quiz"?

"First you gotta read 'em, then you gotta heed 'em." - "Faith and works, works and faith...." Am I trying to live my life with one of these (faith or works) and not the other? Which do I tend to rely on more, faith or works, and how can I keep them balanced?