

Bible Study Questions for *In the Shadow of Jezebel* by Mesu Andrews

In the Shadow of Jezebel tells the story of one woman's evil influence that reached into families, nations, and generations. Jizebaal, or Jezebel as the Scripture writers called her (a Hebrew word meaning "pile of dung"), was a Phoenician princess given in marriage to Ahab, son of Omri, king of Israel. Jezebel and Ahab's marriage established peace and trade between the seaport nation of Tyre and the exportable-goods nation of Israel, but Queen Jezebel brought more than peace and trade. She brought Baal.

1. Jezebel seemed to be the creative instigator of every sort of evil. Read the following verses and list the sins she committed.

1 Kings 18:4 _____

1 Kings 19:1–2 _____

1 Kings 21:8–14 _____

1 Kings 21:25 _____

2 Kings 9:22 _____

2. Though Jezebel seemed to be at the core of many evils, Ahab, like all of us, stood alone when called to judgment for his sins. Read the verses below and record the sins God credited against Ahab's personal choices.

1 Kings 16:30 _____

1 Kings 16:31 _____

1 Kings 16:32 _____

1 Kings 16:33 _____

3. Is there someone in your life who brings out the worst in you? Perhaps he or she goads you into wrongdoing or provokes you to sin in anger. How does remembering Ahab's personal responsibility for sin—in spite of Jezebel's manipulation—help you with your circumstance?

4. King Jehoshaphat was lauded in 2 Chronicles 17–20 as sort of a second Solomon, building on the trade success and spiritual renewal that his abba, King Asa, began. Read the following verses and record the examples of Jehoshaphat’s faithfulness to the Lord.

2 Chronicles 17:3–4 _____

2 Chronicles 17:6 _____

2 Chronicles 17:7, 9 _____

2 Chronicles 18:5–8 _____

2 Chronicles 20:2–5 _____

5. Like Solomon, Jehoshaphat made certain compromises that ultimately weakened his nation’s spiritual condition. List examples of Jehoshaphat’s compromises found in the following verses.

2 Chronicles 18:1 _____

2 Chronicles 18:2–3; 19:2–3 _____

2 Chronicles 20:32–33 _____

2 Chronicles 20:35–37 _____

6. Perhaps Jehoshaphat’s most destructive compromise was made at the end of his life—in his choice of successor. What do the following verses tell us about Jehoshaphat’s sons?

2 Chronicles 21:1 _____

2 Chronicles 21:2 _____

2 Chronicles 21:4 _____

2 Chronicles 21:12–13 _____

According to 2 Chronicles 21:3, why did Jehoshaphat appoint Jehoram as his successor? Have you ever made compromises based on societal rules of conduct? If so, how did it affect your relationship with the Lord? How did it affect other people?

7. Jehoshaphat followed the dictates of culture and tradition, naming his firstborn son, Jehoram, as heir to Judah's throne even though Jehoram's marriage aligned him with the house of Ahab, which openly worshiped Baal. How do the following verses show Jehoshaphat's efforts to safeguard Judah's spiritual future even after his death?

2 Chronicles 19:4–7 _____

2 Chronicles 19:8–10 _____

8. Read 2 Chronicles 21:4–6, 12–13. Why did Jehoshaphat's efforts to maintain spiritual integrity fail?

9. Could Jehoshaphat have acted differently and preserved Judah's faithfulness to Yahweh? If so, how might he have done so and obtained more godly results?

10. What attempts have you made to stay relevant to our current culture but also remain faithful to godly truths? How have you seen your efforts fail? How have you been successful?

11. By the time Ahab and Jehoshaphat reigned, Israel had been split into two nations: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings are parallel histories of God's chosen people; however, they emphasize different aspects of these nations' collective stories. If your Bible has section headings, list the topics addressed in the following chapters.

2 Chronicles 21–23

2 Kings 8-11

12. Skim the content in the above-mentioned chapters. What topics do you find in 2 Chronicles 21–23 that remain unspoken in 2 Kings 8–11?

What topics do you find in 2 Kings 8–11 that remain unspoken in 2 Chronicles 21–23?

Which kingdom—Israel or Judah—is emphasized in the book of 2 Kings?

13. What was Israel's capital city? (1 Kings 16:23–24) _____

Did Israel's capital city have a Yahweh Temple? (1 Kings 12:28–31) _____

Where did Yahweh's presence dwell in Israel? (2 Kings 2:9–14) _____

Why was Yahweh's anger stirred by false prophets?

14. What was Judah's capital city? (2 Sam. 5:6–9) _____

Did Judah's capital city have a Yahweh Temple? (1 Kings 6:1) _____

Where did Yahweh's presence dwell in Judah? (1 Kings 8:10–11) _____

Why was Yahweh's anger stirred when Judeans worshiped on high places instead of in the Temple?

15. In AD 70 the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome and never rebuilt. (Fortunately, God had already settled on a new plan—a new covenant.) Where did Yahweh's presence dwell then?

Read Romans 1:6. Who are among God's chosen people today?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. In what temple does God dwell today?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16–17. Why is God's anger stirred when we abuse our bodies?

16. Read 2 Chronicles 22:10–12. Let the horror—and wonder—of these events seep into your soul. The crazed daughter of Jezebel tried to murder every descendant of David, but one princess and her high priest husband hid a single Davidic prince for six years—in God’s Temple. You may wonder:

- Did this princess or high priest have a special relationship with the baby’s royal father, or was their bravery purely to preserve the Davidic covenant?
- Where in the Temple did they hide the prince? Did other priests know about him?
- Where did the high priest’s wife stay during her monthly uncleanness—not on the Temple holy grounds—and could they even have a child in the holy chambers of the Temple?
- Was the Temple used for worship during those six years or completely sealed off?
- What happened outside the Temple during those six years?

These were the kinds of questions that drove me to write this book. Nagging, troublesome unknowns crying out for deeper research. I searched maps, Josephus, commentaries, and diagrams of Jerusalem’s underground tunnels (yes, they’re real). However, at the end of *In the Shadow of Jezebel*, we’re still left with a few haunting questions.

Why didn’t anyone else in Judah openly confront Athaliah’s wickedness? No soldiers revolted. There is no record of a national outcry. What’s your best guess as to why no one rebelled against Judah’s deplorable queen?

17. What if *you* had witnessed Athaliah’s evil? Would you have sided with the daring few or melted into the silent majority? Why?

18. Jehoiada and Jehosheba acted quickly to save baby Joash (Jehoash), but they didn't act rashly. Read 2 Chronicles 23:1. How long did Jehoiada wait before placing Joash, David's descendant and rightful king, on Judah's throne?

19. What insights do the following verses give us about waiting on the Lord?

Proverbs 20:22 _____

Isaiah 40:31 _____

20. Has there been a situation in your life when wisdom dictated waiting—to build strength for a later battle? Explain.

21. What is one concept you've learned through *In the Shadow of Jezebel* that you hope to apply to your life?

Dear Reader,

Thanks for spending time with me in God's Word. If you've made a commitment or would like to offer feedback on the Bible study, group questions, or *In the Shadow of Jezebel*, please email me at mesu@mesuandrews.com or send a note to P.O. Box 873243, Vancouver, WA 98687.

In His Arms with You,
Mesu Andrews