

Jezebel Stirred Him Up

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: 1Kings 21:17-26

A. Background - Jezebel - 'dʒɛzəbəl; Hebrew: זֵבֶל; Modern - Izével

1. 9th century B.C. princess, identified in the Book of First Kings as the daughter of Ethbaal, King of Tyre (A Sidonian of Phoenicia) and the wife of Ahab, king of northern Israel.
2. The marriage of King Ahab to the daughter of the ruler of the Phoenician empire was a sign of the power and prestige of Ahab and the northern Kingdom of Israel. It was considered a brilliant stroke of international diplomacy.
 - a. What is politically expedient can often be morally destructive.
3. Her father's name, Ethbaal, means "living under Baal's favor" He was originally the high priest of Ashtarte who took the throne by force from his Phoenician predecessor.
4. Her name is a question: "Where is the Prince?" a ritual cry from worship ceremonies in honor of Baal during periods when the god was considered to be in the underworld.
5. Jezebel incited her husband Ahab to abandon the worship of Jehovah and encouraged worship of Baal and Ashtarte instead.
6. She dallied with false prophets, dressing in provocative clothing and putting on makeup.
7. She persecuted the prophets of God - 1Kings 18:4
8. She fabricated false evidence of blasphemy against an innocent landowner who refused to sell his property to Ahab, causing the landowner to be put to death - 1King 21:1-16
9. For these and other transgressions against God and the people of Israel, Jezebel met a gruesome death. 2Kings 9 states that the prophet Elisha, Elijah's successor, anointed Jehu, commander of Joram's army, as king, in order that he might destroy Ahab's descendants as a punishment for the way Jezebel had treated God's prophets and his people. According to the scripture, when Jehu confronted Joram in order to kill him, Jehu told him there could be no peace in Israel while his mother Jezebel's prostitution, idolatry, and witchcraft continued. Jehu next went to the royal palace at Jezreel. Knowing he was coming, Jezebel painted her face and attired her head and posed at a window. Jehu ordered her servants to throw her from the window to her death; his horses, and trampled upon her. He entered the palace where he ate a meal, and then ordered her body buried, but they only found her hands, feet and skull; the dogs had eaten her, just as Elijah had prophesied.
10. In the New Testament, the name Jezebel came to be associated with false prophets, false doctrine, promiscuity, and seducing others into sin, a byword for an utterly wicked woman - Rev. 2:20-23

I. A FORBIDDEN MARRIAGE

- A. Jezebel brought her religion to her marriage. And why not... she was a preacher's kid; her father preached for Baal.

1. Ahab acceded to her wishes and promoted her religion in Israel.
2. It is to be noted that Ahab was of the Omride family line, which was the most wicked dynasty to ever rule Israel
- B. God warned Israel about this problem - Deut. 7:3-4
 1. Solomon succumbed to this problem - 1Kings 11:1-2
- C. Ahab and Jezebel made life difficult for those who wanted to follow Jehovah.
 1. In every decision we make in life, whether what career to pursue, where we will live, where we will worship, who we will marry, we must ask ourselves honestly and earnestly: will this help or hinder my relationship with God? - Matt. 6:33
 2. Ahab's choice of a spouse had profound consequences in his life and the lives of his children, subjects, and succeeding generations for many years to come - 1Kings 21:25
 3. The person we marry will have a position of great influence over our lives. They will have input on matters related to money, schedule, children, activities, and especially worship - 1Peter 3:7

II. A SANCTIONED PERSECUTION

- A. 1Kings 18:3-4,7-16 - Jezebel worked systematically to destroy God's prophets.
 1. She sought the life of Elijah - 1Kings 19:1-2
 2. She gave safe haven to the priests and priestesses of Baal and Ashtarte, 850 total - 1Kings 18:19
 3. Just because evil occurs with official approval, does not make it right, nor will those who do evil and the leaders who approve it escape the justice of God.
- B. The Lord's response - Matt. 5:11-12; Luke 6:22; 1Peter 4:14
 1. Wherever there are competing religious ideologies, God's people will more often than not be the ones who are oppressed.

III. A LEGALIZED COVETOUSNESS

- A. Jezebel played a leading role in dishonorably acquiring Naboth's vineyard.
 1. 1Kings 21 - Naboth wouldn't sell to Ahab because the vineyard was his inheritance. But this didn't stop Jezebel. She sent letters to the city leaders urging them to frame Naboth for blasphemy and stone him.
 2. Jezebel and Ahab committed conspiracy, told lies, pressed others into sin, and committed murder, all in the name of covetousness.
 3. When we allow desire for this world's possessions to take control of our lives, there is no end to the evil that we would be willing to do.
- B. Covetousness is a vile sin that brethren often overlook or diminish.
 1. It was part of the law given to Noah and the Patriarchs.
 2. It was part of the Law of Moses - Ex. 20:17
 3. It is one of the reasons given to withdraw fellowship - 1Cor. 5:10
 4. Paul says it is simply another form of idolatry - Col. 3:5
 5. Covetousness is evidence of a lack of trust in God - Heb. 13:5

IV. A JUST REWARD

- A. Jezebel's end was terrible to say the least. Regardless of what we may think of it, the manner of her death makes a statement: sin is offensive to God, and He will reward it accordingly - Gal. 6:7-8
 - 1. Imagine living in such a way that no one will ever be able to say anything good about you.
 - 2. "Well, he was a good whistler."
- B. Let us live in such a way that demonstrates that we are aware of our influence on others, in such a way that God will not find us worthy of such an end, in such a way that when we pass, others will find something worthy to say.