

JEZEBEL: A CONTROLLING SPIRIT THAT SPLITS CHURCHES

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While Daniel was Senior Pastor at The Coastlands in Aptos, CA, he taught a seminar on what has been described as ‘the spirits of Jezebel, control and witchcraft.’ He, along with his wife Pamela and a couple of leaders of The Coastlands, identify some characteristics, spiritual dynamics and helpful biblical and personal insights on this discussion.

The spirit of Jezebel is a strong demonic spirit closely related to witchcraft and control, creating anxiety and difficulty in relationships—especially those where Godly authority enters the picture. Often, when you are around this spirit, you’ll tend to feel disturbed, uneasy and frayed around the edges. Jezebel displays a great deal of pride, and tends to target leadership in order to derail it and render it ineffectual. This spirit wields great influence through deception—and all of us can be susceptible.

Since Scripture is the only reliable source for understanding spiritual bondage, we can search through the it for insight into a particular spirit or distortion. As we explore both the Old and New Testaments to better understand the spiritual dynamic regarding ‘Jezebel,’ we find in 1 Kings 16:31-33 that Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal (meaning “with Baal,” meaning *master* or *owner*), a king of the Sidonians who served the false god Baal. The “spirit of Jezebel,” as we’ll be referring to it, gets its name from this woman, who was certainly not the only character to portray it, but was by far its most famous representative.

I. Setting the Context

A. Everything in the Kingdom that is Going to Do You Good and Grow You Up in God Will Cost You Something. (2 Corinthians 12)

1. It is by grace we are saved; it is by grace that we continue along.
2. People who don’t want to pay that internal cost of having to die in one way or another, ultimately, don’t grow too much in the Lord.

B. Goal of Discerning of Spirits.

1. Simply to aid and give us all some additional information on the subject.

- a. Be careful not to go around pointing your finger at people saying, “Oh, I see Jezebel.”
2. By seeing some of the attributes of this spirit, it may explain a lot of the traumas that some of us have gone through and that might be causing you anxiety and difficulty.

II. The Spirit of Jezebel

A. Jezebel Was the Daughter of Eth Baal, which Literally Means “with Baal”; “On the Side of Baal,” a False Deity.

B. It Seeks to Cut Off or Destroy the True Prophetic Voice to a People.

1. Since this spirit wants to silence true spiritual authority, it goes after leadership. (1 Kings 18:4)
 - a. Not only will this spirit seek to seduce prophetic individuals, but ultimately, its desire is to come against the final spiritual authority in the church, which is the pastor.
 - b. Ultimately, it will have an adversarial role with the pastor.

C. Traits of Jezebel.

1. It’s a very intimidating spirit and will make you feel afraid and feel like you will come up wanting. It incites fear and the desire to run away; challenges your spirituality.
 - a. It can lead you to hopelessness and despair. (1 Kings 19:1-4)
 - b. Depression makes you susceptible to being overwhelmed by the spirit of Jezebel.
2. It feels very spiritual.
3. It’s a coveting spirit. The spirit of Jezebel wants another’s place—their inheritance. It is ultimately self-seeking. (1 Kings 21)
 - a. The spirit of Jezebel will use its authority to get something for itself or to control the situation.
 - b. Jezebel is described as trying to start telling elders what to do. It will begin directing spiritual leadership; telling people what they ought to accomplish next.

- c. If you're vulnerable to this spirit by your discontent, you covet something that you don't yet have.
4. It has a religious agenda.
- a. The spirit of Jezebel is that it very often will use religious pretenses, religious formulas or religious exercises to do its dirty work.
 - b. There are many spirits that do this to you (the spirit of pride is another one), but when you are around the spirit of Jezebel you will always feel accused.
 - c. This spirit can either be very patronizing or the spirit of Jezebel says, "They're disqualified because they aren't spiritual enough."
 - i) Operating in a marriage, a wife will convince a husband that because he has done a stupid thing, he can go away and she can handle it—she'll pick up his responsibility (not always, but this could be this spirit).
 - ii) Beware of that statement as an ongoing thought in your life. It is extremely dangerous.
5. Regarding submission and authority. It accuses. (1 Kings 21:9-11)
- a. This spirit can say you're not submitted enough.
 - b. It can gauge spirituality by conformity; we have same gifts and we think the same. If you agree with it, then you're submitted; if you don't agree with it, then you're rebellious.
 - c. It says there's something wrong with you. "Not my problem, it's your problem."
 - d. Directs spiritual leaders in what they should do. (Vs. 21:8)
 - e. Uses flattery to seduce leaders—thwarting the purposes of God through others. (Revelation 2:20-24)

6. It wants to take another's inheritance, place or authority.
7. Exercises authority over men. Acts as if she doesn't have a husband—she overshadows her husband. (1 Timothy 2:12-15) In Greek, Jezebel means "false teacher" or over-bearing, nagging woman.
8. The strategy by the enemy is to infiltrate and gain trust of leaders.
9. The spirit of Jezebel will call to *revelation, deep things, profundity* or *mystery*. If you do what they (people influenced by Jezebel) want you to do, you will learn it as well.
10. The spirit of Jezebel tries to seduce and thwart the purposes of God by seducing the leader who's trying to bring them about.
 - a. It doesn't have to be sexual; it can be flattery, which is seducing.

III. Connection with Witchcraft and Control (2 Kings 9:22)

A. Jezebel, Control and Witchcraft are Integrally Connected to Each Other.

1. They are incredibly deceptive and slippery. The spirit of witchcraft and the spirit of Jezebel both tend to go after leadership.
 - a. Jezebel essentially wants to render spiritual leadership ineffective and of no consequence.
 - b. Our church was experiencing a spirit that was different from the Spirit of the King.
 - c. These spirits can attack and mislead sincere people.
2. We don't have to know the name of a spirit—the really important thing is to know the Name of Jesus.

B. Traits of Witchcraft.

1. Witchcraft is falsely prophetic.
2. It creates its own state, space, or reality.

3. It is a deed of the flesh.
4. It claims special prophetic revelation and leads people away from safety, truth or virtue.
 - a. We think of immorality as sexual, but it also means unlawful lust—wanting to control things for yourself.
 - b. Literally, “to practice idolatry” is to have a god other than God as the one you worship. Every being that goes by the name of “the lord” is not the Lord.
5. Witchcraft always finds its foothold in areas of rebellion against God or against authority. (2 Kings 9:30-31)
6. Witchcraft is also linked with divination.
 - c. It is presumptuous and lures to a destiny other than God’s.
 - d. It begins by presuming to do something, to take something, or to accomplish something without regard to the Lord.
 - e. It will suggest, tempt and tries to knock you off course.
 - f. Divination literally means to distribute, to divide or to determine by the casting of lots.
 - g. The danger point is the vulnerability of dissatisfaction with the boundaries of your inheritance or with the place that you are in life.
 - i) The Bible says, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.” (Psalm 16:6)
 - ii) Respond to the Lord as He has created the lines of your inheritance.
7. Witchcraft is rebellion against God’s design and boundaries.
 - a. The enemy of our souls wants to change, to set the clock back or set it forward, get you out of sync, or out of timing with the Lord and what God has written concerning you. (Daniel 7:25)

A. The Spirit of Control.

1. A Controlling Spirit is Inflexible and Unable to be Entreated.
 - a. “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” (James 3:17)
 - b. This spirit doesn’t like to roll with the punches because it wants to call the punches.
 - i) A lot of husbands who fall prey to the spirit of control live under the delusion that the way they think is more legitimate than the way their wife thinks.
 - ii) For wives, this spirit wants to control by ‘knowing.’ “Well, there are certain things that he never thinks about and I’ve got to make sure that this happens my way.”
2. Similar-sounding to legalism, there is ‘one way’ to do it.
 - a. A person can become bitter because things don’t turn out the way that they wanted things to go.
 - b. In an effort to control things they will come up with formulas for you to use spiritually.
 - c. They can throw “little tantrums” or/and be very manipulating or/and use intimidation where you feel “bullied.”
 - d. It can breed an unhealthy dependence.
3. It concerns itself with matters over which it has no authority—worries about things it shouldn’t worry about, and has opinions that are of no consequence.
 - a. I don’t want to suggest that we as a church are not open to suggestions.
 - b. This spirit uses legitimate excuses, legitimate means and legitimate situations to get what it wants. It tries to have all these things be legitimate and especially spiritual.
4. It’s essentially an occultic spirit and comes primarily from pride or fear.
 - a. Faith furthers God’s Kingdom, but fear is the exact opposite.
 - b. In the Kingdom, when you relinquish control you are actually in control. (Luke 17:33)

- c. “Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.” (Proverbs 25:28)
 - d. Scripture tells us to control our own body. (1Thessalonians 4:3-5)
5. It’s the pride of thinking it knows the best way to do things—the opposite of humility which gives preference to one another in love.
- a. It insists upon itself as its defense.
 - a. We were made to live not just for ourselves, but through the love of Christ, being of one mind and in humility looking out for the interests of others. (2 Corinthians 5:14; Philippians 2:1-11)

B. Relinquishing Control.

- 1. To whatever degree of bondage that we’re in regarding this spirit, learn to come in the opposite spirit.
 - a. Instead of “If I give them an inch, they’ll take a mile,” go the extra mile. If you’re afraid there’s not enough resource, give. (Matthew 5:41)
 - b. Try listening and being obedient to someone other than yourself. (2 Kings 18:20)
- 2. God has divine order. Find and follow God’s plan.
 - a. Trust in the Lord and don’t be troubled. (Psalm 37:3)
 - b. Relinquish control and trust the Lord. (Luke 9:23)
- 3. The Lord meets us in our inadequacy. (Proverbs 21:30)
 - a. God wants us to really know Him. (Jeremiah 24:7)
 - b. He wants us to know what’s going on around us and will provide us for all our questions. (Genesis 22:14)
 - c. Through our inadequacies, when we trust in the Lord, we will see His healing and His touch in our lives (and the His touch through us for others).

IV. Confronting the Spirit of Jezebel (and Other Occult Spirits)

A. Tolerating Instead of Confronting can be Harmful. (Revelation 2:20-24)

1. Our usual reaction to the spirit is not to challenge it because it's intimidating.
2. We allow it—keep it around.

B. Challenge the Spirit of Jezebel and Point Things Out Over a Period of Time.

1. The best reference and guide is to talk about the fruit of someone's life. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)
2. What do you see beginning to manifest in his or her life?
3. Usually it will be unsubmitted to an authority.
4. Use Scripture to confront: "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of truth..." (2 Timothy 2:24-25)
5. It's not a thing that you would confront by simply telling them, "You are afflicted with the spirit of Jezebel." But if they're coming to you saying, "I've got this distortion in my life," with some prior understanding of it, then you can say, "Yeah, I think that's the spirit of Jezebel."

V. Part Two: The Story of Saul and His Vulnerability

The story of Saul is the most complete description mentioned in the Bible of witchcraft overwhelming somebody. There are other references to Jezebel, and of people who were overcome by it, but this is one very complete example and it's a remarkable story.

A. God Appointed Saul to Have a Significant Ministry. (1 Samuel 10)

1. Saul was counseled, guided, tutored and disciplined and had access to the mighty prophet named Samuel.
2. Verse 10 tells us that Saul had a dynamic encounter with the Holy Spirit and he began to prophesy.

3. In verse 11, we learn that after prophesying, he changed from the 'old man' into a new man—people wondered if he was a prophet.
4. Verse 26 tells us that valiant men and loyal men, trained and experienced warriors, surrounded him. He wasn't a loner off by himself, but he surrounded himself with loyal men.

B. Saul Was Tested in Battle. (1 Samuel 11)

1. He wasn't some fresh upstart who had no experience. He was experienced in spiritual matters.
2. Verse 14 tells us that Saul was to be a key player in the renewing of the Kingdom.

C. Clues to Standing Against Rebellion and Witchcraft.

1. Obedience doesn't come from giftedness, anointing, vision or leadership, but by obeying God.
2. The danger to Saul was that he thought his mission and calling and anointing were proof against rebellion.

3. Saul's Rebellion. (1 Samuel 13)

- a. In the midst of fighting against the Philistines, on the seventh day Saul decides to take matters into his own hands. (Vs. 8)
- b. Later on, instead of killing off the Amalekites, Saul comes back to offer a sacrifice to God, but he hadn't obeyed God. (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

- a) Like Saul, we can be tempted to take matters into our own hands to maintain our position, ministry or vision.

4. Important things to remember about obedience.

- a. Keeping God's commands are always more important than keeping our situation or protecting ourselves.
 - i) The root word *to keep* ("kept" 1 Samuel 13:13) can better be translated "to preserve" or "to regard."

- ii) We as human beings have a tendency to regard our situation and to seek to preserve ourselves. This can lead us into disregarding God's commands.
 - a) We're sometimes tempted to look at our situation, rather than His word.
- b. Anointing carries instruction for obedience. (1 Samuel 15:1)
 - i) It's so important that we *listen* to the anointing of God.
 - ii) If we're leading a group and the Lord says, "I just want you to love these people" but you go off and do hundreds of Bible teachings, and people don't feel loved, then you haven't obeyed.
 - iii) Saul didn't obey God. (1 Samuel 15:9)
 - a) In this verse, we learn witchcraft carries its own agenda. Saul had his own basis of evaluation, his own hidden agenda. (1 Samuel 15:12)
 - b) Anointing is given to carry out God's plans, God's way. Anointing never gives you permission to do what you think is best.

D. Witchcraft, Rebellion and Pride.

1. Witchcraft and rebellion are closely associated to pride—it celebrates its own accomplishments by evaluating itself with its own agenda. (2 Corinthians 10:18)
2. The deception that witchcraft offers is that "going on the mission" is a generic kind of obedience. God isn't interested in the big things you are doing as much as the little things you are obeying.
3. Witchcraft will always set its own terms for obedience.
 - a. In 1 Samuel 15:21, Saul tries to appease the prophet.
 - b. Witchcraft ultimately will offer to God (and think it's a big deal) what God really desires destroyed in your life.
 - i) Another example is giving up chocolate for Lent. Don't offer noble sacrifices to God instead of obedience.

- c. Be careful you aren't saying that God's way isn't enough, that He won't fulfill you. (That's why rebellion is the same as divination or witchcraft.)
4. Living in rebellion for a long time, creates habits that have been developed which become acts of worship and may take a period of time to be broken.
 - a. People can become numb or they can get very angry. It can take a lot of prayer for a breakthrough.

VI. Self-Pity

A. Self-pity is Never Going to Get You Free of the Deeds of the Flesh.

1. It insists on attention and it wants you to relate to it based on its terms.
2. When people want you to do more work than they want to do for their own deliverance (and are intimidating) there is something wrong with this picture.
3. The person needs to be willing to cut self-pity off.

B. Better to Be Found Guilty (than to be Caught in this Nest of Spirits).

1. Pray and acknowledge your sin to the Lord and be accountable to people you trust.
2. Come in the opposite spirit by having a grateful heart.
3. in the Psalms, David is the one who always said, "My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is in Him." (Psalm 62:5)
4. These spirits will always urge you to forget faith.
 - a. They want to eliminate the word of God, a prophetic word or the counsel of people who care for your soul.
 - b. They want to remove authority.
5. When counseling someone 'afflicted,' use your conversations (or opportunities) wisely—time may be limited.

- a. The Lord can give you revelation and discernment.
- b. A lot of prayer is needed to see wonderful liberations for people.

VII. Wrapped-Up in Another Reality (Questions and Answers)

A. What Do You Do When Counseling Somebody with Attributes of Witchcraft?

1. Usually for people who want to be well, it is a very hopeful thing, and I would teach them to walk in obedience.
2. As it says in the Bible, we want to exhort and teach so that "...they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:26)

B. Is the Attack or Awareness of Witchcraft in Our Church a Concerted Attack by the Enemy Trying to Get Witchcraft into our Church, or Is It in Our County?

1. Both. I think that in our county, the spirit of Jezebel is the reigning spirit. We're going to confront it a lot because of where we live.
2. I also believe that this is a purposeful attack against us.

C. How Do You Differentiate Between Witchcraft and the Flesh?

1. A deed of the flesh is witchcraft and this is what's so scary about it; it's like idolatry.
 - a. When you have idolatry, you're so bent on going after that thing, and you end up becoming like that thing you worship.
 - b. The flesh is bad enough. When it becomes bondage, it becomes so overwhelming that the person loses touch with what's real. They are determined that they know what God has for their life, and are completely wrong.
2. Disobediences are the little red lights that Saul ignored over and over again.

D. Accountability Is Key.

1. Don't be afraid if there is bondage in your life—accountability will be helpful and essential.
 - a. Everyone will have thoughts once in a while that are absolutely false because the devil is always prowling around testing to see who is vulnerable. (1 Peter 5:8)
 - b. The spirit of witchcraft likes to hide but as soon as it's uncovered, it's powerless.
2. Knowing the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)

E. Warning Signs and What to Look For.

1. Saul fell into the sin of witchcraft by doing what his flesh dictated. (1 Samuel 13:8-14)
 - a. Whenever we operate in witchcraft, we lose blessing and promises.
2. Witchcraft operates through domination, control and manipulation.
 - a. Witchcraft has its roots in fear, pride and rebellion—fear in losing control and not getting what we desire; pride in believing that we deserve what we desire and that we can obtain it for ourselves; and, by rebellion in going our own way to get it.
 - b. Witchcraft is also used to take another's authority, gift or possession, which has been given by the Holy Spirit. (1 Kings 21)

F. Absalom Takes Authority for Himself.

1. Absalom stood at the gate of the city and drew aside all those who had matters to be worked out with King David. (2 Samuel 15:2-6)
2. Absalom represented himself as fairer, more just and better-equipped person than David, and entreated the favor of the people and told them to disregard David.
 - a. He told people they didn't have to go to David and that they could talk to him.
 - i) In the same way, a couple in a home group were trying to take authority for themselves by entreating the favor of the others in the group, continually drawing them to themselves, and away from the leaders.

- ii) Jezebel undermines the confidence of the leader and the place the Lord has for them.
 - a) This is very different from how a healthy home group functions within a church body.
 - b. Take these people aside and lovingly confront them, and hopefully, lead them to repentance. (Galatians 6:1)
 - i) As a leader of a home group, you are caring for a group of people and your whole goal is to keep them moving along within the context of where the church is as a whole.
 - ii) When you, as an authority, are talking to somebody in love and they “don’t get it,” sometimes times they do but they don’t want to “get it.”
 - iii) This couple eventually left the church and continued to experience failures at other churches—in this case I believe it was spirit that kept propelling them.
- 3. A controlling and manipulating spirit drains the life right out of you with their needs—it’s like a black hole.
 - a. It is always “you don’t” and “why don’t you.”
 - b. People who are bound up and have a lot of problems, in the midst of all their problems, think it’s someone else’s fault.
- 4. People who are caught up in this bondage, their minds are on earthly things.
 - a. “For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.” (Philippians 3:18-19)
 - b. When you pick up His suffering and lay down your own desires, your own ambition and lust and pride and say, “Yes, Jesus. I will pick up my cross and carry it,” and live your life for Christ and not for yourself, you are no longer subject to this wicked and corrupt realm.