



The Spirit of Jezebel

Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." (1 Kings 18:19, NIV)

My wife gave me a birthday card a few years back. On the front cover was a picture of a lion seated on a throne. The card read, *Happy Birthday to the King!* When the card was opened a lioness popped out from behind the throne and the inside of the card read; *From the power behind the throne.*

The very best humor always has a genuine element of truth in it, and I got a good laugh out of that card. But the power behind the throne in Israel during the days of Elijah was no laughing matter.

The spirit of Queen Jezebel permeates every part of this story. She lurks in the shadows, but her evil presence is powerfully felt.

For example, in 1 Kings chapter eighteen, when Elijah challenges King Ahab to summon the prophets of Baal and Asherah to Mount Carmel for a fiery showdown, he refers to them as eating at Jezebel's table.

There is a lot that could be said about the meaning of this statement. Likely it implies more than Jezebel's financial support, hinting not so subtly at her personal involvement in the sexual rites which were a vital part of the worship of this pagan god.

But what I want you to see is how Elijah's words reveal Jezebel as the power behind the throne. Earlier in this same chapter we learned that Jezebel was responsible for murdering the prophets of God. Ahab may be king, but Jezebel was calling the shots in Israel.

For me, Jezebel represents Evil Incarnate. She is larger than life. Clearly her devotion and worship of Baal, who later became known as Baal-Zebub or Satan opened her up to dark and powerful forces.

Interestingly enough, Jezebel makes an appearance in the book of Revelation. Jesus warns the church in Thyatira not to "tolerate that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophet." He goes on to say that she leads God's people "into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols." (Revelation 2:20, NIV)

Of course the Jezebel spoken of in Revelation is not the wicked queen who would later be cast from her balcony and eaten by dogs on the streets of Samaria. But I think it is safe to say that God, using the apocalyptic imagery of revelation is warning, not against a literal person, but rather that spirit of teaching and prophecy that leads his people astray.

Some have seen the spirit of Jezebel at work in the story of John the Baptist and his beheading at the request of Herodias' daughter. Considering that Jesus referred to John the Baptist as coming in the spirit of and power of Elijah, it isn't hard to find some uncanny parallels between Jezebel in Kings and Herodias in the gospel accounts.

Just as Jezebel sought to kill the prophets of God and Elijah, so Herodias sought the death of John the Baptist. After her daughter's sensual dance before Herod, her step-father, we read that Herod was "pleased" and offered her anything she wanted up to half the kingdom. When she sought her mother's advice, Herodias without hesitation told her to demand John's head on a silver platter. The connection between sexual immorality and murdered prophets is hard to miss here.

What does all this mean for us today? If you google "Jezebel spirit" or some similar search, you will find a great deal posted concerning the pervasive spirit of sexual immorality found in today's church. You will also discover a great deal about Satan's attempts to silence the proclamation of God's living word to His people.

I am not endorsing everything said on the internet regarding this spirit of Jezebel, but I will tell you that we are experiencing many of these things in the church today.

I also want to make it clear that Satan believes neither in religious tolerance nor political correctness. It's his way or the highway. He is the thief and murderer who steals, kills, and destroys God's people. He is the serpent who leads us astray from God and His purposes in our lives.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8, NIV)

Think About It

1. Like Jezebel, Satan often lurks in the shadows, but exercises considerable influence for those who are ignorant or passively ignore his existence. Ask God to help you discern where the enemy of His people is at work in your life, family, and church. Commit to pray against his evil plans.
2. Sexual immorality is rampant in today's church. Josh McDowell's "Just One Click Away" is a You Tube video worth watching. What are some areas in your life that you need to be especially vigilant concerning sexual sin?