
KING AHAB AND JEZEBEL

Just as every one of us has had our good days and our bad days, Israel too, has had her share of good kings and bad kings. And King Ahab was definitely not one of the good guys.

In 1Kings 16:31-33 we read: "And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife *Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal*, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him."

Many fascinating finds have been made in the world of archaeology concerning King Ahab and the events surrounding his life. First of all, Ahab is mentioned in Assyrian records. On an inscription that accounts a battle known as Qarqar, between Ahab and his enemy King Shalmaneser III of Assyria, Shalmaneser records the size of Ahab's army that fought against him. It mentions the following:

"2000 chariots and 10,000 troops from Israel's king, Ahab."

Archaeologists from Harvard, digging in the ruins of Samaria, the ancient capital of Israel, have also found a palace that Ahab built which contained within it a room where ivories were stored.

This room, interestingly enough, is mentioned in the Bible in 1Kings 22:37-39 which says:

"So the king died, and was brought to *Samaria*. And they buried the king in Samaria . . . Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, the *ivory house which he built* and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?"

God spoke against these houses in Amos 3: 13-15: "Hear and testify against the house of Jacob," Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, "That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions, I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel; And the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground. I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; *The houses of ivory shall perish*, And the great houses shall have an end," Says the LORD.

Also found in the Ivory room were small stone boxes with which Ahab's wife, Jezebel, may have mixed her cosmetics. The boxes contained a number of small holes to hold various colors and a depression in the center for mixing.

THE BIBLE in 2Kings 9:30 states: "Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, *Jezebel heard of it; and she put paint on her eyes* and adorned her head, and looked through a window."

King Ahab married one of the most wicked woman in scripture, Jezebel. Her father was known as king Ethbaal, a dictator who took the throne of Sidon by force. He did so by assassinating his brothers. The Greek writer Menander also stated that Ethbaal was a high priest in the worship of the pagan god Baal. His name means (I am with Baal.)

According to the Bible, Jezebel convinced Ahab to turn his back on the God of Abraham and to build a pagan temple to her god Baal in Samaria. She then massacred the prophets of the LORD and replaced them with prophets of Baal and Asherah the goddess wife of Baal. So evil were the prophets of Baal and Ashertoreth, that they murdered little children in their sacrifices.

THE MODERN DAY EQUIVALENT TO ABORTIONISTS.

The Oriental Institute of Chicago, during excavations near Samaria, found the ruins of a temple built to **Ashertoreth** that stood during the reign of king Ahab. Near the site were found jars that

contained the remains of infants who had been sacrificed in this horrible temple.

This find verifies that Baal & Asherah worship was common in Samaria at the time of Jezebel. 1Kings 18:19 mentions that Jezebel surrounded herself with the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Asherah.

A seal was also found which may have once belonged to Jezebel. The seal is inscribed with the letters "JZBL." According to the Bible, Jezebel was quite at home with sealing documents with a seal. 1Kings 21:8 says: "And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal."



JEZEBEL SEAL

Another event which occurred at the time of Jezebel was when the prophet Elijah challenged the 450 prophets of Baal whom she had appointed. Elijah told the people **"If the Lord is God follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."** And to show the people that the Lord was God he challenged the prophets of Baal to call upon Baal to reign down fire from heaven, but nothing happened when they prayed to Baal. Then Elijah prayed to God that the people would turn their hearts back to the Lord. God heard Elijah's prayer and fire from the Lord fell from heaven and burned up the sacrifice that was prepared by Elijah. When the people saw what happened, they fell face down and cried **"The Lord-He is God! The Lord-He is God!"** Elijah then commanded the people to execute the prophets of Baal.

Jezebel then threatened to kill Elijah, and Elijah fled from Jezebel into the wilderness.

1Kings 19:9-15 then states the following: "And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, *anoint Hazael as king over Syria.*"

This same King Hazael is mentioned in Assyrian records. An inscription, by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser, known as the Black Obelisk states this:

"I fought against Ben-hadad and take credit for his downfall. Hazael, the son of a worthless man, then ascended to the throne."

As with everyone who continues to practice evil, Jezebel's life came to a tragic ending. King Jehu of Israel instructed that Jezebel be killed because of

her wickedness. 2Kings 9:30-33 states:

"Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window. Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?" And he looked up at the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" So two or three eunuchs looked out at him. Then he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot.

THE GREATEST STATEMENTS MADE BY AND ABOUT ELIJAH - THE PROPHET WHO REBUKED KING AHAB AND HIS WIFE JEZEBEL:

"And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him"

1 Kings 18:21



"Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

1 Kings 18:37

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

James 5:16-20

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