**Jezebel: wife of Ahab**

According to the [Hebrew Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible), Jezebel incited her husband King Ahab to abandon the worship of [Yahweh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahweh) and encourage worship of the deities [Baal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baal) and [Asherah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asherah) instead.

Jezebel became associated with [false prophets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_prophet). In some interpretations, her dressing in finery and putting on makeup led to the association of the use of cosmetics with "painted women" or prostitutes.

She was a [Phoenician](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenicia) princess, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of [Tyre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre%2C_Lebanon) (1 Kings 16:31 says she was "Sidonian", which is a biblical term for Phoenicians in general). Jezebel married King [Ahab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahab) of the Northern Kingdom (i.e. Israel during the time when ancient Israel was divided into Israel in the north and [Judah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah) in the south). Ahab was the son of [King Omri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omri), who had brought the northern Kingdom of Israel to great power, established [Samaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaria_%28ancient_city%29) as his capital, and whose historical existence is confirmed by ancient inscriptions on the [Mesha Stele](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesha_Stele) and the [Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Obelisk_of_Shalmaneser_III).

The marriage of Ahab and Jezebel was the culmination of the friendly relations existing between Israel and Phoenicia during Omri's reign, and possibly cemented important political designs of Ahab. Jezebel, like the foreign wives of Solomon, required facilities for carrying on her form of worship, so Ahab made an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

 Jezebel went so far as to require that her religion should be the national religion of Israel. She organized and maintained guilds of prophets, 450 of Baal, and 400 of Asherah. She also destroyed such prophets of Israel as she could reach. [Obadiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obadiah), the faithful overseer of Ahab's house, rescued one hundred of these, hid them, and secretly fed them in a cave.

Elijah

The prophet [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah) confronted Ahab and charged him with the sin of following Baal. Elijah had two altars set up at Carmel, one dedicated to Baal, one to Yahweh, and a bull sacrificed upon each altar. The supporters of Baal called upon their god to send fire to consume the sacrifice, but nothing happened. When Elijah called on Yahweh, fire came down from heaven immediately and consumed the offering. Elijah ordered the people to seize the prophets of Baal and Asherah, and they were all slaughtered. The superiority of Elijah and of his God in the test at Carmel, and the slaughter of the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, fired the vengeance of Jezebel. Elijah fled for his life to the wilderness, where he mourned the devotion of Israel to Baal and the lack of worshipers of Israel's God.

Through the centuries, the name *Jezebel* came to be associated with false prophets. By the early 20th century, it was also associated with fallen or abandoned women. In Christian lore, a comparison to Jezebel suggested that a person was a [pagan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paganism) or an [apostate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy) masquerading as a servant of God. By manipulation and/or seduction, she misled the saints of God into sins of idolatry and sexual immorality. In particular, Christians associated Jezebel with [promiscuity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Promiscuity). In modern usage, the name of Jezebel is sometimes used as a synonym for sexually promiscuous and/or controlling women. (Wikipedia)