

The Last Nail in Jezebel's Coffin

A Collection of Sermons



By
Stephen R. Gentry

The **L**ast **N**ail

in

Jezebel's **C**offin

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this book to my precious wife, Rochelle. She has stood by my side through thick and thin for the last thirty-three years. We have driven several hundred thousand miles preaching the gospel, flown to various countries to be involved in mission work, and pastored three churches. She never complained but encouraged me to follow the will of God. She has been a godly example to our three girls and is not only my wife but my best friend. We have loved each other for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer in sickness and in health and will cherish each other until death we do part.



Pastor Stephen R. Gentry and wife, Rochelle

Foreword

This book of sermons by Bro. Steve Gentry demonstrates his ability to study the Bible, arrange the material in a structured and logical way, and proclaim the truth of God's Word firmly and fairly.

If you are a preacher, you will be blessed by these sermons and may even rework them into your style and preach them yourself.

If you are a layperson, you will be blessed by these sermons, for if you will not only "hear" but obey, you will grow in knowledge and in your experience with the Lord Jesus Christ.

These sermons present great Doctrinal content, including preaching about Prayer, Redemption, Holiness, and the Gifts of the Spirit. They also present great practical content, including preaching about Home and Family, the local Church, a believer's business ethics, and a Christian's influence, to name a few.

Finally, these sermons are replete with great personal experiences and interesting illustrations like windows, letting in the light of understanding.

As you read, let the Spirit of God speak to you personally and be willing to obey what the Holy Ghost says.

Bro. Dwain Galiher

(Bro. Galiher is the pastor at Junction Hill Pentecostal Church in West Plains, Missouri. He is well-known among the Independent Holiness Churches and is often asked to teach and preach in Conferences, Revivals, and Camp Meetings.)

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Preface

I remember several years ago, almost 40 now, I had just started preaching and had no idea there was such a thing as a sermon book. I had a King James Bible, a Strong's Exhausted Concordance, and a Webster's Dictionary. For a few years, the only books I had in my library were Biblical reference books: Commentaries, Bible Dictionaries, a couple of books of Illustrations, and a set of Zondervan's Bible Encyclopedias. I gleaned a lot of thoughts from listening to cassette tapes of revival sermons. (telling my age)

Then, one day, I was at a thrift store in Alabaster, Alabama. I was looking through the books; undoubtedly, a minister's library had been donated to the thrift store. I bought a buggy full of books for just a few dollars. I began reading through them and was introduced to names I had never heard. I read Clovis Chappell, Clarence Macartney, Vance Havner, Hyman Appleman, Charles L Allen, and several others for the first time.

As I began to read, I would find myself inspired to study and preach the same thoughts. I often read the title of the sermon and the scripture text; that was all I needed. At other times, I read and reread

a sermon speaking directly to my heart. I quickly saw the advantage of reading sermon books. I had to learn to eat the meat and spit out the bones, for not everything I read was profitable.

My life and ministry have been enriched by sermons that I have read. From illustrations, testimonies, and facts about everything from raising sheep to raising children, they have been a virtual mine in which nuggets were available simply for the trouble of taking time to pick them up.

I pray that these sermons will be anointed by the Holy Ghost and speak to the reader's heart. I have gleaned from many books and life experiences to compile these sermons, and I give all the glory to God if they help someone to make heaven their home.

The Lord gave me the sermon "When God Says No!" after we had a set of stillborn twin boys. It has been several years since I preached it, but as I wrote the sermon, I felt the Holy Ghost moving in my soul just as strongly as the night I first preached it in Columbus, Ohio, over 30 years ago.

Stephen R. Gentry

Chapter 1

The Last Nail in Jezebel's Coffin

“And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face and tired her head, and looked out a window.” II Kings 9:30

Jezebel's parents, no doubt, were optimistic about their baby girl when they named her Jezebel. According to the *Old Testament Hebrew Lexical Dictionary*¹, Jezebel's Hebrew and Chaldee definition is to be chaste or modest. However, by the time of her death, she had completely changed the definition of her name. Today, if you look up Jezebel in the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*², it is defined as; an impudent, shameless, or morally unrestrained woman. At the same time, many people have ruined their name, none so thorough as Jezebel. So thoroughly and completely until no loving mother, knowing anything of the Bible would name their child Jezebel.

Parents often have great expectations for their children. They dream of their sons succeeding in business and obtaining great notoriety. They can imagine their

daughters winning pageants and marrying into royalty. But the reality is that the fruit usually does not fall far from the tree. The training of a child is the most crucial factor in character building. To have a daughter turn out to be a chaste and modest young lady, she needs to be shown by example the path that leads to these godly attributes. Prov. 22:6 said,

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

If one fails to train them in the way they should go, they will follow the path they are familiar with, no matter what you may name them.

Training a child is more than simply instructing them how to live; it encompasses creating a desire in them. Suppose a parent displays great excitement and joy in serving the Lord. It will be contagious. Their children will have a desire to also serve the Lord. If a parent gripes about the church, finds fault with the pastor, and acts like it is like taking bad medicine to attend a prayer meeting, their children will not desire to serve the Lord.

Jezebel was raised in idolatry. She was the daughter of the King of the Zidonians, Ethbaal. The area of the

Zidonians was in the coastal plains of Sidon and Tyre (now Lebanon). The Zidonians worshipped various false gods, the most notorious being Ashtoreth. They were also worshippers of Baal, after which Ethbaal was named. When Ahab took Jezebel to be his wife, he was influenced by Jezebel and her father to become a worshipper of Baal. I Kings 16:31 says,

“And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.”

Interestingly, the Bible never referred to her as a queen, but this was exactly what she was. As the wife of King Ahab, king of Israel, she possessed great power and influence even over her husband. The sad thing is that she influenced him toward evil. In fact, because of her influence, Ahab became one of the most wicked kings who ever lived. 1 Kings 21:25 states,

“But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.”

After Jezebel's marriage to Ahab, she becomes responsible for her own decisions. No matter if the training she received as a child has enabled her or crippled her, she will, from this point forward, give an account for every work she does in her life, whether it be good or whether it be evil. It shall be brought to judgment. Sadly, she begins committing terrible sinful acts, each a nail in her coffin.

To forge one's coffin means making conscious decisions determining the premature end of one's life. When someone decides to use tobacco, despite all the warnings on the cigarette packages and the pouches of tobacco, they make a deliberate decision that often leads to heart disease, emphysema, and cancer. These choices often feel good in the present time, but no thought is given to their future consequences.

I. Idolatry

Many nails went into the construction of Jezebel's coffin, sins she committed throughout her life. One of the first was idolatry. Idolatry is the worship of idols, extreme admiration, love, or reverence for something or someone.

The people of Israel worshipped Jehovah God, the one true and living God.

When Jezebel became Ahab's wife, she did not leave her Baal worship behind. Some may have thought that she would forsake idolatry and be converted to the worship of Jehovah, but instead, she converted Ahab to Baal worship. Missionary dating is never a good idea. If you are so carnal as to date them, you will never be spiritual enough to win them.

During Ahab's 22 years as the ruler of Israel, idolatry was unleashed, largely because Jezebel stirred Ahab up. According to I Kings 16:31-33, altars were set up for Baal, a temple was built for him in Samaria, and groves (shrines in various places) were made to worship him. Four hundred fifty prophets of Baal ministered in the Temple of Baal and four hundred prophets of the groves. I Kings 18:19 says all these "*eat at Jezebel's table.*" There was also the worship of Ashtoreth, the goddess of fertility.

In Ex. 20:3, the Bible states, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*" While most people today do not build a shrine to an idol or worship a wooden statue, many are guilty of idolatry. Money, power, sports, recreation, and so on are examples of modern-day idolatry. People often place God on a shelf and replace him with another love that consumes their time and

money. Something as innocent as fishing could become an idol. While there is nothing wrong with fishing, it is quite therapeutic. It should remain enjoyable but never hinder one from attending Sunday school and church. When you love fishing more than you love the church, you have an idol in your life.

William Bate illustrated idolatry in the heart: "Travelers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition, that they fill their huts with so many idols, they do not even leave room for their families. How many men fill their hearts with the idols of sin so that there is no room for the living God or any of his holy principles!"³

II. Murder

The next nail Jezebel used to build her coffin was murder. I Kings chapter 21:1-15 tells the story of Jezebel's devious plans to bring in two false witnesses that will accuse Naboth of blaspheming God. This is ironic, seeing how she abhors God.

The scripture says that Naboth had a vineyard in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab. Ahab spoke to Naboth about purchasing the vineyard so that he might make it into a garden of herbs. Naboth replied,

Chapter 1: The Last Nail in Jezebel's Coffin

“the Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.”

Ahab came into his house with a sad countenance. He turned his face to the wall and would eat no bread. Jezebel asks him, “Why is thy spirit so sad?”

He told her of Naboth's refusal to sell him the land in Jezreel. She said, “arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

Ahab never asks her how she would accomplish this deed. He knew her and had to suspect that it would not be by righteous means. He may have felt he would not be held responsible for whatever wicked action his wife, Jezebel, might take if he did not ask. However, when Elijah, the prophet, pronounced judgment upon Ahab in the vineyard, he received a death sentence for his unwillingness to step in and stop Jezebel from having Naboth murdered.

Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name to set Naboth high and honor him. Two men, sons of Belial, brought accusations against Naboth that he had blasphemed God. Naboth was carried outside the city and stoned to death. She then told Ahab to

take possession of the vineyard and that Naboth was dead.

This was not the only person that she murdered. In I Kings 18:13, the Bible said that Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord. Not only did she murder for personal gain but also in hatred of God and his prophets.

We know that murder is a sin. We have memorized the commandment in Ex. 20:13, "thou shalt not kill." But how many people have added a nail in their coffin by hating their brother? 1 John 3:15,

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

When you have such hatred toward a brother that you would wound them by word or deed, intending to embarrass or harm them, that hatred has turned malignant. The same spirit that would motivate men to murder now works in you. To murder one's brother, you need not a sword or poison but only a sharp tongue.

III. Seducing Spirit

Another nail in Jezebel's coffin was seducing the Lord's servants to sin. Rev. 2:20 says,

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

When someone chooses to reject Salvation, it is a tragic choice. But to portray to others that you have found a better way and then use lies and deception to persuade them to forsake Christ is a travesty.

A seducing spirit can take on various forms. One form is to claim a spiritual or intellectual insight superior to those they attempt to seduce. In the late 70s, Jim Jones, a preacher and political activist led a group of followers in a religious movement called the Peoples Temple. This group, at its peak, boasted over 3000 members. Jones seduced his followers to join a communal lifestyle in which many turned over all their income and property to Jones and the Peoples' Temple. The headquarters was in San Francisco, California. However, due to negative publicity and reports of abuse, Jones ordered the construction of a commune at Jonestown, Guyana; this was to be a socialist paradise, free from the suppression of the United States.

In 1978, Leo Ryan, a U.S. Representative, led a delegation investigating the reports that had trickled in from Jonestown. When Leo Ryan and four others wishing to leave the compound were boarding a plane, they were shot and killed by men from Jonestown. Jones then ordered a mass suicide that claimed 909 commune members, 304 of whom were children; almost all of the members died from drinking Flavor Aid laced with Cyanide.

In a signed note found at the time of his death, directions were given that Jones's assets were to be given to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Arrangements had already been made for \$7.3 million to be transferred to the Soviet Embassy in Guyana. ⁴

He seduced these poor people into taking their children's lives and their own. A seducing spirit is so persuasive that it hypnotizes victims and puts them in a literal trance. It causes them to lose discernment and their ability to reason logically.

The scriptures tell us that "that woman Jezebel" was allowed to teach and seduce the servants of the Lord. This does not mean that Jezebel was reincarnated;

rather, the same spirit that dwelled in Jezebel was dwelling in these false prophets. Through these seducing spirits, the servants of the Lord were defiling themselves. They were committing sins that they would not have previously committed.

These seducing spirits often tell people what they want to hear, sympathize with their troubles, and even give them money and gifts. They will assume the position of their closest friends, but if one fails to follow their teachings and wishes, they will often face their wrath or be ostracized.

IV. Lasciviousness

While several other nails could be mentioned that went into Jezebel's coffin, such as harlotry, lying, the persecution of God's people, etc., the last nail that went into the building of her coffin was the sin of lasciviousness.

Lasciviousness is an old English word. Webster defines lascivious as filled with or showing sexual desire, lewd, and lustful in acts/thoughts. To put it plainly, lasciviousness is when a person entices others through their dress, conversation, or actions to commit lewd acts or have lustful desires or thoughts.

It is listed in Galatians 5:19 as one of the works of the flesh,

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness..."

As mentioned, John the Revelator recorded that Jezebel would teach and seduce the servants of the Lord to commit fornication. Fornication is a sexual sin. It means to engage in premarital or extramarital sex before or outside of marriage. Lasciviousness creates the lust that leads to this sin.

In Rev. 2:21, the Bible says,

"And I gave her (Jezebel) space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."

God is very merciful. He offered a space of grace to Jezebel. Nineteen years before her death, the prophet Elijah had pronounced judgment upon Jezebel because of her murderous plot to kill Naboth. I Kings 21:23 states,

"And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel."

Nineteen years is quite a space to repent. She could have forsaken Baal and

worshipped the only true and living God, Jehovah. Who knows? This story might have ended differently if Jezebel had only repented.

However, when Jezebel realizes that Jehu, who is slaying the house of Saul, has arrived in Jezreel, she does not repent of her idolatry nor call out for God's mercy. But instead, she decides to dress and act provocatively to appeal to his manly weakness. Some women think that all men are the same. Every man can be captured by the black widow, who turns and kills her mate after she has her fling. I am glad there are still men of God who are not for sale. Men who will not compromise in the face of lasciviousness.

II Kings 9:30 says,

“And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face and tired her head, and looked out a window.”

When a person is a Christian, they take on the nature of Christ. They instinctively respond to situations in a way that reflects their lifestyle and commitment to Christ. While this is evident in a Christian's life, it is also visible in the life of the ungodly and unbelievers. Jezebel is facing God's judgment; she immediately

reacts as she has lived. She begins to try to seduce Jehu. She will quickly learn that this was not the right approach.

She painted her face. The first thing she did was apply makeup to her face. The first known use of cosmetics was in Egypt; women often used charcoal to blacken their eyes, a white powder to lighten their skin, and berry juices to stain their lips. This was originally done to appeal to Egypt's many gods. So, it was associated with idolatry at its conception. However, as time passed, it became common among heathen nations to use makeup to allure men. They would paint their face when they wanted men to look at them. It was like a calling card, announcing 'I'm available.' When Jezebel painted her face and stood in the window, she made a very forward statement to Jehu. She was letting him know that she was available for his pleasure. This would be considered an act of lasciviousness.

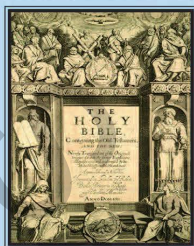
Instead of Jehu falling victim to Jezebel, He looked toward the window and asked the question. "*Who is on my side?*"

And there were two or three eunuchs who responded in the affirmative. To these, he commanded, "*Throw her down.*"

So, they threw her down. Jehu then trod her under the feet of the horses. After

GOD'S WORD TO MAN
A TRANSLATION, NOT A VERSION

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Stephen R. Gentry

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