

How to Defeat the Insidious Spirit of Jezebel

Jezebel was a Phoenician princess who married Ahab, king of Israel. Her father was Ethbaal, king and high priest of the Sidonians. Queen Jezebel introduced Baal worship into Israel. By acquiescing to her idolatry, King Ahab broke the first two commandments:

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.” —Exodus 20:3–5

Baal worship gives us clues as to the workings of Jezebel. The name Baal means “lord” or “possessor.” According to the *Dake Annotated Reference Bible*, Baal was the sun-god of Phoenicia, and the supreme deity among the Canaanites and various other pagan nations. His full title is Baal-Shemaim, which means “lord of heaven.” In Greek mythology, Baal is the equivalent of Zeus.

The Canaanites, who were Baal worshipers, participated in sex worship, fertility rites, religious prostitution and human sacrifice—all to pacify the gods. Fast-forward 54 chapters in the Bible and you find the false prophetess Jezebel who teaches and seduces God’s servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Can you see the stage being set for idolatry and sexual immorality in Jezebel’s world? Where Jezebel is pulling the strings, you will find idolatry and sexual immorality behind the curtain.

Just how sinister is the Jezebel spirit? *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* says,

Jezebel has stamped her name on history as the representative of all that is designing, crafty, malicious, revengeful and cruel. She is the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of God. Guided by no principle, restrained by no fear of either God or man, passionate in her attachment to her heathen worship, she spared no pains to maintain idolatry around her in all its splendor.

Matthew Henry's Commentary calls Jezebel a "zealous idolater, extremely imperious and malicious in her natural temper, addicted to witchcrafts and whoredoms, and every way vicious."

Clearly, the spirit of Jezebel is interested in more than control and manipulation. We have to discern the deeper motive of this spirit if we ever hope to resist the temptations that will lead to the great falling away that Paul writes about in 2 Thess. 2:3. Jude urges us to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to us, because "certain men have crept in unnoticed ... ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

The spirit of Jezebel is already running rampant in the world. Unfortunately, Jezebel is also running loose in the church and manifests in many local congregations without anyone ever seeing it—or confronting it.

If Jezebel is not a spirit of control and manipulation, what, then, does Jezebel look like? It looks just the way many books describe—on the surface. This is why so many are deceived. Jezebel is not merely a woman (or a man) with an overbearing personality or immature character. Jezebel's influence runs much deeper than a desire to make someone a mouthpiece or puppet, or control the worship song list, or intimidate people from joining the inner circle in order to guard the leadership positions of those it controls.

Let's be real. Some of those bossy, controlling people just

need to read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, and they would be fine. In other words, some saints just need good old-fashioned people skills.

So, think again: What does Jezebel look like in the church? Male or female, a Jezebelite—meaning a person who is influenced or dominated by this spirit—is a subtle seducer. And the key word is subtle. If Jezebel were obvious, no one would be fooled. A Jezebelite usually has a charismatic personality that draws people to other gods and away from Christ. Sometimes she succeeds in this idolatry by exalting pastors—puffing them up, putting them on a pedestal, giving them the honor God should have. She also does this by luring people to the things of the world and by introducing doctrines and principles that sound godly but come from the world's system.

Likewise, a Jezebelite is quick to encourage sin. A woman confides in her, for instance, that she is having sex out of wedlock. The Jezebelite will assure the woman that it is OK if she is in love, easing the guilt and glossing over any godly conviction the woman might feel.

Please hear me: If we look only for control and manipulation, we will wrongly accuse people of “flowing in a Jezebel spirit,” while the principality wreaks havoc in the lives of people in the church.

There have been strong lines drawn between God's prophets and Jezebel. Remember, it was the wicked Queen Jezebel who is credited with killing the Lord's prophets. Obadiah risked his life by hiding a hundred prophets in two caves and feeding them bread and water, while Jezebel's own prophets sat at a table overflowing with rich food and wine (see 1 Kings 18:4, 19). From this contrast we see there are carnal rewards for cooperating with Jezebel in this lifetime, and there are eternal rewards for refusing to tolerate that spirit.

By the same token, God will not wait until eternity to pour out judgments on those who refuse to repent of flowing in a Jezebel spirit. Nor will those who refuse to tolerate that spirit go unrewarded in this lifetime. I can tell you this from experience. If you refuse to bow down to Jezebel—no matter what it costs you—God will repay you, at least in part, even now.

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