



JEZEBEL: THE QUEEN OF EVIL

INTRODUCTION

The story of Jezebel's life effectively illustrates the utter ruin that comes from the pursuit of evil. Born into a family whose father was an idolatrous king, Jezebel was a princess completely corrupted with the vile works of his religion. Her husband Ahab . . . *did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him* (I Kings 16:33). Every mention of her name centers upon an evil deed or murderous plot. A ruthless killer, Jezebel truly was the Queen of Evil. She earned the title of the most notorious and despicable woman ever written about in the Bible.

Many life lessons we learn are through negative examples. As we study Jezebel's life, she portrays an example of what not to do, how not to behave, and whom we are not to worship. She was exceedingly competent, highly gifted, and a powerful person, but extremely wicked.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him (I Kings 18:21).

Names Given to Jezebel

Jezebel Daughter of King Ethbaal Queen of Israel	. . . <i>he</i> [King Ahab] <i>took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians . . .</i> (I Kings 16:31). She married Ahab, king of Northern Israel. The original spelling of her name was <i>Izebel</i> which means – chaste free from carnal connection in Hebrew. Her Phoenician name is <i>Abizebel</i> which means - my father Baal is noble. Jezebel has come to mean – licentious, shameless,immoral, wicked.
Priestess	<i>gather to me</i> [Elijah] . . . <i>the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty . . . which eat at Jezebel's table</i> (I Kings 18:19). Priestess of Baal. Jezebel supported a vast number of priests of Baal and other heathen deities.
Cursed woman King's daughter Princess	<i>Go, see now this cursed woman . . . for she is a king's daughter</i> (II Kings 9:34). A pagan princess, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. <i>Cursed</i> means – to loath, to be hateful and wicked; to call down evil upon, denounce violently and to detest; bitterly curse.

SECTION I – Jezebel and Ahab's Evil Practices

Asa was king of Judah for 31 years when Omri became king over Israel. Omri reigned twelve years: six years in Tirzah¹. He then bought a hill from Shemer for two talents of silver. He built a city on the hill, and called it Samaria, naming it after Shemer, the previous owner. Omri not only did evil in the eyes of the LORD, his behavior was worse than all the kings who were before him. He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam², the son of Nebat. He continued in idol worship and caused Israel to sin, thus provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger (I Kings 16:15-26).

READ I Kings 16:23-34.

1. After the death of King Omri, who became the king of Israel, how long did he reign (v. 29)? _____

2. What statements were made about him and his reign (vv. 30, 31)? _____

The Zidonians were Baal worshippers. Baal was considered a god of nature and fertility. A crude and inhuman religion, Baal worship was known for its child-sacrifices. They also participated in animal sacrifices, ritualistic meals, and licentious³ dances leading to sexual orgies. Ahab did not walk in the ways of the Lord, and his marriage to Jezebel drove him toward greater evil.

¹ Tirzah: beautiful city of Canaan captured by Joshua; residence of the Kings of Israel.

² Jeroboam: king of Israel, who did evil by making two golden calves for the people to worship. This stopped the people from going to Jerusalem to worship God as the Lord had commanded (I Kings 12:21-33).

³ licentious: unbridled lust.

3. WRITE out all that Ahab did (vv. 32, 33a). _____

_____ 4

LOOK DEEPER

READ Exodus 20:1-6.

WRITE out the first two commandments that God gave to mankind through His servant Moses (vv. 3-5a).

Why is man to have no other God (v. 5b)? _____

How does God bless those who love Him and obey His commands (v. 6)? _____

PERSONAL

EXAMINE your life for areas of evil influences. What is your influence on others? How are you disobeying God's Word? ASK God to help you to repent and to obey His Word.

⁴ grove: an Asherah pole; a wooden symbol of a female deity; the Canaanite goddess of fertility, her worship involved sexual excesses intended to stimulate rain and quicken the ability for animals and people to reproduce; the goddess is associated with sacred trees or groves of trees - *asherot*: in the Bible Asherah has come to mean "sacred grove."

SECTION 2 – Elijah: A Man of God

God used the prophet⁵ Elijah⁶ who seemed to appear from nowhere. He played a vital part in delivering judgment to a king and queen, who not only provoked God to anger by worshiping Baal, but caused the people to sin as well. In I Kings 17:1, Elijah prophesized against Ahab . . . *As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to My Word.* There was a twofold challenge in this message: first, he proclaimed his authority was from the living God of Israel, and secondly, he directly challenged the authority of their god Baal, the Phoenician storm god, whom they believed to be responsible for causing rain.

READ I Kings 17:1-24.

1. In the midst of this drought, notice the Lord’s provision for Elijah. Briefly SUMMARIZE each.

By the Brook Cherith (vv. 2-7): _____

In the home of the widow of Zarephath (vv. 8-16): _____

For the widow’s son (vv. 17-23): _____

2. What did the woman conclude about Elijah (v. 24)? _____

⁵ prophet: one who is divinely inspired to communicate God’s will to His people and disclose the future to them.

⁶ Elijah - Hebrew *My God is Jehovah*.

PERSONAL

Throughout this chapter, we see Elijah, a prophet who followed and obeyed the Living God. Who or what are you following and obeying above all else?

Do you consider yourself to be a woman of God who speaks according to the Word of the LORD? How do you pursue the truth?

SECTION 3 – The Stand-off: Elijah Versus the Prophets of Baal

The Word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year of the famine and sent him to meet with King Ahab. God would send rain and end the famine. The wicked Jezebel erupted into violence, as she massacred the prophets who worshipped the One and True God.

READ I Kings Chapter 18.

1. King Ahab called Obadiah,⁷ who was he (vv. 3, 4)? _____

What did he do when Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD? _____

2. What did Ahab ask Obadiah to do (vv. 5, 6)? _____

What did Obadiah do? _____

3. Obadiah met Elijah. How did he revere the prophet of the LORD (v. 7)? _____

⁷ Obadiah – Hebrew *Ohbahdieah* servant of the LORD.

4. SUMMARIZE the encounter between the two men of God (vv. 8-16)? _____

5. How did Ahab address Elijah (vv. 17, 18)? _____ ⁸

How had Ahab troubled Israel? _____

6. Who and how many were the prophets, who ate at Jezebel's table, that Elijah summoned to Mt. Carmel (v. 19)?

7. SUMMARIZE what happened as Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal (vv. 20-40). _____

READ I Kings Chapter 19.

8. What was Jezebel's response to the execution of the prophets of Baal (I Kings 19:1, 2)? _____

9. Elijah had shown great faith in God as He challenged the gods of Baal at Mount Carmel. What did he do when Jezebel threatened him (vv. 3, 4)?

⁸ troubleth: to disturb, afflict, stir.

10. How did God reveal Himself to Elijah?

vv. 5-8 _____

vv. 9, 10 _____

vv. 11-14 _____

vv. 15-18 _____

God revealed to Elijah how He was in control, by speaking to him in a still, small voice. His protection was upon Elijah as He continued to guide and direct him in everything. In I Kings 19:16, God instructed Elijah to anoint Jehu as the new king of Israel and choose a prophet to succeed him (I Kings 19:19-21). God used Jehu, the anointed king, to bring about the death of Jezebel.

SECTION 4 – Jezebel: The Murderer

Jezebel's obsession with evil had no limits. She continued to exhibit contempt for God's laws. In depraved ruthlessness, she murdered in order to attain whatever she or her husband Ahab wanted.

READ I Kings 21:1-16.

1. Who was Naboth the Jezreelite and what did he own (v. 1)? _____

2. What request and offer did Ahab make of Naboth (v. 2)? _____

3. What was Naboth's response to Ahab (v. 3)? _____

In Numbers 36:7, the law for the distribution of land was very clear; it was not to be transferred from tribe to tribe. Knowing he could not have the property because of the law, Ahab therefore went to his house heavy⁹ (v. 4).

4. What did Jezebel say to him about this situation (vv. 5-7)? _____

5. Briefly SUMMARIZE Jezebel's evil plan to get Naboth's vineyard for her husband, Ahab (vv. 8-15).

6. What did Ahab do (v. 16)? _____

PERSONAL

Jezebel took matters into her own hands when Ahab did not get what she thought he should have. Have you ever taken a situation into your own hands that was not going your way? What were the results?

SECTION 5 – God's Vengeance

When Ahab went into the vineyard of Naboth to take possession of it, God sent Elijah to deliver a message to him.

READ I Kings 21:17-29.

1. How did the LORD condemn Ahab (vv. 17-20)? _____

2. How did the LORD condemn his posterity (vv. 21, 22)? _____

⁹ heavy: sullen, peevish, sad.

3. What prophecy is given concerning Jezebel's death (v. 23)? _____

4. Whom else would the dogs eat (v. 24)? _____

5. To what was Ahab's wicked behavior attributed (vv. 25, 26)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

What do the following Scriptures say about a wife's influence towards her husband?

Genesis 2:18 _____

Proverbs 31:11, 12, 26-28, 30, 31 _____

As was prophesied in I Kings 19:16, 17, Jehu became king over Israel after Ahab.

READ II Kings 9:30-37.

6. How did Jezebel react when she heard Jehu had come to Jezreel (v. 30)? _____

Some commentators believe that Jezebel was well aware of her impending death. As Jehu entered the city, Jezebel, in shameless arrogance, determined to display her position as queen, took the time to paint her face and adorn her head. Even in her last hours, she showed no fear of man or God. The death of Jezebel was perhaps one of the most gruesome ever recorded in the Bible.

7. How did Jezebel die (vv. 31-33)? _____

8. As wicked as she was, what did Jehu tell them to do for her and why (v. 34)? _____

9. What did they find and what was the significance of their find (vv. 35-37)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven actions that are an abomination to God. Jezebel demonstrated each of these character traits throughout her life. REREAD the passage carefully and give an example of each trait from Jezebel's account.

v. 17 *a proud look* _____

v. 17 *a lying tongue* _____

v. 17 *hands that shed innocent blood* _____

v. 18 *a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations* _____

v. 18 *feet that be swift in running to mischief* _____

v. 19 *a false witness that speaketh lies* _____

v. 19 *he that soweth discord among brethren* _____

MEMORY VERSE

_____ (I Kings 18:21).

Jezebel was a wicked woman. She manipulated herself into a powerful position, taking authority over the King of Israel and the prophets of Baal. Her ultimate scheme was to take control of God's people, His prophets, and God Himself; only those who fear the LORD¹⁰ can stand up against such a wicked treacherous woman.

¹⁰ the fear of the LORD: to stand in awe of God; to hate evil (Psalms 33:8, Proverbs 8:13).

NOTES: _____

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