

*No pride, no matter how adorned with power and cunning,
can prevail against the word of The LORD.*

Jezebel

An Epic of Power, Prophecy, and Judgment

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This is a work of historical fiction inspired by the biblical accounts recorded in the Books of Kings. While the core events are drawn from Scripture, certain scenes, dialogue, characters, and narrative elements have been imaginatively reconstructed for dramatic purposes.

Scripture references are primarily based on the biblical books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings, unless otherwise noted.

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An Epic of Power, Prophecy, and Judgment

JOHN OLSEN

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This novel is a work of historical fiction based primarily on the biblical accounts found in 1 Kings 16–22 and 2 Kings 1–10. These chapters recount the reign of King Ahab of Israel, the influence of Queen Jezebel of Sidon, the prophetic ministry of Elijah and Elisha, and the rise of Jehu.

While the major events in this narrative follow the biblical record, certain characters, dialogues, and scenes have been imaginatively expanded in order to bring the historical world of the ancient Near East to life. Cultural descriptions of Phoenicia, Sidon, Samaria, and the political alliances of the period draw from historical and archaeological research regarding the ninth century BCE.

The intention of this work is not to replace Scripture, but to illuminate the historical and human setting in which these biblical events unfolded.

Prologue

THE WINDOW OF JEZREEL

Night had settled over Jezreel like a veil drawn across a kingdom already judged. High above the courtyard, a woman stood at the palace window. Torches flickered along the walls as wind moved through the city, their light catching the gold woven into her garments. Servants moved below in hurried silence, speaking in whispers, as though the stones themselves were listening.

Jezebel did not move. Beyond the gates of the city, the road from Ramoth-Gilead cut across the valley like a scar through the earth. Somewhere along that road a chariot was coming. She knew it. The prophets had spoken for years. Their words had followed her like shadows across kingdoms and seasons. They had stood before kings and armies and declared judgment with the certainty of men who believed heaven itself stood behind them.

But queens do not bow to shadows. She lifted her chin and looked out over Jezreel, the city that had once trembled at her

command. Towers stood against the night sky. Courtyards where soldiers once shouted her name lay quiet now. The vineyards stretched dark beyond the walls. Somewhere in those fields Naboth had once stood. And somewhere in those fields the word of a prophet had begun its slow, relentless work.

The story of Jezebel was never merely the story of a queen. It was the story of power, ambition, and the collision between throne and covenant. In the golden courts of Sidon and the stone halls of Israel, ambition, desire, greed, and idolatry moved like unseen currents beneath the surface of power. They bent men and kingdoms alike, corrupting loyalties, poisoning devotion, and summoning consequences that no throne could escape.

Unchecked ambition devours honor. Idolatry enslaves the heart to what is false. Greed twists the soul until power itself becomes a god. These forces were not confined to ancient courts. They shape the rise and fall of nations in every age.

Jezebel had mastered them all. She had understood something few rulers ever grasp: that dominion is not secured by armies alone, but by shaping what people fear, what they worship, and what they believe to be true. Through temple and throne, through ritual and alliance, she had woven influence into the fabric of a kingdom. Kings bent. Priests obeyed.

Prophets were hunted. Yet even as her power spread across Israel, another force moved quietly through the land.

Prophets. Men who possessed neither armies nor crowns, yet spoke with the authority of a word they claimed came from heaven itself.

Among them stood Elijah. Years earlier he had appeared before the throne without banner or escort and declared that the heavens themselves would close. And the heavens had obeyed.

From that moment forward the collision had begun: human ambition against divine authority.

The vineyards of Naboth, the fires of Carmel, the fall of kings and the rise of Jehu, all had moved toward this night. Now the valley lay silent. Far beyond the walls, horses were already running.

Jezebel stood unmoving at the window, daughter of Sidon, queen of Israel, ruler who had shaped kingdoms through fear and devotion alike. If judgment had come for her, it would find her standing. Far below, the wind stirred the dust of Jezreel.

And history had begun to close its hand.

Act I

THE SEED OF DOMINION

Nine centuries before the birth of Christ, along the sun-drenched shores of the Mediterranean, Phoenicia thrived, enigmatic, wealthy, and feared. The world was a crucible of power. And Sidon was its anvil. Tyre glittered with wealth and gold; Sidon with secrets, smoke, and shadow. Phoenician sailors carved trading empires across the waves, their ships carrying cedar, purple dye, and cunning to the farthest reaches of the known world. Commerce was conquest; trade, a language of influence; ambition, a tide moving unseen beneath the surface of the sea.

Sidon breathed salt and incense beneath the rising heat. Streets twisted like veins, alive with merchants calling over spice-laden stalls, craftsmen weaving fabrics dyed with the rare purple of crushed murex shells, and priests threading through columns of stone with solemn steps, smoke twisting like serpents toward the bright sky. Bronze statues glimmered in torchlight, eyes

unblinking, following every passerby. Altar fires cast shadows that danced across courtyards, drawing the faithful into ritual and awe. Here, devotion and fear were inseparable. Trade financed worship, and worship cemented authority. Even the stones knew the value of fear, beauty, and influence. Sidon itself pulsed with ambition, strategy, and reverence.

At the heart of this city stood Ethbaal: king, priest, architect of obedience. His name in the Phoenician tongue meant “With Baal,” for the storm god of fertility, whom the people believed ruled rain and harvest, was invoked in every temple and marketplace. He had seized his throne with blade and cunning, merging the authority of altar and crown. Every gesture fell beneath his gaze. Merchants whispered, guards aligned, priests chanted, Sidon moved as one organism, an engine of allegiance powered by culture, ritual, and devotion.

Ethbaal had not been born to the throne. Through calculated violence, ritual precision, and unwavering cunning, he claimed both kingship and priesthood. The bronze idols, ceremonies, and public devotion were instruments of control, tools of obedience, not manifestations of divine power. King Phelles fell beneath his blade, swift and merciless, and from that night Ethbaal fused political authority with spiritual dominion, orchestrating fear and loyalty as a master of men.

Under his hand, Sidon rose like a city of living citadels. Limestone temples crowned with cedar beams pierced the sky; walls bore serpents, lions, and sacred symbols glinting in sunlight. Incense spiraled endlessly from bronze censers, mingling with the sharp tang of burning offerings. Alleys, plazas, and markets carried devotion and dread alike. Statues of Asherah presided over the city, her alabaster face both alluring and severe. Shadowed niches housed flickering lamps, giving her presence a life of its own. Obedience was not requested, it was inevitable.

The cult that Ethbaal commanded did not merely exist, it consumed the city. Rituals of Baal and Asherah deepened into rites whispered behind temple doors. Blood was offered. Fear bound the city tighter than law. Priests and devotees trembled beneath the weight of these ceremonies, their chants echoing across marble halls and narrow streets, a hypnotic symphony of dread and devotion.

Ethbaal understood that dominion was rooted in hearts, not stone. He placed Baal at the center, not as ornament, but as instrument, binding loyalty, fear, and obedience into one unbroken current. Temples, statues, incense, rituals, all levers of unseen power, interlaced with governance, commerce, and law. By merging belief with authority, culture with command, he forged a city that moved as one, its people not performing devotion, but living allegiance.

Amid Sidon's marble towers and sunlit terraces, power had a scent: incense, salt, and crushed murex. Ethbaal moved among bronze altars and perfumed corridors, king, and once a priest of the temple, a ruler who had fused altar and throne into a single authority, noting every gesture of obedience and every flicker of devotion. Dominion, he understood, was not secured by swords alone, but by shaping what people feared, believed, and obeyed.

And then, in the stillest hour before dawn, a new rhythm entered the world. Within the palace, heavy with incense and perfumed with crushed murex, Ethbaal's firstborn daughter emerged into the flicker of torchlight. Jezebel. The midwives whispered, priests inclined their heads, and even the torches seemed to bow to her tiny form.

The sea breathed against Sidon's harbor walls, carrying the scent of salt and tar. Lanterns swayed from the masts of anchored ships, casting trembling shadows across the water as the city continued its restless pulse.

"Jezebel," Ethbaal intoned, voice low, deliberate, carrying the cadence of temple chants. Not merely a name, but a decree, a prophecy. Not a child, but a vessel of destiny, a living instrument of Sidon's ambition. The night held its breath. Winds whispered through open windows, heralding a force that would one day bend kingdoms. In her tiny frame was

consecrated the future of Sidon's dominion: strategy, obedience, and the weaving of hearts.

From her first breath, Jezebel absorbed Sidon's rhythm. The flicker of a priest's eye, the hesitation of a guard, the alignment of servants, all etched themselves into her mind. Festival days became lessons in strategy: processions of fire and color, tilts of crowns, sways of robes, the subtle art of commanding awe. In quiet evenings, Ethbaal spread maps across her lap, tracing rivers of loyalty, streets of obedience, tributaries of influence. Faith, culture, and perception were tools of rule.

Even in play, she practiced command: dolls became courtiers, stones soldiers, hands rising and falling in silent authority. By the time she walked the terraces, her mind moved like a general surveying unseen battlefields. Every ritual, every market, every subtle cue became threads in the tapestry she would one day weave. Arrow and bow, herald and hand, she would bend kingdoms and hearts alike, carrying forward her father's vision.

Sidon slept, unaware. Her presence alone would stretch Sidon's reach beyond stone walls, bending devotion, awe, and fear to a single purpose: obedience.

By twelve, Jezebel stood upon the palace terrace, small yet unyielding, her eyes sharp and calculating. She scanned the

harbor: sailors tightening lines, guards shifting their posts, merchants whispering over their wares. Even in her youth she grasped what many kings never learned, that kingdoms seldom collapse by the sword alone, but first in the quiet surrender of human hearts. From childhood she had watched the priests of Baal move through Sidon's temples, learning that devotion could command obedience as surely as an army.

Below, the courtyard had become a stage of discipline. Torches flickered like soldiers; bronze armor gleamed, shields aligned. Bread ovens puffed warm smoke, voices murmured, hammers clanged, yet the city's pulse beat under her watchful eyes. Sidon had become a theater of obedience, and she, its quiet conductor.

Ethbaal stood at the center, crimson robes flowing, eyes piercing, cataloging every gesture. Above him, Baal's bronze statue loomed, lightning bolt raised, shadow stretching across the courtyard like a living omen. Stars bore witness to the consolidation of power.

By dawn, heralds proclaimed: "Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians." Ships docked, silver changed hands, vats of Tyrian purple steamed anew. Sidon had survived the night, but for Jezebel, the world had shifted. She had seen the mechanics of obedience, the fragility of power, and the canvas upon which she would one day leave her mark. Seeds of strategy and dominion

had been planted in silence, and the world beyond Sidon would one day feel their harvest.

Thus fell the house of Ahab.
And the Word stood.



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