

## **The Bad Girls of the Bible**

### **Jezebel: The Queen That Influenced A Nation**

(Part 4)

**Intro:** Who do you think is the most despised woman in modern history? According to LIFE magazine in 1964; it was Madalyn Murray O'Hair. They called her “The Most Hated Woman in America. She was the Founder of American Atheists. She may be best well known for her lawsuit which went to the Supreme court ending school sponsored prayer in public schools.

- What made her so hated by so many was the influence she had on an entire nation.

When it comes to the bad girls of the Bible, there is one that stands head and shoulders above the rest. Her negative influence on the nation of Israel is unlike any other female Biblical character. Her name is synonymous with everything bad and evil. Her name is Jezebel.

Let me give you some highlights of her life. (Maybe I should call them “low-lights”)

- She was daughter of the Phoenician King Ethbaal. Married King Ahab of Israel and immediately leads the nation into idolatry (Baal / Asherah)
- King Ahab has 2 temples built...one for each and 850 prophets instituted.
- Jezebel influences King Ahab to such an extent that the Bible records Ahab as the worst King in Israel's history. He provoked God more than any other!
- Systematically kills the prophets of the Lord / tries to eradicate worship of the true God
- Threatened to kill the prophet Elijah after Mt. Carmel – death threat
- Killed Naboth to steal his vineyard so Ahab could have it.
- In the end, she was thrown out her upper story window / trampled by horses/ eaten by dogs in her death, and only her hands, feet and skull were left.
- Jezebel is one of the most feared and despised women in all of Scripture . We see her in I Kings 16 through II Kings 9 (40+ years of history)

### **Principals from the life of Jezebel**

#### **I. Be Selective With Your Partnerships. They Can Turn You Away From God's Path**

*I Kings 16:29-33 “Ahab son of Omri began to rule over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twenty-two years. But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than any of the kings before him. And as though it were not enough to follow the example of Jeroboam, he married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal. First Ahab built a temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria. Then he set up an Asherah pole. He did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him.” (NLT)*

A. Who we partner with has tremendous influence upon our lives

*I Cor. 15:33 “Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.” (NLT)*

*Prov. 4:14-15 “Don’t do as the wicked do, and don’t follow the path of evildoers. Don’t even think about it; don’t go that way. Turn away and keep moving.” (NLT)*

1. So what do I mean by “partner with”? In the story, it obviously refers to the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel. This partnership had tremendous influence on Ahab and how he reigned Israel. She influenced him for evil
  2. For us, a partnership could be a marriage / business relationship / a close friendship / it’s whoever you align yourself with to experience life / achievement / pleasure / to experience purpose
  3. It’s not a phrase referring to who we simply associate with. How can we possibly be salt and light in a dark world if we do not associate with people who need Jesus. It’s not referring to isolationism. The church has done too much of this already!
  4. It’s a phrase that refers to who we get into the harness with. Who we get into the yoke with to experience life together. These are not casual relationships. These are the close relationships we attach ourselves to in order to journey together.
- Have a yoke on the platform to illustrate.
    5. To say that people who are in the yoke with you have no influence on your life is simply living in denial. It’s impossible for that to be true. Even if you’re dragging them along with you, they are influencing your life.
    6. We need to be selective with all close relationships because of their influential power on our lives and direction. The closer you are to someone, the more influence they exhibit on our lives.
      - Their influence is a lot like mixing colors. If you mix the color pink with the color blue, what do you end up with? Purple. (share other colors)
      - Have glass with water and utilize food coloring. “If someone gets into your glass with you there is influence!” Who you allow in your life has influence.
    7. If you are going to link up with another person, you’d better realize that together you’re going to create a new color. How do you make sure it’s a color you like?

Answer: We must be selective? How do we do this?

#### B. Who we partner with should reflect similar values

1. Notice the warnings from the word of God about teaming up with people of different values.

*II Cor. 6:14 “Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?” (NLT)*

2. This is why the bible warns us about being selective in who we marry. This is the most influential partnership of all! The Bible is not saying these people are bad. It does mean they are from a different kingdom. That kingdom has differing values.
3. We should look for people who we want to become like and align our lives with them. I want to partner with people who help me become all that God wants me to be.

*Prov. 13:20 “Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.” (NLT)*

4. I want to rub shoulders with people who are moving in the same direction I am sharing the same values I share. I want to align myself with people who want to follow Christ.
5. I don't need people in my life where I constantly feel the pull from them to go in another direction...a pull from them to violate my values...trying to influence my thinking in a negative way.

*Amos 3:3 “Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?” (NLT)*

6. As a follower of Christ, are you aligning yourself with other people who are actively following Christ. There are plenty of people out there who call themselves Christians yet have no real desire to follow Christ. Their influence is real! Be selective by looking at values! Be selective by looking at direction!

## **II. Don't Be Surprised That Satan Will Always Have Opposition Ready**

*I Kings 19:1-3 “When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them. “Elijah was afraid and fled for his life” (NLT)*

A. There will always be people Satan will use to discourage you

1. Sometimes we fail to realize that one of the greatest tools Satan uses to discourage us is relational conflict. Haven't you ever had some great thing happen only to have the wind taken out of your sails by someone else?
  - This is what happened to Elijah
  - The Bible warns us about this.

*I Peter 5:8 “Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.” (NLT)* Often the devouring Satan does is through the criticisms and hurtful comments of others. Satan uses people all the time to do his work!

*II Tim. 2:26 “ Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.” (NLT)*

2. If you are going to do anything significant for the Kingdom of God you can expect opposition. What surprises us is that the opposition is usually flesh and blood motivated by our spiritual enemy.
3. Even believers in Christ who are not walking in obedience can be used by the enemy to discourage those who are. This is why it's so effective. We don't expect the attacks to come from within our own camp!
- Story of Jesus on His way to Jerusalem and telling His disciples that He will be crucified. Peter's response and Jesus' rebuke. “Get behind Me Satan!” Jesus understood where the attack was coming from! He wasn't calling Peter Satan. Satan spoke through Peter.
  4. If Satan can influence a guy like Peter do you think he can influence the average believer in church if they are not careful? Of course!

5. As you begin to make progress in your life, embracing change, learning to follow Jesus, seeing Him use your life; don't be surprised that the opposition you encounter may be another person in your own camp who is not so excited about your direction
6. I have embraced the mentality years ago that opposition is usually an indicator I am right where God wants me to be. Don't change course. Decide to endure!

**B. Often our greatest attacks come after our greatest victories**

1. Here is Elijah running for his life from Jezebel only hours after the greatest experience of his ministry career. It was literally a mountain top experience only to have his hopes dashed hours later. This also gives us a perspective of Jezebel. Facing 850 prophets was easy compared to facing this one woman. Wow!
2. I have found that often my greatest struggles have come on the heels of my greatest victories. As I have reflected on this over the years of ministry, I believe I understand this a bit better.
3. As wonderful as mountaintop experiences are, they are exhausting. Experiencing great victories come at a price that usually leaves us mentally / emotionally / spiritually and often physically exhausted. After these victories, we tend to be extremely vulnerable. The guard simply comes down. The armor comes off.
4. Satan is a master at waiting until just the right time when we are the most vulnerable to launch his attacks. Look at how he responded to Jesus.

*Luke 4:13 "When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time." (NLT)*

5. Satan is always waiting till an opportune time. There are times when I am feeling strong, focused, connected, empowered and walking in victory. I wish Satan would attack during these times because with Jesus and me, we'd bring the smack down on him! (He doesn't show up)
  6. But let's face it, no one can do this perfectly 24/7/365. It's humanly impossible. There are times when we feel weak, vulnerable, discouraged, exhausted, worn out or burnt out. Satan waits for these times.
  7. This was something I talked to my mission teams about. Often people coming back from mission trips spiritually struggle when they return. Now you know why! We need to be praying for our Guatemala team!
- Dealing with opposition is simply part of our faith journey.

**III. No one can escape God's absolute principals of planting and harvesting**

*II Kings 9:31-33 "When Jezebel, the queen mother, heard that Jehu had come to Jezreel, she painted her eyelids and fixed her hair and sat at a window. When Jehu entered the gate of the palace, she shouted at him, "Have you come in peace, you murderer? You're just like Zimri, who murdered his master." Jehu looked up and saw her at the window and shouted, "Who is on my side?" And two or three eunuchs looked out at him. "Throw her down!" Jehu yelled. So*

*they threw her out the window, and her blood spattered against the wall and on the horses. And Jehu trampled her body under his horses' hooves.” (NLT)*

A. We will always harvest whatever we plant

1. Jezebel had a violent, ugly death. Her death is an example of God's principals of planting and harvesting. She violently murdered many people over the course of her life. These were the seeds she planted. This is what she harvested in the end.
2. The bible tells us we will reap what we sow, we harvest what we plant. If we put good seeds into our lives we harvest a good crop. If we plant evil seeds we get an evil crop.

*Gal. 6:7-9 “Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.” (NLT)*

3. This is one of the most profound life principals that I know of. It is so imperative for us to realize that everything we do in this life matters. Everything is a seed that we are planting in our life that will result in some type of harvest.
4. If you want to look forward to your future, you don't have to believe in luck. You don't have to hope everything will turn out OK. You embrace God's principals of the harvest. You can look forward to whatever you have planted!
5. This is why we should be so careful. Once seeds are planted there is no way to take them out of the ground. God always forgives us, but he doesn't remove the seeds. He doesn't remove the consequences of our choices.

B. God has given us great freedom in determining our future harvest

1. What we harvest in the future is up to us. If you want to look forward to a great future crop you must be planting good seeds today.
2. What are good seeds? Obedience. Living life God's way is how we put good seeds into the soil of our lives. This is why I say “Obedience =Blessing! Your obedience today will result in a harvest of blessing later.
3. It's never too late to start planting good seeds. It's never too late to start being more intentional with your planting program.
4. This is why giving ourselves to God's process of transformation helps us be better at planting good seeds. The more you allow Jesus to change your life the more good seeds you can put into the ground. The more good seeds in the ground the bigger and better your future harvest will be.
5. Our future is up to us. It's not determined by effort. In God's Kingdom our future is determined by planting good seeds...by obedience...by allowing Jesus to change our lives. One final thought...

*Prov. 13:19 “It is pleasant to see dreams come true, but fools refuse to turn from evil to attain them.” (NLT)*

6. We all have dream about our future. Often though, we can sabotage our own dreams by refusing to turn away from the very things that will destroy them. The bad seeds we plant in our lives can sabotage and destroy the dreams we are looking forward to.
7. By following Jesus we can avoid this. By letting Him continually change our lives so we can plant good seeds, we can experience the pleasant satisfaction of seeing dreams come true.

As we reflect on the life of Jezebel

- What are your partnerships like? How are the people you associate with influence you?
- Are you getting sidetracked by Satan’s opposition? Stay the course!
- Are you preparing your future by planting good seeds today? This is how are dreams come true!