



The Jezebel Yoke

Breaking
Free from
Bondage &
Deception

SANDIE FREED

Foreword by BILL HAMON

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Bondage & Deception

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“I visited Mount Carmel where Elijah overcame Jezebel’s prophets of Baal. To Elijah, the battle with Jezebel was overwhelming, yet physically Mount Carmel is small and insignificant. It’s not the size of the battle but its significance that intimidates us. Sandie draws us into the vortex of faith and shows us how to win this war.”

Barbara J. Yoder, senior pastor and lead apostle, Shekinah Equipping and Revival Center

“Sandie’s writings are coming from a heart of compassion, for she is writing from life experiences where she has fought the battle and learned how to deliver oneself from the yoke of Jezebel. Read with confidence knowing that you are receiving proven workable principles and practices.”

Dr. Bill Hamon, bishop of Christian International Apostolic Network; from the foreword

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Foreword

Dr. Sandie Freed has *done it again*. Only this book gives you wisdom and understanding of how to deliver yourself from the yoke of Jezebel. She helps you recognize the deceitful and manipulative tactics of the Jezebel spirit.

Every thought we think, every attitude we have, and every action we take is motivated by one of three spirits—our own spirit, God’s Spirit or Satan’s spirit. The Jezebel spirit is definitely one of Satan’s spirits. Sandie gives clear insights and ways of determining what spirit is motivating you to think or act the way you do.

Sandie is not just speaking from book learning. She has lived the life and has had to overcome the Jezebel spirit. I have learned in my 58 years of ministry that whatever truth and ministry we are called to reveal and minister to people, those are the things we have to go through. These experiences that the devil throws at us and God allows us to go through give us wisdom and insight to overcome and then help others to avoid the snares of the enemy and show them how to overcome. It also gives the person the passion and willingness to do what he or she can to help others by writing books and ministering the truth that sets people free.

I have known Sandie for many years as my spiritual daughter and have helped walk her through some of these different life experiences. Her writings are coming from a heart of compassion, for she is writing from life experiences where she has fought the battle and learned how to deliver oneself from the yoke of Jezebel.

Read with confidence knowing that you are receiving proven workable principles and practices.

Thanks, Sandie, for sharing the truths you have learned through much suffering and near-death experiences. May God greatly bless you and reward you abundantly for sharing your life with us.

Your Bishop,
Dr. Bill Hamon
Bishop of Christian International
Apostolic Network (CIAN)
Author of *Day of the Saints*
and ten other major books

Preface

Welcome to an opportunity to be loosed from the captivity of deceiving spirits connected to Jezebel. Never before have I felt so compelled to empower my readers with revelation that will help them be freed from captivity. I remain passionate about helping others be loosed from the grip of Satan; maybe this is due to the fact that I, myself, have cried out in desperation to be freed from various yokes of captivity. Knowing that much of the bondage I experienced was due to deception from the enemy—and then my believing his lies—has strengthened the mandate I have to help others. My desire is to expose the many different tactics of Satan with the hope that others who cry out for freedom can experience abundant life, which Jesus promises.

My prayer is that you are as desperate to be free as I have been. I have been called by others a *freedom fighter*. It is a fitting mantle, I believe. I have had to fight diligently to be free and to walk in different levels of freedom. Though Christ paid the price for our freedom at the cross, there still remains a personal battle as each of us takes off the old man and puts on the new. This book is meant to empower you to do just that.

If you are truly committed to freedom and are as desperate as I am to remain free, I have faith that you will be able to submit to the Holy Spirit and experience His power to loose you from Jezebel's yokes of captivity. In fact, I truly believe that you will be set free from different yokes and slip right out of the enemy's clutches as you progress from chapter to chapter! You will notice as you read that this entire book is focused on "slipping" out of every yoke that has oppressed you in life.

I have to admit that while writing this book I sometimes felt as if I were taking one step forward in victory and then backing away two steps, only to realize I was being blocked by darkness. In other words, the spirit of Jezebel and her cohorts did not wish this book to be written. I have had to press

forward for revelation that will help you take hold of the increase that God promises.

My determination to remain properly positioned before God so that I could hear what He was speaking on this subject came from a particular dream. In the dream, I kept seeing the word *vortex*. It was a simple dream, actually. The word *vortex* kept appearing before me in written form, and I was speaking to others concerning “the dynamics of a vortex.” Upon awakening from the dream, I immediately felt the Lord impress upon me these three words: *vortex*, *whirlwind* and *waterspout*. I awoke knowing that there was a supernatural vortex that God was going to provide for the readers of this book. I was greatly encouraged by this. In fact, I believe that because I remained focused on what the spiritual vortex would do for my readers, I was able to continue to write with great passion.

As you read, keep this word *vortex* in the forefront of your mind. God desires to place you in His vortex, a spiritual *whirlwind* of His power. If you recall, it was a whirlwind that God used to take Elijah to heaven. I believe that God’s breath is blowing life upon you. You can be captivated by this spiritual vortex and power-thrust into greater freedom.

Also, keep in mind that God is bringing you to His *waterspout*. Psalm 42:7 says, “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts” (KJV). He is the river of living water, and He has abundant life planned for you. He is calling you into a time of discovering how great His love is for you. He desires to reveal your future and release a great flow of blessings!

Remember this and you will become more empowered to break free from yokes binding you to spirits of darkness. Allow your faith for breakthrough to begin to arise.

Because I am a freedom fighter, I remain committed to completing this project, for I have passion within me, like the biblical figure David, to record my thoughts and feelings. This book is truly a testimony of one on a road to freedom. I can also testify that writing is a catharsis; it truly eases the pain this prophet experiences due to my mandate to remain a voice for God. I have always believed that for a Christian, pain is never wasted. God redeems our traumas and uses them for His glory. I have learned firsthand that His grace *really is* sufficient—though I did not truly know that until I was on the other side of the challenges. I can now write with great confidence concerning His grace and His faithfulness, because I have come out of much trauma, trauma that brought me nearly to the point of death.

Let me assure you that Satan wants each of us to remain deceived concerning the goodness of God. The Deceiver is actively targeting your future and attempting to steal your destiny. The enemy is prideful and believes that he can defeat the plans and purposes of God concerning you. Dear one, the Deceiver is deceived! God says that nothing . . . absolutely *nothing* . . . can keep you from His love (see Romans 8:37–39). God’s love encompasses His faithfulness to authorize you not only to achieve your destiny, but also to walk in the fullness of His covenant promises. Even so, the Deceiver has appointed different spirits to target your trust in God’s faithfulness. We will examine the different strongholds and spirits that Jezebel uses to yoke you as a captive, as well as the lies that rob you of your faith in God.

This book is a testimony to God’s faithfulness and His divine plans for fulfillment in your life and mine. At the end of every chapter you will be given time for self-reflection. We will get “up close and personal” as we take healthy looks at our lives and take inventory of our doubt and unbelief so that we can become whole. We will examine both the Old Testament and the New Testament searching for truth. Keep in mind that when we observe the Old Testament it is not for the purpose of remaining yoked to the Law, but rather for gaining information to use to break free. I know you will agree with me that it is time to move out of the past! Let’s believe *now* for His grace to go forward. He is knocking at the door of our hearts, desiring to reveal the splendor that comes from trusting Him for our every need.

Run quickly to Him. Open your heart wide to Him. Trust Him in the journey to break off yokes and lead you out of captivity. I want you to embrace freedom. Let’s become unyoked together!

Acknowledgments

It has always been comforting for me to realize that I don't have to know "everything" to be used by God. I am so thankful for the list of people (whom I now acknowledge) for believing in Sandie Freed—or should I say the "Christ Jesus" in Sandie Freed. After all, without Him there is absolutely no grace at all to fulfill destiny. I am certain that those who have supported me over the years saw something greater in me than I could see. It had to be God!

I wish once again to thank my faithful friend and intercessor, Paula Bledsoe, for all of her "overtime work."

To all of my personal intercessors—none of this would happen without your prayers and support.

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To Mom and Pop Hamon—thank you for your support over the years. You are such a blessing and inspiration. Dr. Bill, you are an inspiration to nations, and I honor you for your theological insight and impartation to the Body of Christ.

To Jim and Jeanni Davis—thank you for being there for us over the years as good friends and mentors. And to Dr. Jim—the theologian I acknowledge for all of my manuscripts—a big Texas hug and thanks!

I wish to acknowledge my family, especially my husband, Mickey, for his support and my precious sister, Pam, for always being the wind beneath my wings.

Very special thanks to Ann Weinheimer for all of her support during this project. Ann, you are amazing! Thank you for making me look good on paper. I have enjoyed working with you on this book and I look forward to more in the future. You are a blessing to the Body of Christ.

And, finally, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my precious friend and editorial director of Chosen Books, Jane Campbell, who not only encourages me during seasons of “writer’s block,” but is also there just when I need “girlfriend time.” You are an extremely gifted lady with such compassion for the Body of Christ. I love you, girlfriend!

Introduction

She's a Jezebel! We most often attach that familiar phrase and the Old Testament name of *Jezebel* to women who are seductive in nature with heavily painted faces, or to women who are overly aggressive, controlling and manipulative. While that is not a wholly inaccurate description, the historical Jezebel, who as wife of King Ahab was queen of Israel, was much more than a control freak: Jezebel was inspired by the Deceiver, Satan himself, to establish Phoenician idolatry on a grand scale at her husband's court. To further her cause, she slew the prophets of Jehovah, murdered Naboth for his vineyard and then threatened the life of the prophet Elijah.

Jezebel is also mentioned in the New Testament. Revelation 2:20 describes a Jezebel-type of influence operating in the church of Thyatira. Jesus addressed the church of Thyatira and rebuked it for allowing the woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the servants of God. Jezebel's intent in that New Testament church, just as it is today, was to cut off the voice of God's true prophets. Obviously, this cannot be the same identical woman mentioned in the Old Testament who was the queen of Israel; rather, it was the same evil *spirit* seducing the believers in the church.

Identifying the Evil Spirit

We can easily conclude by the mention of Jezebel in both the Old and New Testaments that this evil influence of Satan, operating through a Jezebel-type *spirit*, lives on and operates even today. This evil spirit continues to seek out individuals, whether male or female (the spirit is non-gender), whom it can influence both in the church and outside the church. The Jezebel spirit works

through many different avenues that we will discuss throughout this book. For now, understand that control and manipulation are two of its most identifiable characteristics. In the local church, the spirit can be found in both leadership and congregation. In the marketplace, a Jezebel spirit might manifest through a controlling boss or a seductive competitor. At home, the Jezebel spirit can operate not only through a husband or wife, but also through a controlling child.

Another identifiable characteristic is false prophecy—remember that Jezebel called herself a “prophetess.” Later I will expand upon the false prophecy and witchcraft that affect us today. We have all been affected by false prophecy through Jezebel’s deceptions and the lies of the Deceiver. At the end of this Introduction, you will find a yoke of Jezebel “test.” By the answers you give, you will begin to identify her deceptions in your life.

For now, allow me to ask you a few questions. Do you ever tell others “I can’t seem to find my place”? Have you experienced times when you seem to not “fit” in your local church? Do you move from one congregation or ministry to another to “find your spot”? Have you noticed that it is difficult for you to find any sense of peace or fulfillment in life? These are all symptoms that the Jezebel spirit and her tools of deception and temptation are working against your freedom. The Jezebel spirit attempts to deceive you into believing that you do not belong or that others are continually rejecting you. All of us are confronted by her at one time or another.

Let me ask you a few more questions. Have you been experiencing chronic dissatisfaction? By this I mean, have you sought joy and feel as if you have it, but later realize it was merely a fleeting sense of happiness? Are you frustrated with your life and yourself? At times, do you truly believe that you will never feel loved and accepted? Again, if so, it is very possible that you have been deceived into believing that you cannot trust God for your total fulfillment. You may even be trusting in counterfeit gods without realizing it. The Jezebel spirit is a strong promoter of idolatry.

It is possible that you have been so influenced by the Jezebel spirit that your life feels as if it is spinning out of control. Or you might have awakened one morning and faced the fact that your life is in chaos. *Chaos* is a word used to describe utter confusion and complete disorder. Spiritually, we know that God is not the author of confusion; the enemy is. When a Jezebel spirit is in operation in our lives, we will most likely experience chaos, confusion and

disorder. It is possible in this instance that the spirit of lawlessness may also be in effect.

The book that you now hold in your hands will guide you into freedom from the many different yokes of Jezebel and the deceptions of the enemy, including idolatry.

Driving Jezebel Away

In my previous book *Breaking the Threefold Demonic Cord*, I wrote extensively about the spirit of Jezebel and her relationship to two seducing cohorts, Athaliah (her daughter) and Delilah. My pursuit for current revelation of the working of this spirit led to an understanding of the different yokes that she uses, and how we can break free from her oppression.

Again, when I write about Jezebel, I am not in any way stating that we battle the same woman whose story is told in 1 Kings 16–21 and 2 Kings 9, the queen who slew God’s prophets and sent Elijah running off to a cave. Neither am I suggesting that she is “haunting” people today, as if she were a ghost seeking revenge on Christians. Jezebel is one of the evil powers in the hierarchy mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 6, and she is bent on destroying God’s people. As you continue to read, you will gain greater understanding of the ways this spirit manipulates individuals in order to gain authority and maintain her hold.

When the Israelites entered their Promised Land, they were given instructions not to make any covenant, or come into agreement, with their enemies. They were told to “utterly destroy all.” This is the ground rule that we also must follow. We must drive the evil influence of Jezebel from our land. We cannot show any mercy, nor can we tolerate this spirit in any way.

If you have become yoked with the Jezebel spirit, you will have to drive her out of your life completely, or else the roots of this spirit will go even deeper and steal more of your future. Have no mercy on this spirit. As you read, let God’s Holy Spirit alert you to any areas where you need to repent and shift into His plan for your life.

If you decide to enforce this ground rule right now, you will show the devil that you are not renewing Jezebel’s lease as a tenant in your territory! Dear one, believe me: The demons connected to Jezebel will try to convince you to

leave them alone and not drive them out (see Mark 5:7). Jezebel would love to remain in your life, all the while gaining more ground. After all, she convinced her husband, Ahab, to make a place in Israel for her idols, thus seducing the entire territory into idolatry. This is serious stuff, and the devil knows it. Whatever you do, remain positioned before God with a divine determination that you will fulfill your destiny. The enemy will lie to you as you read this book. Be passionate about reading from cover to cover. You will not be disappointed.

Beloved, we cannot allow any spirit of deception, especially Jezebel, to remain in control of our lives. Many have heard me say, “If you ask the devil to dinner, he brings a suitcase.” It is true! I know this firsthand. I thank God for the blood of Jesus that cleanses me, and for His power over any demonic influence that tries to control my behavior.

I am so glad that you have decided to take this journey with me. If this is the first time you have journeyed with me along what I call “Freedom Road,” welcome! For those of you who have traveled with me before, welcome back. I am honored to have you along as we slip free from the yoke of Jezebel and her companion spirits of deception.

The next section offers a checklist to help you determine the grip of a Jezebel spirit on your life. Let’s begin our journey.

The
Jezebel Yoke
“Test”

Are you yoked with a Jezebel spirit? Place a check on each line that relates to you, your spouse or any blood relative.

- Patterns of desolation, barrenness, lack of fulfillment or hopelessness
- Patterns of fear, terror and anxiety attacks
- Addictions or eating disorders
- Insecurity and inferiority
- Problem submitting to authority
- Division in relationships and organizations
- Extreme jealousy
- Prophetic ministry used to manipulate for money or position, or to gain attention
- Gossip and false accusations
- Codependent behavior and the need to control relationships or be controlled by others
- Sexual seduction to gain control

- ___ Refusal to repent or ask for forgiveness; also refusal to forgive others in order to remain in control
- ___ Manipulation of others to gain control
- ___ History of chronic dissatisfaction
- ___ Extreme interest in activities that consume majority of time, such as success or sports
- ___ Family history of idolatry
- ___ Struggles with doubt and unbelief concerning God's faithfulness and His Word
- ___ Performance-orientation and perfectionism
- ___ Having continually to "prove" one's self-worth

If you answered *yes* to *any* of the above questions, it is highly possible that you have been yoked with a Jezebel spirit. Because this is a generational stronghold, its appearance anywhere in your family indicates the potential for your yoking as well. Dear one, the Redeemer is present to set you free from every yoke that binds you. Decide today. Turn the page and begin your journey into freedom.

The Jezebel Yoke of Desolation

Elijah the Tishbite, of the temporary residents of Gilead, said to Ahab, As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years but according to My word.

1 Kings 17:1, AMP

Desolation. This is what the prophet Elijah foretold when he spoke these words to Ahab, king of Israel. No dew or rain? To King Ahab this message was clear: *suffering, loss, death, sorrow*. . . . We might imagine that the king believed the prediction spoken to him that day. Even though he had long since abandoned the God of his fathers, Ahab knew from Israel's painful history that God spoke through His prophets. No, there was no point in arguing. Desolation would come, and he could surely picture in his mind's eye the catastrophic results: loss of livestock due to drought, crops failing, even the possibility of citizens rioting as they cried out for food and water.

I hope they don't come to the palace expecting me to do something about their problems! Ahab knew his guards would defend the palace wells and gardens. He and his wife would be sustained. At this thought of his wife, the king paused. How might she respond during hard times? *Jezebel won't handle loss well*, he decided. But then he cheered some. *She'll come up with something to save us. She always knows how to handle tough situations. She will*

probably alert her prophets to make sacrifices to Baal—our god that controls the rain. After all, what can I do about this? I'll just leave it up to her.

We can glean from Scripture that Ahab had more confidence in his wife than in Jehovah God. The words from the prophet Elijah were meant to sting his conscience in order to alert him to the danger of continuing to turn to her false gods. He was being given the opportunity to renounce idolatry. But Ahab's faith in God Almighty had been too long abandoned: He was in covenant with—yoked together with—Jezebel. And the ultimate result of a Jezebel yoke is devastation.

It was a dark day in Israel. No longer was the voice of the prophet heeded. *This was just as Jezebel desired; her ultimate intent was to shut the mouths of the legitimate, godly prophets and lead the people into covenant with her.* When a prophet is no longer heeded and the Word of God is thereby cut off, Jezebel more easily slips her yoke around unsuspecting individuals, and the results are catastrophic: *desolation in every area of life.*

The story of Ahab and his yoking with Jezebel's idolatry helps us understand that our own partnering in any manner with the evil spirit that drove her—the spirit is also known as “Jezebel”—leads ultimately to desolation. Throughout this book we will look at the many methods the enemy uses to encourage that partnership, and we will discover many yokes that bind us. For now, let's take a moment to look a little more closely at what the Bible tells us about this idolatrous couple. From their story we see a clear picture of how this evil spirit works.

Days of Provocation

As we talk about being “yoked” with Jezebel, imagine the way a yoke brings two animals, such as two oxen, together. Spiritually, a yoke is similar to a covenant relationship—with two options. On the one hand, we can choose to be yoked with the Lord Jesus and walk in His goodness and righteousness. On the other hand, if we choose the way of sin, we can become yoked with evil. Any time we agree with the lies of Satan, we are making a covenant agreement with him. This, in turn, yokes us with darkness. Dear one, we can do the same thing without even realizing it!

Ahab was in covenant with the deceptions of Jezebel and her idols. When he became yoked to idolatrous worship, he provoked God. God responded by raising up Elijah to prophesy into the darkness, stating that a drought would result from the national sin that Ahab had fostered.

When God is provoked, it is a serious matter. I believe that if Ahab had repented when he heard the announcement of judgment, the results might have been different. Was God provoking Ahab to repentance? Provocation is meant to stir up some action—I am convinced of that. When God convicts our hearts concerning an action that needs to be taken, He is provoking our passivity toward doing the work of the Kingdom. To get us moving, especially during times of confusion (I am sure you can see that confusion is another sign that Jezebel is active), He will allow adversity—often thought of as dry seasons—to provoke us to action.

Let me explain what I mean by giving you this example. There is a message of deception being spoken today that we, as believers, do not have to suffer. This is a delusion and a lie from the Deceiver. (The Deceiver is a manifestation of Satan that works closely with Jezebel.) Paul, writing to Timothy, stated that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12, NKJV). Paul went on to say that “evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (verse 13, NKJV).

Do you know who the most adept impostor is? Satan, the Deceiver. Many times he comes to us as an angel of light. He will attempt to speak like the voice of God, all for the purpose of deceiving us. Satan would love for us to believe that we never have to suffer so that, whenever we do suffer, we will doubt God and His Word. Beloved, let us not be deceived when we go through dry seasons. A dry season sent by God will provoke us to seek Him more. When we are dry and thirsty and experience our own type of wilderness, God uses it to provoke us to cry out for His refreshing rains.

When God warned Ahab of desolation, He was addressing not only Ahab’s sin, but also his *passivity*. Ahab was a puppet in the hands of his controlling and manipulating wife. Passivity is an obstacle to believers today as well. We are a part of God’s army; yet at times we would rather resort to sitting on the sidelines, remaining inactive like civilians. Let’s face it: None of us really enjoys conflict. But the reality is that we are at war with Satan’s army—namely Jezebel and spirits of deception. We cannot remain passive. This is why God will allow adversity—some “in your face” type of conflict—that will provoke us to rise up and tear down false altars in our lives.

How tragic that Ahab did not take an axe immediately to his altars of Baal and his Asherah poles on the high places! When God is provoked, He raises up a prophet to speak truth. Ahab should have been provoked to destroy all, but instead he submitted to Jezebel. What will we determine or decide today when the Holy Spirit convicts us? Let us grab an axe and tear down every high thing.

The Sting of Death

As king, Ahab was held responsible for the sins into which Israel fell. Though Jezebel brought her idols with her when she married Ahab, God still addressed Ahab for allowing it. It is interesting to note that any time a pastor or senior leader of a church (or even a husband or family elder or head of a business) allows a Jezebel spirit to rule and reign, God ultimately holds the leader responsible for that sin.

The Bible says, “Now sin is the sting of death, and sin exercises its power. . . . But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory [making us conquerors] through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:56–57, AMP). A “sting” is symbolic of a death structure. In Scripture, it is equal to the venomous strike of a snake. Elijah’s word warned Ahab that anguish of soul was poised and ready to sting him; the same can be said for anyone who is yoked with Jezebel.

When Elijah delivered his prophecy concerning drought and desolation, it was not a random or ungrounded utterance; it was a word of judgment. I am sure that Ahab understood the judgment. As king of Israel, he had been versed to some degree concerning the Law. But through his long reign over Israel (reigning in Samaria for 22 years, from 876–854 B.C.), he showed contempt for that Law. Ahab is said to have done “more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him” (1 Kings 16:30).

Why was he more evil than other kings? Let’s read what Scripture says concerning him:

He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

Let's look with personal application at the ways Ahab provoked God to anger, actions that led to the judgment of desolation. As we do this, you might also begin to consider carefully whether or not you have been yoked with a Jezebel spirit, and the possibility that God may be talking to you, right now. And, dear one, if He is, then He is allowing an anointed time of repentance.

Let me be blunt about this: None of us can afford to shift the blame or deny our culpability whenever the Lord is leading us into seasons of repentance. We must also consider the fact that the effects of curses from our sins are passed down to future generations (see Exodus 20:5; 34:7). I am sure you are like me and desire for the generations to be loosed from heavy yokes. Let's now move forward, prayerfully.

1. Ahab committed sin and considered his sins "trivial." Ask yourself: Do you consider your sins "trivial"? If so, a Jezebel spirit may be blocking repentance.
2. Ahab married Jezebel, a Sidonian, an idol worshiper. Ask yourself: With whom or what are you in covenant? In other words, have you agreed with Satan's lies, or the lies of Jezebel? If so, you have made an ungodly covenant.
3. Ahab began to serve and worship the false god, Baal. Ask yourself: Do you have any idols in your life that you serve? Open your heart to the Holy Spirit now and ask Him to begin to show you if any reside there. Here are a few examples that you may relate to. Do you expect your mate to fulfill all your needs? Or maybe your children? Or maybe your job? This is a form of idolatry because only God promises to fulfill us. How do you view money? Have you considered that money may be an idol if your dependence is upon it rather than God?
4. Ahab built an altar for Baal in Samaria. Ask yourself: Have you allowed Satan to have any seated position in your life? Any area where the enemy rules and reigns in our lives is considered to be a seat of Satan (see Revelation 2:13).
5. Ahab made an Asherah pole. This means he set up an altar to worship the false fertility god, Asherah. Ask yourself: Is any form of idolatry present in your life? We often turn to an idol, such as sports, success or relationships, to replace desolation and barrenness.

As the Israelites followed Ahab into sin, their hearts became hardened toward God and they experienced the “sting of death” along with him. This is what happens to us if we are yoked with Jezebel in any manner. Two prevalent examples of this sting of death in the physical realm are lack of fulfillment and barrenness in some aspect of family life. In the spiritual realm, we often see death of a vision, which leads to a spirit of hopelessness. It is easy to understand, then, that the sting of desolation often manifests as:

- Hopelessness and despair
- Discouragement and disillusionment
- Great loss
- Grief and sorrow
- Physical death
- Spiritual death and apostasy
- Loss of vision
- Confusion
- Fear of failure

Personal Encounter

I can remember, and in detail, being confronted once by someone who was controlled by a Jezebel spirit. When I was a pastor in Texas, I oversaw a powerful intercessory prayer team. Our team was united, focused and determined to touch heaven. One night a new person joined our intercessory time. I began to lead the meeting in prayer when, suddenly, this woman jumped in. She began to quote Scripture by memory, and then proceeded to open her Bible and quote more Scripture.

Now, maybe her actions could have been helpful if she had quoted verses that pertained to the direction we were going in prayer (she did not), but she was still completely out of order. The “out of order” part got my attention more than her religious performance quoting the Word. In fact, even if the Scriptures she quoted had been applicable, I would have been on alert due to her control and rebellion.

This type of action is typical of someone who is yoked to a Jezebel spirit. This spirit regularly puts on pressure to prove one’s value through religious

performance, one way or another. And, Jezebel always has a better way—or so she believes.

The more I was around this person the more I began to feel as if I had to put on a religious act, too. I began to feel pressure to quote Scripture in a certain manner, to present a more intellectual Sunday message, to “perform” a certain way or else I would face her criticism. Comments filtered back to me from this person along these lines:

- *Pastor Sandie doesn't quote the Word enough.*
- *Pastor Sandie doesn't prophesy enough. I can prophesy better than she can.*
- *I hear things from God that are different from what Pastor Sandie says.*
- *So who calls her a prophetess?*
- *Pastor Sandie doesn't spend enough time in prayer. If she did, she would hear what I hear. I pray a lot, you know.*
- *I have ministered with intercessor so-and-so, who is someone with worldwide recognition in both intercession and the prophetic ministry.*

It is always challenging for a pastor or anyone with spiritual authority to confront a strong Jezebel spirit. But, eventually, this evil spirit must be confronted, though to do so without prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit would be fruitless. Our biblical mandate to love the person even as we dislike the evil spirit behind the ungodly behavior will always be a challenge. When yoking of this type is strong, it can be difficult to release God's truth and His deliverance. But never doubt: God will always be faithful to give direction as to how and when to confront a person with a strong Jezebel spirit.

In this situation, I spent many hours in prayer concerning this person. I began confessing what God said in His Word concerning *all* of His children, and then blessed her as a sister in the Lord. I soon began to notice that I felt godly love for her and had genuine desire to see her set free. Because a Jezebel spirit intimidates others, I had to muster up courage to confront her in a counseling session . . . but I did. And, finally, I was able to speak truth to her in love. (This is very important when counseling someone yoked with Jezebel.)

During the session, I called attention to her attempts to appear superior and the ways she was challenging my authority. I also addressed her need for recognition. Basically, I pointed out that due to her own fears of rejection, the enemy had an open door to a deep need for recognition. I am sorry to say that the woman did not embrace this counsel and left our church fellowship

immediately after I confronted her issues. She then went from church to church doing all the same things over and over. How sad!

The Lord desired to set her free, but the deception had such a strong hold on her life she would not look at the truth.

I must admit that it has taken me quite a while to gain confidence and also to know who I am in Christ. For many years, I was yoked with intimidation, and it manifested particularly around someone who operated in a Jezebel spirit. I cannot begin to number all the people I have met who are “name droppers” trying to prove their legitimacy. This generally has the effect of making the hearer feel less than adequate. Again, this is exactly what Jezebel demands from us—to “prove” who we are. I fought against this spirit for years and battled such insecurity that at times I wanted to run and hide. My only solution was to crawl back out from my hiding place and get back in the race to fulfill my destiny.

When a Jezebel spirit is active, you will feel devalued in every possible way. You may feel as if you don’t fit in your own church, or even in your family. This is because Jezebel shows no respect. If she does, it is false—a form of false flattery—and only to get her way. Jezebel manipulates to gain attention, authority and headship.

The Demands of Perfection

Jezebel has her rules and regulations that gauge just how “religious” someone is. God’s messengers, however, come in all shapes and sizes and colors. I am convinced that He calls the peculiar, the “nobodies,” so that He gets all the glory. Maybe that is why he called Elijah. Here was a man who had no notable background, boasted no previous recognition and came from “nowhere,” but he knew who he was in God. There were no performance issues for Elijah—he just showed up and delivered a pure word.

Let me hit the fast-forward button and say that this is exactly what Jezebel hates. The yoke of Jezebel *demands performance and perfectionism*. Jezebel is a legalist and expects, therefore, that every jot and tittle be executed according to the law—and according to her expectations. These days, for instance, we see pressure from a Jezebel spirit for ministers of the Gospel to perform flawlessly. She demands that every Greek and Hebrew word be pronounced

correctly and that Scriptures be quoted accurately from memory. In other words, perfectionism *proves* that one is qualified to be a representative of God.

This evil spirit negates obedience and exalts performance. Obedience is dutiful submission, something that Jezebel cannot possibly understand. Even her name, *Jezebel*, means “non-cohabitate.” In other words, Jezebel (or someone who is influenced by this spirit) must remain in complete control. Jezebel will not submit to anyone (though she attempts to deceive others into believing she does submit). Since this spirit has no gender, it means that neither male nor female will submit to anyone—especially those in spiritual authority.

Jezebel pressures each of us to *act* religiously, to put on a big show and depend upon eloquent speech, intellectualism, certificates of achievement and degrees. It appears that Elijah had none of the above! Although there was a time later that he ran from her threats, still, at this important juncture he knew who he was in God, he had no fear of man and he was confident that God had sent him as a voice. In other words, Elijah was not in the midst of an identity crisis. Thank God for his example.

A Perspective on the Old Testament

According to the Old Testament, drought and desolation symbolized being cursed by God. Drought, as punishment for national idolatry, was set in motion by God Himself (see Deuteronomy 11:16–17; 28:23; Leviticus 26:9). Elijah was led by God to make application to this divine denunciation.

Let me explain my view concerning the Old Testament. At the risk of being labeled legalistic, I believe that we should heed the teachings of the Old Testament unless Jesus Himself teaches otherwise. I believe strongly, for instance, in the blessings and curses listed in Deuteronomy 28 because Jesus spoke a curse over the fig tree, and it withered from the roots up.

Also, as we discuss different yokes of bondage throughout this book, please keep in mind that, as believers in Jesus, we are no longer under the Law of the Old Testament. Though I quote often from the Old Testament, it is meant to provide a window that we can see through (from a New Testament perspective) to *identify how* we may be yoked or in bondage today. The Old Testament also shows us that we can be free from sin and yokes of bondage.

Now these things befell them by way of a figure [as an example and warning to us]; they were written to admonish and fit us for right action by good instruction, we in whose days the ages have reached their climax (their consummation and concluding period).

1 Corinthians 10:11, AMP

Another verse in 1 Corinthians says this: “Now these things are examples (warnings and admonitions) for us not to desire or crave or covet or lust after evil and carnal things as they did” (1 Corinthians 10:6, AMP). There are many different types of yoking. As we continue to study, God will open your eyes to specific ways you might have been yoked. God is faithful to reveal bondages so that we can break free.

I believe that Jesus took our sins (all of them!) upon Himself when He was nailed to the cross and died for those sins. His blood washed all sin away. We now have authority in Christ because of the cross. His grace empowers us on a daily basis to resist the Deceiver that attempts to steal our destiny.

Hearing the Message of Repentance

Friend, are you allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal to you how this evil spirit can yoke any of us? Think about it. Do we sometimes worry a little too much about how we present ourselves? Do we sometimes critique the way others are dressed, the cities they represent or the ministries to which they are connected? Do those of us who are ministers sometimes feel that we will have greater influence if we happen to pull out our list of “Who’s Who in Ministry” to prove our credibility?

Walking with Jezebel leads to desolation, in part, because it carries with it the lessening ability to see the yokes being placed on our necks. Please take a moment and think about this initial confrontation between God’s prophet and the king. God was seeking these words from Ahab: “God, I am truly sorry for my sin of idolatry. I ask for forgiveness. Please reconsider this curse of destruction.”

We must read between the lines. Elijah’s words demanded repentance, but Ahab’s heart refused to receive that message. *That was because a yoke of Jezebel will always resist repentance.* Revelation 2:21 says, “I [God] have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.” The same can be true for you and me. When a Jezebel spirit is active and we give it any place in

our lives, personal pride will arise and blind our hearts to the Holy Spirit's warning regarding the sin of this covenant.

When we choose to align ourselves in any way with the enemy, he blocks our ability to see. This is how deception begins—we feel alone, isolated, discouraged (all signs of desolation and the yoke of Jezebel) and soon we cannot see our future. The spirit of Jezebel and her deceptions blind us to truth. We begin to doubt our discernment to know the things of the Lord. Spiritual blindness steals our vision and destiny. But God promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him. Don't lose hope! God is on our side.

If, as you are reading, the Holy Spirit shows you any ways that you are yoked with a Jezebel spirit, be encouraged that you can break free. God will always allow opportunities for repentance. The Deceiver lies to us and says that we are too sinful and, therefore, unworthy to ask for forgiveness through repentance. Yet, God is forever beckoning us to come into His presence—for anything. When God speaks and our hearts are pricked by His truth, we have an opportunity to run to Him. Every second of every day offers an opportunity to knock on heaven's door and talk to the Father.

The Path to Deliverance

Leviticus 26:1–13 documents what is required of us so that we have “rain” or blessing and not desolation. You might want to study this passage in more depth. Be sure to grab a pen or pencil as you read this, because you will want to take notes along the way. Don't be hesitant, by the way, to underline, highlight and write in the margins of this book. After all, it is your book and your precious destiny! Your notes will come in handy later as you allow the Holy Spirit to continue to minister freedom. Here are four initial points on the path to deliverance.

UNDERSTAND THAT IDOLATRY IS FORBIDDEN

God says that His people “shall make for yourselves no idols nor shall you erect a graven image, pillar, or obelisk, nor shall you place any figured stone in your land to which or on which to bow down; for I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 26:1, AMP).

This passage is clear: We cannot worship idols. We will discuss the Jezebel yoke of idolatry in depth. For now, know that a Jezebel spirit pressures us to bow down to insecurity, inferiority, fear of failure and her other lies of deception, which are all idolatrous.

If you have read any of my previous books, you may recall my personal journey down “Freedom Road.” I battled such insecurity at one point that I embraced many destructive lies of the enemy. I realize now that idolatry was a Jezebel yoke in my life. Before I was delivered from this evil influence, I had many dreams concerning desolation. I would dream that I was in an open field with no fruitfulness. The land was dry and desolate. When I awoke I would pray, but it took some deep soul-searching to understand that God was attempting to deliver me from a spirit of desolation, which was attached to a Jezebel stronghold.

The idolatry linked with the desolation was *self*, plain and simple. How could I cast out “self”? Well, I couldn’t! But, through the years, I have learned what I am sharing in this book. I have learned to put on my new garments—the garments of Jesus. I have learned to break off ungodly yokes, and then receive a fresh *mantle* of Christ. I have also learned that it is the anointing that breaks yokes. All of this will be discussed later, but I want to encourage you *now*. You can be free from “self”! My “self” was involved because I wanted what I wanted—and anything that takes the place of God and what He desires for us is a form of idolatry.

KEEP HIS SABBATH

The Bible makes it clear that we are to keep God’s Sabbath and reverence His sanctuary (see Leviticus 26:2). I have discovered that when I am under the “spell” of Jezebel, that is, when I am influenced by witchcraft, I cannot rest; in fact, I am driven to perform. This evil spirit causes desolation in many hearts when we ignore God’s command to devote one day to a Sabbath, completely to Him.

Again, let me remind you that *we are not under the Law of the Old Testament*. We need a Sabbath rest, but we need not be bound to a calendar Sunday. You will recall that Jesus and His disciples broke the Sabbath law—yet He also knew how to rest. We must remember that the Old Testament is full of symbols and types. As you continue to read, please do not revert to old

ways and take the yoke of the Law back upon you. Still, whether it be Sunday or another day of the week, we need to be obedient to this command.

If we do not obey this, we will surely suffer from desolation in one form or another. For me, my body begins to suffer when I do not take a day of rest. Some people work hard every day of the week yet find that, in the end, they have made less money than if they had been obedient to take some time to rest. When the Lord says that we are to “reverence His sanctuary,” it is not only the church building that He is referring to. We are also His temple. We need, therefore, to reverence and take care of our bodies—that means rest. If we do not get adequate rest, our physical bodies will certainly suffer. Ask me how I know! If you relate to this, then you are suffering from a spirit of desolation brought on by performance—and are yoked with Jezebel.

WALK IN OBEDIENCE

Leviticus 26:3–4 states this: “If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase and the trees of the field yield their fruit” (AMP). Notice that God gives us rain if we walk in His statutes and keep His commandments; in other words, we *do* them! Dear one, this is all about remaining obedient—something Jezebel is desperate to block us from considering. Yet, if we do as God commands we will have victory over the desolations of Jezebel. Reading on through verse 13, we see that if we walk in obedience:

- We will have peace in our land.
- We will not be afraid.
- We shall be “full” of good things and dwell safely in our land.
- God will chase our enemies away. (That means Jezebel, among others.)
- God will lean toward us with favor and regard and will cause us to be fruitful and to multiply.
- He will establish and ratify His covenant with us. (God’s covenant, as you will read later, breaks the yoke of Jezebel.)
- God will dwell in and among us. He will walk with us and among us. He shall be our God and we will be His people.

Dear one, if we seek Him, God promises to reveal Himself to us. You may not know me personally, but the Holy Spirit spoke to you about reading this book. You may be a man who has believed that God cannot speak through

women, yet here you are in obedience reading a book by a woman—not to mention a “five-foot-two Texan with an accent and a big voice” woman! Though the spirit of Jezebel tries to destroy our walk over and over—we must still choose the path of obedience, wherever that path leads.

EXPECT GOD TO BREAK EVERY YOKE

This is my favorite part. Read what God says about breaking off yokes if we are obedient to Him and rid ourselves of all idolatry: “I am the Lord your God, Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you should no more be slaves; and I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect [as free men]” (Leviticus 26:13, AMP).

The Lord is stating that He brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt and released them from their heavy yoke. He also released the generations from their yokes of bondage. He broke off their yokes and freed them. God is promising to do the same for us today. He is going to break off the yoke of a Jezebel spirit that has held you captive. He will also break yokes of deception and every form of bondage. Yes, God is promising you this today. Grab your pen or pencil and write below today’s date and what God has promised you:

Today, the date of _____, God has promised to break off the yoke of _____ from my life. God has promised to set me free.

Now rise up and decree that you are being freed from yokes of slavery. Job 22:28 states that “You shall also decide and decree a thing, and it shall be established for you; and the light [of God’s favor] shall shine upon your ways” (AMP). Know, therefore, that as you are led by the Holy Spirit to make a decree, it is being established in heaven. I am glad you “decided” to align your heart with His Word and make a decree!

A Time of Self-Reflection

Big things can come in small packages. I am thinking of two famous basketball players whom you would never expect, when you look at them and consider their height, to be successful professionals in this sport.

One is Tyrone “Muggsy” Bogue. He was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, and is the shortest man ever to play in the National Basketball Association. Bogue’s height is five feet three inches. In the late 1980s and ’90s he was successful as a passer and ball-stealer, and was one of the fastest men on the court. He played for the New Orleans Hornets for ten years. When compared to other professional players, one would never size him up as an equal in skill—but he was!

Then there was Anthony “Spud” Webb who was five feet seven and the third shortest player in the NBA’s history. He stood about a foot shorter than most of his competitors. He played professionally for the Sacramento Kings, and other teams, scoring 8,072 points throughout his career. He delighted sports enthusiasts when in 1986, having played professionally for a year, he entered the NBA slam/dunk contest, the shortest person to do so, and won!

This leads us to a time of self-reflection. Have you judged a book by its cover? Have you resisted a word from God after “sizing up” the one who delivered it? The Israelites did not always rally behind Moses, and Moses himself seemed to express some fears of inadequacy. Still God instructed Moses to tell them that I AM had sent him. Have we likewise missed the prophetic directives of God because we have been deluded by some mindset? Have we been harsh, critical or judgmental? Do we want a word from “the prophet” and refuse to pay attention to our Sunday school teacher?

Remember from the story of Elijah and King Ahab: When a prophetic word of God is not heeded, Jezebel more easily places her yoke on unsuspecting individuals, and the results are catastrophic: *desolation in every area of life*.

Are you suffering from any form of desolation? Is it possible that you have been yoked with the spirit of Jezebel? Take a few moments to think about this. We often place people *or* our opinions of people above what God says about them. We may be doing the same concerning ourselves. Satan, the Deceiver, may be telling you right now that you are unworthy to hear from God. He may lie and say that no one will listen to you because you are not a good speaker or that you are not bright enough to accomplish the work God has given you.

Scripture calls such lies *imagination*s that must be torn down. Second Corinthians 10:3–6 explains what we are up against:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full.

Take a few moments and write down those lies. Then you will take an axe, which is God's Word, to the root of those lies and chop them down. By this action you negate the lie of the enemy that attempts to abort your future by causing desolation.

LIE #1

I confess that I have believed the lie that says:

I repent for believing that lie because the Word of God states this about me:

As I declare the Word, it becomes a weapon of warfare against the enemy and the evil imagination is cast down.

LIE #2

I confess that I have believed the lie that says:

I repent for believing that lie because the Word of God states this about me:

As I declare the Word, it becomes a weapon of warfare against the enemy and the evil imagination is cast down.

List any more lies from Satan that the Lord reveals to you. Then continue to confirm your freedom through Scriptures such as the ones that follow:

The eternal God is [my] refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out [my] enemy before [me].

Deuteronomy 33:27

I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.

Also, if you know at this point that you have been yoked in some manner to Jezebel, take some time and list the ways below. You may need to review the “test” at the end of the introduction or go back through this chapter and review your notes. Take your time; this is important. Humbly ask the Holy Spirit to search every inch of your heart. Then take a few more moments to repent.

Allow me to pray for you:

Father God, You see and know the readers on this journey with me. I ask that You empower them with Your love and that You guide them through this entire walk down Freedom Road. Holy Spirit, I ask that You release to each person a fresh impartation of passion to know You. I ask that You, Lord, break off every yoke of bondage and that You set each person completely free of all oppression. I ask that You reveal every open door that has hindered each reader. I thank You, Lord, for the shed blood of Jesus and for the cross that has set us free from the law so that now we can walk in divine grace. Now, according to Jesus' promise for believers in Matthew 16:19, I bind the Jezebel spirit and all spirits of deception from blinding the eyes of those who seek the truth. And I loose the love of God and the anointing that breaks every yoke. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

Keeping God's Covenant in Jezebel's Territory

When contemplating what it means to be yoked, we must always consider it a type of covenant. We become yoked, or enter into a covenant, simply by being in agreement. In other words, when we agree with God, we are in covenant with Him. When we agree with Satan (or Jezebel), we are in covenant with him (or her). We can be in covenant, then, with Christ and take on His good yoke. Or, we can be in covenant with the enemy and be yoked with evil.

A covenant is the strongest form of commitment God can make with mankind. It is a binding contract. One familiar example of this is the covenant God made with Noah, promising that never again would He destroy the earth by covering it with water. His covenant sign was a rainbow, which He placed in the clouds. Each time we notice a rainbow after a rainfall or shower, we may remember God's covenant promise.

Similarly, the whole of the New Testament is a statement of God's new covenant with us that we can walk in fellowship and new life with Him because of Jesus. Jesus laid down His life to redeem us from sin. He conquered the enemy through His death. Because of His sacrifice, we can enter into covenant relationship by believing and having faith in Him.

Yoking also involves submission. If we are yoked together with Christ, we are submitted to Him. Where He goes, we go. Where He leads, we will follow.

By submitting to Christ's yoke, we are submitting to His perfect will for our lives. Let's observe the benefits of being yoked to (connected and in unity with) Christ:

Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.

Matthew 11:29–30, AMP

Did you notice that Christ's yoke involves the opposite of oppression and pain? His yoke is good, not harsh or oppressive. Christ offers us rest, relief, ease, refreshment and blessing. His yoke is "comfortable." Now that is a collar worth wearing!

God is a covenant God. One could write a book on the subject of God's covenant—in fact, many people have. I encourage you to read more concerning the covenant promises of God as it will build your faith. Here we will discuss a few basic principles from Elijah's experience that will help you understand God's covenant promises when Jezebel has other plans.

God's Covenant at the Brook

When Elijah gave his prophecy that neither rain nor dew would fall on the land for the next few years, he was going head to head with King Ahab. Since Ahab was yoked to an idolater, a controller and a murderer, Elijah was also going toe to toe with Jezebel. It was now Elijah's season of spiritual warfare against the possibility of being yoked with fear and intimidation.

He had just prophesied a drought to this wicked king and queen, but Ahab and Jezebel would not be the only ones affected by this desolation. All inhabitants in the land would suffer—including Elijah! Did he know when he prophesied drought that God would take care of his needs? There is no indication scripturally that Elijah was prepared for the drought. But we do know that immediately after he gave the startling prophecy God instructed him to go eastward to Brook Cherith. I imagine Elijah breathed a sigh of relief as he pictured the brook. . . . *Thank You, Lord, for my provision as this land becomes desolate.*

Elijah was in covenant with God, and God met his needs. One of God's names is *Jehovah Jireh*, which means "Jehovah will see or provide." When the Lord sent Elijah to Brook Cherith, He was fulfilling His covenant vow, His promise, to His faithful servant: The name *Cherith* actually translates as "covenant." Elijah was provided for at Brook Covenant!

We know that Elijah was fed by ravens two times a day—so I suppose God did drop a form of manna from the sky. But, considering that ravens withhold food from their own young, it is miraculous that he actually was brought food by such stingy creatures! This proves the power of obedience when God speaks direction, doesn't it? He is the God of *all* creation.

Elijah Was Human—Just Like Us!

I remember when my husband and I had a pond for our livestock in the country and we suffered a severe drought one summer. We did not notice at first that the drought had begun, but after a few weeks with steaming temperatures, the ground began to crack open and we saw our pond shrinking. The reality hit us like a thunderbolt.

It might have been the same for the people in Elijah's day. Farmers planted fields expecting rain; people dug wells expecting to be able to draw up water. Although the people would be aware that no rain had fallen, panic would occur when they went to the well and the bucket brought up dirt. It often is a process for the truth to become reality to us. In other words, Ahab and Jezebel did not just wake up the next day and say, "We are experiencing a drought!" That worked in Elijah's favor: It gave him time to get to his watering hole at Brook Cherith.

We have to remind ourselves that though Elijah was a prophet of God, he was also human—just like us. He approached Ahab with faith in God, but he had to walk through the effects of his own prophecy; this would require even greater faith.

From Jezreel, where it is assumed by many that Elijah met Ahab, it is close to twenty miles to Brook Cherith, a journey he probably undertook on foot. If he carried a water skin, he could expect that one-third of his water supply would evaporate in only half a day in the extreme temperatures. Elijah's journey took him through hills, valleys, rocky terrain and mountains. And,

again, Elijah was human, a natural man who operated in the supernatural. Since he was a mere man as are we, I believe he was most likely tempted by the enemy in his thoughts. Sometimes when we prophesy against a Jezebel spirit it takes a few days for it to sink in. We wake up one morning thinking, *What have I done?* This is when we know there will be a counterattack.

You will read more later how the spirit of Jezebel attempts to yoke us with fear. Elijah was a prime candidate for fear as he walked alone after having just delivered such an alarming message. I feel sure he looked over his shoulder more than once just to settle it in his heart that he was not being followed by Ahab's army. Yet, we know that Elijah remained steadfast in his journey to Brook Cherith. He held fast to his covenant-keeping God, and, yes, God did provide.

Moving into Jezebel's Territory

A while later, as the drought grew in intensity, Brook Cherith dried up. So the Lord spoke to Elijah concerning His next place of provision. Since Elijah was yoked with God, and in agreement with His Word, he obeyed:

Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to him: "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food."

1 Kings 17:7-9

When Elijah arrived at Zarephath, he probably did not have his water skin slung over his shoulder. Or else it was dry. Why do I believe this? Because as soon as he arrived at the city gate, he called out to a widow and asked for food *and* water. Imagine this with me, please.

Can you picture his journey from a dried-up brook, leaving those unusually friendly ravens and heading to another place? It happens to us all eventually, doesn't it? I am referring to times of provision and experiencing what appears to be an "open heaven," and then transitioning to a dry season and a time of distress. Often, we have to move forward when we have no idea where provision will come from—just as Elijah had to do.

Though his faith was strong in God's ability to provide, it was still quite a journey for him. Since he was being sent to Zarephath, I think that he might have been tempted to fear once more—after all, Zarephath is a Sidonian city,

and, yes, Jezebel was a Sidonian. Elijah was headed straight into Jezebel territory—for divine provision! Elijah had to remain strong in his faith as he approached Zarephath. Sometimes God really does prepare us a table in the midst of our enemies.

The city name, Zarephath, is the Hebrew root word *tsaraph* (pronounced tsaw-raf) and it means “to fuse or refine, as in metal.” It is connected to words that mean “to melt, make pure or purge away.” The journey to Zarephath was a long one—nearly seventy miles. Think about this: Though the brook had dried up, the Jordan had not, and the Jordan was closer. The Sea of Galilee was also close by. So why did God send him to such a faraway place?

I believe God did this for several reasons. First, He may have intended to prove that He is God, and that He has various ways to show His faithfulness within a covenant relationship. Second, He had a plan to test Elijah’s faith and build his strength, both physical and mental. Third, remember what *Zarephath* means. Elijah was tested, but also he was becoming more “fused together” with God and His Kingdom plan. He was becoming more firmly yoked with God and His purposes. Hunger and thirst, whether physical or spiritual, make us desperate. As Elijah grew more desperate for God’s provision, he learned to trust God even more.

Elijah Persevered—So Can We!

Elijah was so famished when he arrived at Zarephath that he asked a widow who was gathering sticks in the streets to bring him both food and water. He was making this request of a complete stranger who was also experiencing drought and famine—desolation. This poor woman was needy herself. Yet she wasted no time, it seems, doing as he asked. She did, however, explain to Elijah her situation:

“I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

1 Kings 17:12

When he heard her words, her hopelessness, her place of desolation, Elijah looked upon her with compassion. Any preconceived ideas as to why he was in this city would melt away as he remembered God’s mercy. Being in Sidonia, among Baal worship, could have challenged his faith to a certain degree, but

Elijah remained yoked with God and stood on God’s covenant. With compassion and divine perception, he prophesied to the widow who *was* yoked with fear—which is the yoke of Jezebel.

Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.’”

She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

1 Kings 17:13–16

Elijah’s obedience had ended in provision not only for him, but also for others. Isn’t that God’s heart? His Spirit is continually searching for those who are lost, that He might send “ministers” to them who are obedient and will show His divine mercy.

Witchcraft and “Fornications” in the Land

If we truly are yoked with God, there is peace, and we experience His divine rest. If we submit to the spirit of Jezebel, the attendant fear and intimidation *will provoke us in an ungodly way to attempt to control our circumstances*. Control is a form of witchcraft. And control is one of the most obvious signs of one who is affected by a Jezebel spirit.

We know that Jezebel operated in all types of witchcraft. Scripture tells us that a military commander named Jehu was anointed and appointed by God to destroy the house of Ahab and Jezebel. He said these words to Joram, illegitimate king of Israel: “How can peace exist as long as the fornications of your mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?” (2 Kings 9:22, AMP). A spirit of Jezebel entrenches a territory with the sin of “witchcrafts” and “fornications.”

Fornication is desiring something out of God’s timing, and it nullifies the purity of a covenant. Consider the marriage covenant. It is fornication for a man or woman to have sexual union *before* the covenant of a marriage vow is in place. Similarly, if we get out of God’s timing and attempt to manipulate our way into a position of authority within a church setting, this is also a form of fornication—spiritual fornication.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, we read in the book of Revelation that the church of Thyatira was rebuked because it tolerated Jezebel and her fornications. These fornications were most likely expressions of her evil seductions and sexual encounters; there were, for instance, prostitutes in Jezebel's temples where she worshiped Baal. But, for us today, we need to consider the seductions of the enemy concerning the timing of God.

Allow me to quote from my book *Breaking the Threefold Demonic Cord* (Chosen, 2008). This speaks of Baal, the false god that Jezebel worshiped. We also fall into this sin of fornication whenever we resist God's divine timing and try to control circumstances and people:

The spirit behind Baal insists that we have "whom" we want, "when" we want him and that he "do" what we want. This spirit is based upon performance, rather than relationship.

Today, a similar thing occurs when a leader cannot immediately be available to a congregation. I am reminded of the years I pastored a local church and some complained when I was unavailable to immediately return a phone call or meet with them on the spur of the moment. . . . They wanted me right then.

Precious one, I believe that I am speaking from the heart of God now. We must understand that God truly knows our times and seasons. If we cannot wait for His timing, then we will have no peace. Remember this: When Jezebel is active, there is no peace. Over the years I have witnessed men and women who could not wait for the right person, the mate God had selected, and they married the wrong person or sinned with fornication. I have also seen individuals who could not wait for a promotion in ministry. They usually left their churches (or spiritual covering) prematurely and attempted to birth their own ministries. None of this is fruitful—in fact, it results in desolation and even spiritual barrenness. If this has happened to you, God is ready to forgive you. Don't hesitate to approach Him now; He is waiting for you. Simply repent and turn. He will gladly cover you with His covenant blessings once again.

Elijah knew how to walk yoked with God. He knew when to approach Ahab, when to leave Brook Cherith and when to move on to Zarephath. He also knew when to prophesy hope to a desolate widow woman. And he knew how to wait.

Elijah is a wonderful example for us to follow as we learn to walk in covenant with God. Sometimes we need to put ourselves in other people's shoes to understand all that they had to press through during their journeys.

Think, first, of how uncomfortable he must have been waiting daily for the ravens to drop food down to him. I can imagine that Elijah's hunger clock was screaming the first few days. Have you noticed that when you miss a meal your stomach suddenly develops a voice of its own? Sure you have—we all have! But let's take this a step further and imagine how he had to press past turning his nose up at a meal from the Road Kill Diner! (Yes, ravens, like buzzards, are scavengers of carcasses.) I have heard speculation that Elijah was fed by ravens who brought food from Ahab's table—after all, he and Jezebel may have been the only ones still eating well during the famine. Perhaps.

And think about this. Elijah was probably heartbroken as he witnessed desolation—animals and children suffering and hopelessness abounding. Did Elijah realize that the drought would actually last for three and a half years? I think it is relatively safe to suggest that he did not. He had to wait on God and His perfect timing.

Patience is truly a virtue. Jezebel wants to seduce us to worry and be fretful and move out from under God's covenant blessings. Many times we do not know how strong we are until we face opposition. Elijah faced hunger and thirst, yet he knew that God wanted him where He had him for a reason. He stayed in covenant, and God was faithful.

In the next chapters we will study specific kinds of yokes so that you can get freer as we move along Freedom Road. I always encourage my readers to engage fully in the process of becoming freer in Christ. Be sure to grab a pen or pencil and maybe even a journal so that you can begin to document your thoughts. And never hesitate to “dog-ear” a few pages along the way! You will want to refer to them later. I want you totally free, so write, highlight and underline. The Holy Spirit is your teacher.

A Time of Self-Reflection

Jesus desires to cover you today. His covenant promises are written so that you can receive life. God's Word is laced with His covenant promises. Imagine a huge net that reaches from Genesis to Revelation—that is our *safety net* that will catch us when we feel that we have failed God. Romans 8:39 states this concerning God's faithfulness: “Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all

creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (AMP).

Precious believer, God’s covenant promises are like that huge safety net that is forever there not only to protect us but also to remind us of His mercy. If we have sinned or “fallen,” He promises to catch us and then pour out His love and forgiveness. As you move forward in this book I believe the yoke of your past may attempt to clothe you with shame. This is a perfect time to repent for something the Holy Spirit has quickened to your heart. His covenant promises declare that He will never withhold His mercy.

You may desire to say this prayer at this time:

Dear Lord, I desire that You create a clean heart in me. I desire to be like David who knew how to rejoice in the victories that You give (see Psalm 21:1–2). I desire to be free from the yokes and strongholds in my life. I know that my old self was crucified with Christ and that because of Him I no longer have to remain a slave to sin (see Romans 6:6–7). I acknowledge Your covenant with me. I know that it is for freedom that Christ went to the cross to set me free. Your desire is for me no longer to be burdened by any yoke of slavery (see Galatians 5:1). Thank You for empowering me for victory and a glorious future in Christ. Amen.

Bands, Cords and Chains

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

Isaiah 10:27, KJV

Most of us can picture a yoke and its purpose in the natural. Likewise, we have learned that in the spiritual realm a yoke can bind us either to God's covenant promises or to the evils of the Jezebel spirit. In this chapter and the next, we will define spiritual yokes more specifically, focusing on the bands, cords and chains that this spirit uses to defeat and imprison us. We will shine a light on many areas of our lives that have yoked us with evil so that we can become completely free. Evil yokes weaken us for the work of the Kingdom. They oppress us and enslave us. Dear one, this is exactly what our enemy desires!

Imagine if Elijah had been yoked with selfishness, vanity and pride during those days of desolation. Would he have remained obedient? We will see in a later chapter that a time did come when he allowed Jezebel to slip an evil yoke around his neck. When Jezebel threatened him with certain death he allowed discouragement and fear to grip him; he actually ran and hid in a cave. God reached him in a special way to bring him back into His covenant promises, but this shows that no one of us is impervious to the Jezebel spirit.

When Jezebel is entrenched in the land—especially our individual land—we will encounter fear, discouragement, disappointment, idolatry and possible death. By *individual land* I am referring to our spiritual inheritance, the “Promised Land” God has for each of us. Be very certain of this one thing: Jezebel has a yoke planned for you and for me.

But be very certain of this as well: There is good news! The good news is that God desires to expose those yokes and show us how to slip out of them. He wants to empower you to defeat the Jezebel spirit that is attempting to yoke you with adversity and to steal your destiny.

Let’s continue this walk to freedom with a promise from the prophet Isaiah, given at the opening of this chapter. He stated that the day will come when our burdens will be removed from us and the yokes will be destroyed because of the Lord’s anointing.

Anointed to Serve

Precious one, you are anointed! The Lord desires to use you. Though the enemy has lied to you for years with his evil whispers saying that you may never measure up, that you will never be free, it is your time to destroy those evil yokes and receive in their place a new mantle.

It is important for you to realize that you have been called, chosen and anointed by God to break yokes—even off of yourself. The devil tells us differently, but we are anointed because we are believers and are one in Christ Jesus. In the Old Testament, we read how the priesthood was set apart and anointed for service. Today, we are also set apart as believers and chosen by God to serve Him. We are considered priests of the Lord and, therefore, we are anointed.

Zechariah had a vision of two olive trees that were identified as two anointed servants (see Zechariah 4:1–14). This vision is purposeful for us today for it shows us that we must position ourselves as servants, yet we cannot serve out of our own strength. We are not “performers” for God—to be so is another yoke of Jezebel. (You can read how she demanded performance from her false prophets in 1 Kings 18:25–27.)

To serve God does not mean that we are in slavery, but rather that we are bondservants. In other words, slaves are bound with chains and shackles—a

type of yoking. We are essentially slaves to the enemy when we bow down to his words. This is idolatry, and binds us to evil. A bondservant, on the other hand, is a type of slave, but rather this is one who *chooses* to remain as such. We read about bondservants in the New Testament. These were slaves who were freed, unshackled and released from bondage, yet in their hearts they chose to remain faithful servants to their masters. This is what Paul refers to in his letter to the Corinthian church:

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your *bondservants* for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:5–6, NKJV (emphasis added)

Paul is admonishing us not to allow pride to rule over us. When we are bondservants, we preach Christ—not us! It is sad that so many of God's servants promote their own kingdoms. This is exactly what Jezebel did as she brought her idols into Israel and promoted herself over her husband, effectively seizing control of a nation. God anoints us to represent Christ on this earth. When we preach Christ, the glory of God can shine forth from us, thus destroying the darkness.

In chapter 8, “Mantles and Anointing,” we will learn more about walking in this anointing, repositioning ourselves before God and putting on a new mantle of authority. For now, embrace opportunities to remove yokes as they are revealed. As you continue to read, try to picture the anointing on your life releasing you from yokes of bondage.

The Hebrew word for anointing is *mashach* (pronounced maw-shakh), which means “to daub or smear with oil or grease.” Picture yourself smeared with the oil of anointing and sliding out from under the heavy burden to which you have been enslaved—slipping out from the enemy's grip into your newfound place of freedom.

Let me encourage you by saying that the Lord has seen your suffering. I feel very impressed to remind you that He has promised to break the yokes that have oppressed you. He has heard your cries for freedom and has seen your agony. He has seen the oppression—even throughout the generations of your family. Be encouraged. The Holy Spirit wants you set free. It is your season to walk into freedom. Let's keep moving forward.

In many translations of the Bible, the words *yokes*, *chains*, *bands* and *cords* are interrelated and all concern bondage and ungodly yoking. In this chapter

we will study these bondages as they relate to two of the most common yokes of Jezebel: witchcraft and premature death.

Jezebel and the Yoke of Witchcraft

The biblical account of Paul and Silas being imprisoned in Philippi is told in Acts 16:16–24. This story tells us a great deal about the first yoke we will study that is directly linked to the Jezebel spirit—witchcraft.

Paul and Silas were on their way to pray when they were met by a slave girl who was possessed by a spirit of divination or witchcraft. The slave girl earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortunetelling. She followed Paul and the rest of the crowd, shouting and calling attention to herself. She had kept this up for many days and, finally, Paul became so troubled that he cast the spirit out of her. The owners of the slave girl were angry that her gifting (it was actually a “familiar spirit” connected with witchcraft) was no longer available because they were losing money.

The slave owners seized Paul and Silas and convinced the magistrates, the businessmen of the city, that they were teaching unlawful Jewish customs to the Roman citizens. The jailer, on receiving the instruction to jail them securely, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks. After midnight, however, as Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God “suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s *bands* were loosed” (Acts 16:26, ASV, emphasis added).

The word *bands* is the word *desmon* (pronounced des-mon). It is probably no accident that it looks so much like the word *demon*. *Desmon* is related to bonds (bondage), shackles (prison) and chains. Interestingly, commentaries tell us that these bands are anything that creates a disability or impediment. An *impediment* is a hindrance, obstacle or a type of blockage. It applies to anything that delays or retards our progress through interference. We can conclude, therefore, that Satan moved through the magistrates to imprison Paul and Silas so they were “disabled” in ministry. The enemy loves to interfere with God’s plan for our lives, particularly if it delays our rising up and entering into our own Promised Land.

When the enemy deceives us with his lies, he is attempting to cause hindrances to our effectiveness on earth as believers. When we believe a lie, we are deluded and deceived. This in turn creates a yoke of imprisonment and, when this happens, a blockage to our future victory has occurred. Are you getting the picture as to how we are deceived and then yoked with all types of oppression?

Now, let's back up a bit and examine the spirits that were harassing Paul and Silas as they were ministering the Gospel. First, we have to consider the territory in which they were traveling. It was Philippi, a Macedonian city. Philippi was founded by Philip of Macedon, and was noted throughout history as being a city of great wealth due to the productive gold mines in the vicinity. We can conclude from this that a spirit of Mammon was most likely a stronghold in that area. When Paul and Silas silenced the slave girl and her witchcraft, they were engaging not only a strong Jezebel spirit, but Mammon as well. This was a powerful recipe for witchcraft. How does that work?

First, we have mentioned Jezebel's connection to witchcraft (see 2 Kings 9:22). Quite simply, *witchcraft* involves a "witch" with a "craft." Witchcraft is a counterfeit of true spiritual authority: It uses an evil spirit to manipulate and control others. Jezebel dominated others, assumed authority illegally and manipulated circumstances to get her way; and she used witchcraft to do it. Jezebel's domination and control release evil forces against her victims, thus, placing a curse upon them and their circumstances.

In Galatians 5:20, we read that the apostle Paul called witchcraft sorcery (see AMP, ASV, NASB and others) and described it as a deed of the flesh. Anytime we use manipulation and control to secure an outcome or determine our future, we are operating in sorcery or witchcraft. The slave girl who was operating in witchcraft was calling attention to herself through a form of false flattery. I have wondered if she was attempting not only to hinder Paul and Silas's ministry, but also to gather a few clients for herself. In any event, she manipulated to gain influence with the crowd and make money by fortunetelling. Thus we see witchcraft at work as Jezebel and Mammon teamed together against Paul and Silas.

Strong's concordance tells us that *witchcraft* is the Greek word *pharmakeia* (pronounced far-mak-i-ah), which means medication (think *pharmacy*) and magic. It is rooted in the word *pharmakeus*, which includes in its meaning, "spell-giving potions" and "someone who poisons." We can easily say that someone who operates in witchcraft puts a spell on us or attempts to poison us

with his or her words. If you recall, all seemed to be going just fine with Paul and Silas’s ministry until this sorceress showed up on the scene. She shouted for many days until “finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her” (Acts 16:18).

Notice that Paul was “troubled.” The word means that Paul was *diaponeo* (pronounced dee-ap-on-eh-o), which means that he was worried and had to “toil through.” Other translations note that Paul was in deep anguish and was grieved by this evil presence. It is not hard to relate to the “toiling” in warfare that is required to defeat the presence of Jezebel and her witchcrafts.

I am thinking of how praise and worship are affected when witchcraft is present. I believe that Jezebel grieves the Holy Spirit! This is because the outcome of her manipulation negates trust in God—again, grieving the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 states that grieving the Holy Spirit is a type of “vexation” that saddens God. A vexation is *a severe type of weariness*. Put simply, if we embrace the seductions of Jezebel and her witchcrafts, it saddens God.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God [do not offend or vex or sadden Him], by Whom you were sealed (marked, branded as God’s own, secured) for the day of redemption (of final deliverance through Christ from evil and the consequences of sin).

Ephesians 4:30, AMP

Is it any wonder that Paul was grieved by this evil presence? He was being affected with extreme vexation and, finally, he had to cast out the spirit of divination from the slave girl. The spirit wore him down in attempts to dampen the effectiveness of his ministry.

WITCHCRAFT AND THE YOKE OF PYTHON

As I noted, the slave girl operated in *divination*, which is another word used to describe witchcraft.

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of *divination* met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.

Acts 16:16, KJV (emphasis added)

Divination is the Greek word *puthon* (pronounced *poo-thone*) and comes from *Putho*, the name of the region where Delphi, the seat of the famous oracle, was

located. The Vulgate speaks about divination being connected to “pythons and diviners.”

A python among the Greeks and Romans denoted a person who had the spirit of (false) prophecy, or one operating in “familiar spirits.” The priestess of Apollo at Delphi would be a sorcerer or soothsayer. Did you notice the word *python*? A python spirit is connected to divination, sorcery and Jezebel’s witchcrafts when the Jezebel spirit is in operation. Where there is a Jezebel yoke of any type—a python spirit is also active.

In *Breaking the Threefold Demonic Cord*, I wrote this concerning the demonic “squeeze” that a python spirit has on us as believers:

During this attack of Jezebel on our church in Texas, I sometimes personally felt as if the breath were being “squeezed” out of my lungs, and I feared for my life! Have you ever felt as I did, that the life and breath were being squeezed out of you? Maybe the enemy has attacked your finances and has squeezed out all you have possessed. This could be the result of Jezebel and the python spirit. In his book, *Unmasking the Jezebel Spirit*, John Paul Jackson states, “The Jezebel spirit uses a spirit of divination, which in the Greek is called *python*.”

Most of us are aware that the python is a large snake that is very muscular and kills its prey by squeezing, or constricting, until the prey suffocates. When a python spirit, or divination, is active you will notice weariness (vexation and grieving from being troubled as Paul was) as it squeezes out hope, breakthroughs, finances and life. As the python spirit constricts and squeezes, it attempts to yoke us with death and we feel the restraints with every constriction. Because it squeezes out hope, we often revert to old patterns of behavior and, therefore, remain in unhealthy lifestyle cycles with no hope for freedom.

Whenever I pastored in Texas, I noticed how a Jezebel spirit affected the spiritual climate, literally squeezing the life out of not only praise and worship but also the prophetic ministry. Prophecy releases life, but false prophecy (which Jezebel promotes) releases confusion, control, occultic powers and death. Since the name *Jezebel* means “non-cohabitative,” the person with this spirit cannot submit to any form of authority. Guess how much fun it is to pastor someone who entertains this spirit: None! But while we must not tolerate this spirit, we must still love the person. It is difficult at times, but with God’s help it is possible. Because Jezebel desires to yoke us into an ungodly covenant with her, we must remain on guard in the relationship—especially as a pastor or leader. This is because Jezebel desires the leadership position and

will do whatever it takes—especially using false flattery and stirring up rebellion in the congregation—to acquire it.

To have her way, Jezebel will pray charismatic witchcraft prayers. These types of prayers are all soulish in nature as this person will pray his or her own desires. Again, this is divination, sometimes referred to as *white witchcraft*. I can remember being extremely ill during Jezebel attacks. It is now clear to me that Jezebel travels with a spirit of infirmity. In addition, a Jezebel spirit is passed down the generational lines. In other words, if a mother is a strong Jezebel, her daughter will be influenced to be one as well unless the generational cycle is broken.

THE CHAINS OF WITCHCRAFT AND SATAN’S “HISS”

Lamentations 3:7 was written by a prophet who was completely overwhelmed by a yoke of affliction. He wrote: “He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains.” *Weighed down with chains*. I believe we can imagine how horrible his experience must have been. He felt as if he were in bondage to the circumstances he was enduring and felt chained by them.

Interestingly, the word *chained* in this passage is the Hebrew word *nachuwsh* (pronounced naw-*khoosh*) and it means “a sense of ringing.” It is compared to the sound of a bell or the sound that metal makes—like the clanging of chains. Strong’s also gives another interesting reference: It refers to a sound that comes through “the red color of the throat of a serpent when it hisses”! The word *nachuwsh* is connected to a root word *nachash* (pronounced naw-*khash*) and it means “to hiss, that is, whisper a magic spell.”

The hiss is also related to the word *cockatrice*, which is an extremely poisonous type of snake. Also known as the *adder* or *viper*, it lies in wait to ambush, swells its skin and rears its head back for a strike. It is fairly easy to get a spiritual comparison, isn’t it? This is what the devil does. He waits patiently to strike at us and infect us with the poisonous effects of witchcraft.

Do you see how the chains, cords and bands that Jezebel uses to enslave us are connected to her many witchcrafts? If we listen to the evil hiss of the serpent and agree, we are yoked in bondage and slavery.

The Yoke of Premature Death

I have personal experience with having to overcome a Jezebel yoke of premature death. This was a strong yoke over my family. As I mentioned above, the Jezebel spirit can travel down our family lines. When I was in my twenties, I suffered with anorexia and bulimia. It was a serious problem and I was threatened with death several times. In my book *Dream On*, I explain how the Lord delivered me supernaturally through a series of dreams. The yoke of premature death was removed instantly when blinders were removed from my eyes. I endured a seven-year battle with powers of darkness; yet today I am healed and delivered from this oppressive yoke.

My problem was rooted in control issues. I can look back now and examine my generational lineage and I can recognize control everywhere—down both family lines!

Those who are yoked with a Jezebel spirit have deep roots of rejection and abandonment issues. Many deliverance ministers link the yoking to an “orphan spirit.” When I was a child, I was obsessed with thinking I had been adopted. I was never able to receive love from my parents. Though they tried to show me love, their love was always conditional. I felt as if I needed to perform for their love.

Now, to be completely honest, I have to admit that I *loved* attention. I can remember attempting to be the center of attention at our family gatherings. I was taught to sing and tap dance before I was three years old, so I was encouraged to show off my talent at an early age. I would sing, do a few tap steps, twirl a little to show off my colorful dance costume (homemade, but still I felt like Shirley Temple) and wait for praise. That little applause was enough to get me through to the next performance. I also loved being the only grandchild in the family—and then my sister was born. No longer was I the center of attention; I had to share my circle.

Pam was born at a time when our family was in crisis. My father was under financial pressure and we had to move to Hobbs, New Mexico, to try to find our place of provision. Mother was busy with a new baby and Dad worked day and night at the oil fields. What was I to do? I had no one to applaud me, to praise me . . . to notice me! Pam seemed to be receiving all of the attention. So for years I was jealous of my own sister. Come to find out in later years, Pam had the same problem with me! We are very best friends now, but let me tell you, the enemy really attempted to put a wedge between us.

I know now that a Jezebel spirit often binds us with chains of jealousy. Jealousy sets us up for failure in life. When we are always comparing and

measuring ourselves against others, we can never accept who we really are in Christ. Further, the bands, chains and cords of worry, fret and anxiety cause much stress. Knowing that stress is something that causes premature death, we can understand why Jezebel desires to yoke us with competition, jealousy, strife, contention and comparison—all performance orientation.

BREAKING SPIRITS OF DEATH

Years later when Pam became pregnant with her first child, Arin, she had to go to the hospital with pregnancy complications. Pam and I were Spirit-filled believers by this time and we had an understanding of spirits that cause premature death. We began to pray against any assignments of the enemy that were attacking her health and her child's health. Pam developed a severe case of toxemia and while in the hospital she went into premature labor. The nurses came in one day while I was visiting Pam before she was actually in labor, and her blood pressure shot sky-high. They said that the placenta was cut off from oxygen and whisked her away in an ambulance so that she could receive better premature delivery care for her child at a larger hospital. I jumped into my car and followed the ambulance for what seemed to be hours—it was in rush hour traffic and I was a wreck.

Hours later, our family had a miracle as Arin was born at 3.5 pounds. She was so small that she fit in the palm of my dad's hands. (We still have pictures.) She was born with some complications and had open heart surgery at only one week old! But today she is a beautiful young lady and studying to be a teacher.

When Pam was pregnant with her second child, Mandy, the same problem developed. Once again, she had a premature delivery and Mandy was on a heart monitor after birth. Mary Crum, a prophetess and good friend, ministered to Pam and me one day and said she felt that the Lord impressed her to pray to break off a spirit of premature death. She explained that the assignment was upon the women on my mother's side of the family. We went immediately to ask Mom if there was any history in her family of early deaths in women. Mom told us a story we had never heard before. She said that on her father's side five girls had all died before the age of five!

The premature deaths were all unusual and unpredictable. So we prayed and broke off the spirit of premature death on our family.

I was yoked with control and manipulation for years until I gained greater understanding of Jezebel. Again, my problem was due to deep rejection: I controlled so that I would not be hurt or rejected again. The anorexic behavior was simply an extreme need to control. I felt as if my weight was one area in my life I could control and did so to the most extreme measures. I am so grateful that the Lord has set me free. He gets the glory—I could have never gotten free on my own. I know if I can be free from the yoke of Jezebel, so can you!

Now that I understand more about the Jezebel yoke, I am certain that the premature death assignment is linked to the Jezebel spirit. Precious reader, you may relate to my story, and if you do then I want to encourage you to keep reading. At the end of this chapter I have included a time of self-reflection and an opportunity to break off the yoke of premature death as well as other yokes.

As you read further, there will be many opportunities to identify several other yokes and demonic spirits that seek to steal your joy and victory. Keep in mind also that the enemy knows that we will remain handicapped and unable to live in consistent freedom and victory until we fully believe that we are who God declares that we are. As you continue to read and study, you will begin to understand your authority in Christ and exercise the anointing upon your life to break off yokes!

ELIJAH DEFEATS DEATH

I want to return to the story of Elijah for a moment, at the point where he encountered and gained victory over premature death.

Elijah's words brought life to the widow and her family and thus destroyed the Jezebel yoke upon the land. (By the way, that is what prophecy often does. Prophecy releases God's spirit of life upon a desolate situation.) Just as the Word states in 1 Kings 17:14, "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail" (KJV), God's divine power multiplied the seed of faith sown by the prophet. The widow and her family were blessed and Elijah had provision.

Yet, tragedy struck the widow's household once again. Her son became very ill and died. Let's observe Elijah's encounter and victory over premature death.

Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

“Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?” Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

The LORD heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, “Look, your son is alive!” Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth.”

1 Kings 17:17–24

Again, embrace this truth: The Jezebel spirit attempts to yoke us with premature death. In this case, it was through a spirit of infirmity. Since the territory was Jezebel’s dominion, we know that idolatry and witchcraft were prominent. It is probable that this woman was an idol worshiper, yet she seemed to have a heart for the man of God. This was another way for God to receive glory—through resurrecting her son.

I believe that the mantle of authority that was upon Elijah defeated the yoke of premature death on the widow’s son. A mantle represents protection, warmth and covering. God was rebuking the coldness in death, and covering him with Elijah’s mantle—the prophetic mantle that releases life!

God desires to do the very same with each of us. The Lord has been releasing the Word of life over you. He has sent messengers to feed you—authors who pen the thoughts of God, and ministers who preach wonderful messages to build your faith. If you have felt as if you have been yoked with a Jezebel spirit of premature death, *you also can be set free!*

Consider Any Occult Involvement

Dear reader, you are gaining increasing revelation concerning Jezebel and spirits of deception. Before we conclude this chapter I feel that I must explain how closely the occult is connected with witchcraft and divination. *Revelation reveals what has been hidden, and the occult attempts to hide revelation.* We will look at the occult later when we study idolatry, but know that Jezebel worshiped Baal, and Baal promotes occultic activity. This is because Baal is a spirit of prophetic divination—as is Jezebel, the false prophetess. If you are influenced by a Jezebel tendency, you are yoked strongly with the occult. Also, if you or your family (even in generations past) ever dabbled in Ouija boards,

fortunetelling, horoscopes or any practices prohibited by the Bible, then it is almost certain that you have been targeted by the evils of the witchcraft and divination attached through familiar spirits.

You need not fear! This is a good time to repent for any involvement with Jezebel or her sorceries. In fact, at any time that you feel the Holy Spirit prompting you to pull aside, please do so. Go ahead and grab your pen or pencil and take a few moments to examine your life. Let's take a few moments for self-reflection, shall we?

A Time of Self-Reflection

1. Can you identify a particular lie that you have believed? Maybe you do not truly believe you are anointed and the enemy has lied to you concerning your value. Take just a few moments and imagine Jesus pouring oil over your head and anointing you to serve Him for the rest of your life. Now, listen carefully to His voice. What is He saying to you right now? (Write down His words to you.)
2. As the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart, can you see yourself as anointed? I hope so because when He anoints you, He smears you with oil and you can slip right out of a very heavy yoke that has oppressed your life. Now, dear one, imagine yourself slipping right out of that oppression. Then, next, *see* yourself slip out of the clutches of the enemy. You are free.
3. Now that you know how to slip out of yokes as the anointing breaks them off, you can follow this same pattern throughout this entire book. Every time we encounter a yoke, band, cord or chain that affects you, go ahead and see yourself slip out of it. Jesus broke those yokes when He suffered at the cross. When you read that word *slip*, you will know what to do. You will see it often because I do not want you simply to be free—I want you *free indeed!*

See yourself slipping out of every yoke.

Let the Lord touch your heart and heal every hurt. Pain has been a heavy yoke.

Indeed: Believe that you are completely free indeed from any hindrance.
Desire the full truth involving God's plan for your life.

Prophecy victory over your life as you slip out of the grip of Jezebel and deception.

Here is my prayer for you:

Father God, I give praise to You, the Rock of our salvation. One thing I know for certain is that You have promised to give us victory over our enemy. Because You are our Rock, I am confident that each of Your children can stand solidly on the foundation of Your divine love—knowing that You will never forsake us. You are a merciful God. Since we have been raised with Christ who is now seated at Your right hand, I pray that You empower each precious reader to set his or her heart on things above and not on earthly things.

I pray that You redirect our passions and desires so that our focus remains on Your divine will. Create a new heart within us. We believe that as we are continually transformed into Your image, yokes are also being broken off of our lives.

I pray that no weapon formed against us will prosper and that we are empowered daily to walk in greater freedom and faith. Thank You, Lord, for our rich inheritance in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Evil Yokes and Vicious Cycles

In this chapter we are going to remove more yokes and also gain understanding as to why so many of us remain in oppression. Much of it has to do with old patterns of behavior—sinful patterns—that are linked to Jezebel.

Maybe as you read you will begin to recognize a besetting sin that repeats itself or moves in “cycles” through your life. If this is the case, if the behavior occurs regularly, you are most likely yoked together with the sin. This kind of cycling is actually linked to the word *generation*. *Generation* means “circle.” I know that you have probably heard of “the circle of life.” Life flows in cycles. In my recent book *Conquering the Antichrist Spirit* (Chosen, 2009), I wrote this concerning cycles:

The word *generation* refers to a “revolution of time.” It means the revolving cycle or circuit of time. A revolution of time can perhaps be best understood by a clock, whose hands cycle in a circle—minute to minute, hour to hour. Another revolution of time is the calendar year, which circles from day to month, month to month, until it arrives “full circle” at December 31.

It is my belief that we are in a churchwide season of deliverance; many who have been yoked with oppression due to the lies of the Deceiver are finding new levels of freedom. Remain open-minded as you continue to read concerning the different yokes so that you can be set free from oppression.

Jezebel and Religious Legalism

Previously we noted that Jezebel is “religious.” The Jezebel spirit promotes what I call “religious legalism,” which is strict adherence to the Law. Jezebel sets us up to be “performers,” not children of God concerned with the condition of our hearts and a pure relationship with the Lord. I want to discuss this in more depth, because this is so insidious and so often difficult to discern.

Scripture tells us that “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1). Further we are told, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” (Acts 15:10, KJV).

Religious legalism stems from misuse of the Law that was given to Israel. Laws involve some type of order or an orderly system of rules and regulations necessary to govern society. Biblically, especially in the Old Testament, there was a very unique legal code that was established by divine revelation from God for the purpose of directing His people in worship, in their relationship to Him and in their relationships with one another.

The summation of the most important laws is the Ten Commandments. These laws are not just religious rules, but more of a judiciary representation of God’s necessary order to govern the entire life of His people. They deal with such issues as adultery, murder, stealing, accusing others falsely, coveting. The first commandment demands the abandonment of all false gods (idols) and worshiping only the one true God. The Ten Commandments were meant to guide Israel not only in a relationship with the Lord, but also with others.

Along with these baseline commandments, other laws were given to the people through Moses. Several books of the Bible attributed to Moses outline these laws. If you were to read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, you would see that each book has a slightly different focus. Exodus is devoted to human rights, personal property rights and social duties during religious festivals. Leviticus focuses on rituals pertaining to the Tabernacle. In the book of Deuteronomy, we notice repetition of certain laws, but also what happens to mankind when the laws are broken. Unfortunately, Christians have been living under a shadow of “dos and don’ts” for thousands of years. This is not the heart of God for New Testament believers. *God does not desire that we remain yoked with religious bondage and legalism.*

TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Law was given not to place heavy burdens (yokes) on God's people, but to cause a definitive separation between those who were His and those who were pagans in surrounding nations. We know, however, that the New Testament teaches that we are no longer under the Law of the Old Testament. In the early Church, some of the Jewish believers wanted to impose the Old Testament law of circumcision onto the new converts. They believed that these Gentiles needed first to be established as converts to Judaism and be circumcised *before* they could be considered as Christians. Again, we see that religious legalism commands some type of religious act to become acceptable to God.

Paul, a former Pharisee, taught the early Church that the Mosaic Law had nothing to do with a believer coming to Jesus for salvation, and he pointed out the error of this type of religious thinking. Any time we attempt to lean toward the Law to prove our relationship with God, we are engaging in a form of religious legalism. Scripture states that the Law kills. We can easily understand, therefore, that religious performance (legalism) is a yoke of bondage in comparison to our freedom in Christ.

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:5–6

Legalism and religious performance yoke us with *deception*. Attempting to obey a set of rules in order to be approved by God negates the sacrifice of Christ made at the cross. Only through Him and His death are we righteous. There is nothing within ourselves that makes us worthy or righteous. To believe that we can work our way to heaven without a relationship with Christ is deception; we are saved by grace, and grace alone. Both Paul (see Galatians 5:1) and Peter (see Acts 15:10) speak of yokes of slavery that the Law brings; it is a yoke no one can carry. I will write more on grace and mercy later in this book. *For now, simply realize that if you feel unworthy of God's love because you are not doing enough to please Him, you are potentially yoked with religious legalism. God wants you free!*

THE QUEST FOR PERFECTION

Jezebel was the epitome of religious living. She had her very own 450 prophets of Baal who ate at her table. I would bet she never missed a Baal service. She probably got a manicure the day before, went to Baal church early and led the prayers. Believe me: This seducer came to church packing weapons—and her weapons were false prophecy, false teaching and evil seduction. She was a perfectionist, I am sure. I know this because when I was younger, and strongly yoked with this evil spirit due to generational iniquity, I suffered much with perfectionism, performance and legalism.

Have you suffered with religious legalism? If so, you have been lied to by a religious spirit that says that you have to do everything “right” for God. It says that to be an effective minister of the Gospel at work, home or church it is up to you to speak correctly, to prepare your teachings thoroughly and to impress others with your sincerity.

The enemy will lie to each of us and cause us to believe that if we are not perfect then we are unqualified to represent Christ on this earth. To depend upon our own ability is to attempt to control—the hallmark of a Jezebel spirit.

Can you feel that yoke? It is really uncomfortable, isn't it? It will get even tighter. Go ahead. S-L-I-P!

The Yoke of Sin

Lamentations 1:14 gives us an interesting picture regarding sin. It states that our sins can be “woven together,” bound into a yoke and placed on our necks. Whatever the sin or iniquity we indulge in, we can see that it separates us from God and leads to bondage.

We know that the spirit of Jezebel is seductive. In my opinion the woman Jezebel was Satan personified. Think about it: She murdered God's prophets to silence the truth, and sought control of worship. That sounds like Satan, whom Isaiah identifies as the cherub who attempted to exalt himself above God and be worshiped. In fact, Satan desired to *be* God. His heart motive was to be exalted *above* God.

When operating through a Jezebel spirit, Satan's heart attitude is the motivating force behind the scenes. We know this because his character was identified in Isaiah 14:12–14:

How have you fallen from heaven, O light-bringer and daystar, son of the morning! How you have been cut down to the ground, you who weakened and laid low the nations [O blasphemous, satanic king of Babylon!]

And you said *in your heart*, I will ascend to heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount of assembly in the uttermost north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

AMP (emphasis added)

He wants to exalt himself in our lives today, and every time we indulge in sin, he can tie the yoke that binds us to Jezebel a little tighter.

The word *sin* has various meanings. Romans 3:23 states that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The word *sin* in this passage means “coming short of our true end,” which is the *glory* of God.

Isn't that an interesting explanation? When we consider that definition, we can easily say that sin causes us to miss the mark in life, and that our true destiny is stolen somehow. We can also say that the result of sin can block us from fully experiencing the glory of God. We are all called to be “mantled” with God's glory. A mantle is a symbol of authority and it is the “glory mantle” that empowers us to shine.

When I ponder the definition of sin, I feel empowerment in my spirit to cease from sin. I do not want any iniquity in my life that might destroy my true end or destiny. I also do not want sin to darken my light!

Fausset's Bible dictionary gives the definition of *sin* as “rebellion, mainly against God as our rightful king.” This is an interesting perspective, suggesting that iniquity has authority or rulership over our lives. In other words, *Who is king in our lives?* It is a good question to ask ourselves periodically. Allowing any other king to rule rather than *the King* is idolatry. (More on that yoke later.)

Other definitions of *sin* involve words such as *crookedness*, *perversity*, *a distortion of our nature*, *a disturbing moral balance* and *transgression of God's will*. When I read these words I find myself realizing again how sin affects our true nature. God created us in His image; sin distorts and perverts that image. I can also identify with feeling yoked with darkness when I have sinned against the Lord. I am positive you can also.

SIN AND THE YOKE OF LAWLESSNESS

First John 3:4–6 shows us how sin is a yoke of “lawlessness”:

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

Scripture tells us that Jezebel murdered 450 of God's prophets. Murder is, of course, a type of lawlessness. But, as you remember, Jezebel did more than murder God's true prophets; she seized the throne of Israel. I want to review this story briefly because the lawlessness with which Jezebel yokes us is this: *We submit to Jezebel's yoke when we revert to control and manipulation to get whatever we desire.*

One particular story describing this sin of lawlessness is documented in 1 Kings 21. King Ahab deeply desired (or should I say "lusted after") a vineyard that was owned by a man named Naboth. This vineyard was Naboth's inheritance and, as such, extremely important to him and future generations of his family.

One day Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth" (verse 2).

Naboth could have sold his birthright, just as Esau had done years earlier when he sold his inheritance for a bowl of soup (see Genesis 25:29–34). But Naboth could not be bought—and good for him!

Yet his determination to hold out cost him his life. Ahab went home and became "sullen and vexed" (1 Kings 21:4, NASB). He lay in bed refusing to eat. When Jezebel approached him to find out what was wrong, he told her that Naboth would not do what he wanted.

Jezebel took complete control. She rose up and said, "Here, let me get it for you!" Now, it is true that Ahab was a weak king—in some things, I mean. He was a powerful warrior in battle, and Scripture makes note of that. In other matters, however, he chose to remain nonconfrontational and gave his wife complete control. This was true in religious affairs and, obviously, other affairs, as well.

In other words, Ahab *used* his wife to get his own way by *tolerating* her actions! Ahabs often use that form of manipulation and control: Through inactivity they empower Jezebels to do much of their bidding. Though Jezebel manipulates and controls by nature, an Ahab will shrink back and tolerate her or his behavior (remember that Jezebel is non-gender) to get his or her own way.

In turn, Jezebels also need Ahabs to give them a place of authority—even if it is illegal authority. Jezebels wear a crown, but probably not a king’s crown. This is why she was forced to sign her letters with the king’s name and seal them with his royal seal. Jezebel had no seal, no authority; she needed Ahab’s.

Jezebel sent her letters to elders and nobles in Naboth’s city and then proclaimed a fast. This is typical. This spirit will attempt to appear religious in Christian circles. She will organize fasts, prayer meetings—anything to give the appearance of being so “spiritual” that no one would suspect that anything could possibly be wrong. Jezebel wears a religious mask, but indeed is demonic and a hypocrite. The persons allowing this evil spirit to operate in and through them are completely deceived. Appearing “holy” and “religious” is only a front—their deceptions have completely blinded them to their actions.

SIN AND THE YOKE OF BELIAL

The yoke of Belial, which is attached to Jezebel, is a spirit of not only lawlessness but also false testimony. I am convinced that the yoke of Belial also yokes us with premature death. Take some time and read the passage below. Notice how Jezebel used a false testimony to achieve her devilish control to seize Naboth’s vineyard.

Don’t forget to grab that pen or pencil to take some notes. Maybe you can recall a time when you were falsely accused, or a time when the “thief” who steals, kills and destroys illegally took part of your inheritance. Dear one, Belial may be a yoke that needs to be broken from your life, so by documenting these events as the Holy Spirit leads you, you will have them ready for times of repentance and deliverance.

So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: And set two men, *sons of Belial*, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. . . .

Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

1 Kings 21:8–10, 14–16, KJV (emphasis added)

Belial is one of the most wicked of spirits of deception mentioned in the Bible. Belial and the Deceiver work hand-in-hand to yoke us tightly with a Jezebel spirit. It is my opinion that since it is so closely yoked with Jezebel, Belial is also a ruling spirit.

The name *Belial* is mentioned 27 times in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. *Belial* is related to words such as *wicked*, *ungodly* and *evil*. Yet it is most commonly connected to the word *worthless*. Most Bible translations state that Jezebel had two “worthless” men bear testimony against Naboth. Webster’s dictionary defines *worthlessness* as “valueless, useless, contemptible and despicable.”

Despicable, in turn, means “deserving to be despised.” To me, this implies that when we are yoked with Jezebel and Belial we are cursed—deserving to be despised. The curse is one of poverty, moral decline, insecurity and hopelessness, along with vile and contemptible sin. The Old Testament spelled out different “levels” or “degrees” of sin. Some sins were abominations, for instance, which were punishable by death. Other sins required certain types of sacrifices.

Etymologically, *iniquity* is a word that means “that which is twisted.” We can understand how the Deceiver can twist the truth and, therefore, deceive us—especially seduce us into sin and bondage. The serpent, Satan, is a twisted snake—constantly hissing—hurling curses and witchcrafts against us as he links up with Jezebel and Belial.

Any believer who loves Christ can be certain that all curses were settled at the cross. Repentance is still necessary, however, to remove every yoke. Belial is a world ruler of wickedness. We can break its evil yoking by repenting of our sin, standing in the anointing and binding him as a strongman (see Matthew 12:29).

Has the enemy ever lied to you and said any of these things?

- You are worthless.
- You are hopeless.
- You are a mistake.
- You are evil and can never be forgiven by God.
- Your sins are too many and too vile; God will not forgive you.
- You *deserve* to be despised.

Beloved, this is the voice of Belial. He is testifying falsely about you. He is a liar and a murderer. Reject these lies. Don’t wait. You are anointed.

How the Enemy Lies!

Thus far we have learned that through repentance we dethrone the enemy who speaks evil whispers, those lies concerning our anointing. You are now positioned with great faith to move forward into a greater level of freedom. Keep in mind how important it is to open your heart to the Holy Spirit as you read. God desires total freedom (freedom indeed!) and He will continue to expose any sin that blocks you from experiencing abundant life. If we have been deceived, *we won't know it!* That is how deception works—Satan deceives us, and the deception blocks truth. Please understand this: If we believe a lie, it nullifies truth. It is very important, therefore, to trust the Holy Spirit completely as you read.

Since the Word states that we have all sinned and come short of God's glory, this means that we have been yoked with degrees of darkness. I have been in the ministry for many years and I am still amazed at the multitudes of believers who do not embrace deliverance. People, even ministers, have said to me, "Sandie, I don't need deliverance." Yet, while I am ministering to them, I sense strong demonic opposition. Sadly, many people who believe they do not need deliverance need deliverance the most!

If the enemy is talking to you right now and is saying that you do not need help, especially deliverance—well, the Deceiver has targeted you with his deceptions and Jezebel is influencing you to do everything you can to control what you can without consulting the Lord. We need to remain alert and on guard to the deceptions of our enemy.

Matthew warned us of false Christs and false prophets who would attempt to deceive the very elect: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24, KJV). Let us consider the fact that Satan comes many times as an angel of light, imitating the true Light. As he whispers his lies to us he will attempt to sound like God.

I recall a time when my husband and I met someone who chose to remain in a prideful and unteachable position. To be exact, it was a man who believed that he was hearing God's voice, and it was very clear to us that he was listening to an angel of light—a false voice. Allow me to give an example from this experience and also to point out how important it is that we remain teachable while submitting to God and His godly counsel. To refuse to submit

fully to the Lord and His teachers will cause us to remain in pride and rebellion.

During a counseling session this man came to us requesting a “blessing” on his divorce from his wife. He went on to explain that he had been having dreams of another woman, and that the Lord had told him that this other person was to be his next wife. We asked whom he was dreaming about, and he told us her name; it was the name of a woman in our church! He went on to say that after the dreams began, he entered an adulterous affair with her. I am sure you can imagine our alarm.

Our counsel was biblically solid: We explained to him that simply because we dream about another person does not mean that an adulterous affair is God’s will. The man began to defend himself and insisted that he was hearing the voice of God in the dreams. We responded with counsel suggesting that he was hearing a false voice and was submitting to deception.

We pleaded with him to repent and turn back to God, but our counsel was unheeded. This man divorced his wife and remarried the woman “of his dreams.”

A year later this man phoned me, asking that I meet with him for counsel. I asked him what the counsel concerned (I had not seen him since that day in our office). He said he was having dreams again . . . of yet another woman! He desired counsel concerning finding an attorney to defend him as he took legal steps toward divorce.

My heart sank as I listened to his story. It was obvious that he was caught up in a cycle of disobedience and rebellion and was hearing the voice of the enemy. He had had an opportunity to step out of deception a year earlier, and yet he chose once again to remain in an old pattern of sin. Rebellious attitudes that involve pride and the refusal to submit to the Lord open the doors to the voice of Satan. The devil is a liar and he awaits any opportunity to deceive and shackle us.

We must never let pride lead us to believe that we are not vulnerable to the wiles of our enemy. Let’s now expose the particularly heinous sins of pride and rebellion and slip out from these yokes.

The Yoke of Pride

A prideful heart will assume that it does not need to hear the same message twice. As I write, I am reminded of how many of God's children truly believe they know most everything about the Word simply because they have heard it at some point. We forget that we gain faith when we are "hearing, and hearing" the Word (Romans 10:17, KJV). We need to position ourselves to hear the Word, hear it once more, and hear it yet again. Though there are many who "get it the first time," it is clear that we move in greater levels of faith the more we hear the Word.

Why am I writing this? Because there is no doubt that you have heard messages concerning pride before. Please position your heart to take any necessary steps if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you in this area. If we will humble ourselves and be willing to change according to His leading, we will be rewarded with a mantle of greater authority. No one yoked with pride can fully submit his or her life to be used for God's glory. Pride wants it all!

God hates pride. He hates it because it dethrones Him and puts *us* on the throne. We can easily identify the pride of Jezebel as she set out to dethrone God in Israel. She set up altars to Baal and Ashtoreth and seated false prophets at her table. How prideful these actions were! Yet, according to Revelation, God gave Jezebel space to repent. Though her prideful actions were a direct insult to God, He still loved her and gave her opportunities to turn from her wickedness—opportunities that she slighted.

I have to say that I have never seen a "full-blown" Jezebel (a ten on a scale of one to ten) repent. Not all who suffer from the effects of a Jezebel spirit are tens. I have known only two tens during my lifetime, and they never repented for the damage they had caused in my life or the life of our ministry. But most of the ones on the scale from one to nine also resist repentance. This is because they cling to a false belief that says, "I can't be wrong. If I am wrong, then I am flawed, and I cannot be flawed." A Jezebel spirit convinces them to hold out, remain in control and resist ever saying a heartfelt, "I'm sorry." This is sad because that person will not only remain blocked from repentance, but will also remain blocked from *receiving* love and forgiveness.

It is the Jezebel spirit that keeps us from facing our need for repentance. This spirit says, "You don't need to repent; there is nothing wrong with you." Beloved, we have all sinned. I had much rather take time to examine my life each day and repent when necessary than to assume that I am above reproach.

Pride comes in many forms, as we will observe. But just because God hates pride, that does not mean He wants you to feel bad about yourself if you

recognize that pride is a stronghold in your life. God is not a condemner—He is the Redeemer!

Trust the Holy Spirit to speak to your spirit. He is leading you forward with cords of love. In fact, He will expose the pride in our hearts precisely because He does love us so much. If God did not expose and destroy pride through our repentance, the sin would destroy us.

Do you see how pride can lead us into cycles of captivity and demonic yoking?

KING DAVID: MISSING GOD'S TIMING

We could discuss many different biblical figures who struggled with seasons or cycles of pride. King David is an excellent example. Since most believers are familiar with the life of this shepherd boy, later the king of Israel, it should prove to be a rather uncomplicated study. Also, most of us can in some way or another identify with David's personal struggles, his successes and failures.

Though he was an awesome king, a worship leader and a man after God's own heart, David struggled with a pride issue that opened the door for a Bathsheba issue! Let's review a familiar verse describing the season of David's pride:

In the spring, *at the time when kings go off to war*, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged [the city of] Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 11:1 (emphasis added)

Notice that it was the time for kings to go to war, but David stayed home. Keep in mind that David and his armies had already routed the Ammonites in the field. They had waited for the right season of the year in which to lay siege to the city Rabbah, where these enemies had fled. Yet it was during this siege that he sent his men to war and he remained home.

THINKING TOO MUCH OF HIMSELF?

We have to consider this disturbing question: Why didn't David go to war? When he, as king and military leader, should have been abroad with his army fighting the battles of the Lord, he decided to let others go in his stead. Was it arrogance? Neglect? Did David desire the glory of victory without the effort of battle?

All too often those at the tip of a hierarchy are tempted with the “I’m above that” syndrome. I am sure that we can all identify some who have elevated themselves to the “untouchable” list, no longer serving, but rather being served. (Let us *never* forget that Jesus was King of kings and the greatest Servant of all.)

We can learn from David’s story how the Deceiver and the Tempter often work hand in hand. All was lost over the bath of Bathsheba. While her husband, Uriah, was seizing a city for their king, that king had his eyes glued on her as she bathed. Bathsheba was not only the wife of one of David’s valiant warriors, she was also the daughter of Eliam, one of David’s thirty mighty men! The list of David’s betrayals gets longer. Eliam was the son of Ahithophel, one of David’s most trusted advisors. Yet David’s pride and lust caused him to toss aside loyalty to his men—as well as his loyalty to God.

Thinking of himself more highly than he ought led to great despair. The men achieved victory at Rabbah, taking the city, but David was shamefully conquered and led captive by his own lust. The sin of which he was guilty was adultery; he broke the seventh commandment. This act was punishable by the judges (see Job 31:9–11)—a sin that not only dishonors, but also leaves such reproach it is not easily wiped away. And it did not stop there: He next committed the heinous crime of directing the murder of Bathsheba’s husband.

David became yoked with iniquity, and the effects of his sin went deep into his generations. For one example, it opened the door for the deaths of two sons—the son conceived by his adultery with Bathsheba and his rebellious son Absalom. Being yoked with pride leads to destruction. How true that pride goes before a fall!

If the Holy Spirit convicts you that pride has hardened your heart to obeying the Lord’s plans and directives, take a moment to repent. This might prove difficult because Jezebel absolutely hates repentance and will do everything possible to block it.

REFUSING TO SUBMIT

Pride says essentially, “I know better than God.” In David’s case, he did not submit to God’s clear direction for timing. *Missing out on our anointed seasons can lead to devastation.* David was leading God’s army and fighting God’s enemies, and his success depended upon obedience to God’s directives. God did *not* anoint him as king so that David could choose his own domain in

his own timing. The particular land he would possess and the timing for possession were according to God's specifications.

Why did he feel exempt from the plans God had laid out for him? In times past, David would position himself before God, worshiping Him and seeking direction for the many battles. When the Amalekites destroyed Ziklag and captured the women and children, for instance, David placed the ephod upon himself to seek God. The man after God's own heart was given the specific counsel to pursue, overtake and recover all. He went *with* the men to battle; it was an anointed season for this king to go to war. When the Lord says it is our season for war, we had better blow the shofar and gather the troops! If we obey, we can, like David, pursue the enemy, overtake him and recover all that was stolen.

I believe that, at times, we mistakenly assume we know our own hearts. But the truth is this: Only God really knows us. Proverbs 16:2 reveals that we see ourselves as pure in our own eyes, "but the Lord weighs the spirits (the thoughts and intents of the heart)" (AMP). This means that He knows secrets of our hearts that we do not realize are there. He will allow opportunities for us to see the darkness tucked away in different heart chambers. Maybe this temptation was a test for David, a test to know his boundaries. The enemy dangled a carrot in front of David's eyes . . . and he took the bait. He should have turned his head when he noticed Bathsheba bathing. Never forget that *the Deceiver is a beguiler—one who baits us*.

Why do we so often choose our own times and seasons rather than submit to the hand of God? How many times has God instructed us to lay something down in our lives so that He might use us in His service? How many times have we established our own priorities? How many times do we find that obedience is way down on our list?

This is not just pride; it bleeds into rebellion. A lesson from the life of King Saul, Israel's first king, shows us the brotherhood between pride and rebellion. They go together, hand in hand.

The Yoke of Rebellion

King Saul also gave in to the temptation to choose his own way. He disobeyed God's direct command to attack and utterly destroy these same Amalekites

that David later battled. Instead of doing so, he saved the best of everything—including the king of the Amalekites. One might say that it was the season for kings to destroy all. Instead, King Saul had a better idea.

The Lord spoke through the prophet Samuel that Saul’s “rebellion is as the sin of *witchcraft*, and stubbornness is as *iniquity and idolatry*. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Samuel 15:23, KJV, emphasis added).

Saul’s rebellion was a sin equal to witchcraft. And his stubbornness (pride and arrogance) was the same as iniquity and idolatry. Saul’s pride and rebellion led to a yoking with iniquity. The result of King Saul’s sin was equally as shameful as that of his successor, David. David lost his honor; Saul lost his entire kingdom.

Jezebel desired total control of Israel and would not submit to any restraint. For King Saul, as for us, not submitting to authority, resisting restraints (even from God), remaining bent on having his own way—this is a sign of a Jezebel yoke.

If you have allowed this evil influence into your life, then take some time with the Lord right now as you enter a time of self-reflection. Please understand that it is highly possible that if you have walked in rebellion, you might have missed a season of deliverance. If so, simply repent and move forward. Your new season is now—today! It is time to be completely free of these oppressive yokes that have hindered you for too long.

A Time of Self-Reflection

This is another opportunity to examine our hearts. Even though the Word says that only God truly knows what is in our hearts, I believe He will show us areas that need repentance if we ask. Thumb through the pages of this chapter and take note of any areas where you highlighted text or wrote your thoughts in the margins. These notations might be areas in which the Holy Spirit was quickening your spirit. He will tug at your heart in an effort to draw you closer to Him. As you review the pages, take a few moments to document more thoughts under the different headings below. Write down the particular sin (or incident) and then pray a prayer of repentance. As you do, the yokes of that particular sin will lift and you can continue to S-L-I-P!

THE YOKE OF SIN

On the lines below, list any recurring sins that you see in your life.

THE YOKE OF PRIDE

On the lines below, list any ways that you see pride at work in your life.

THE YOKE OF REBELLION

On the lines below, list any ways that you see rebellion at work in your life.

ADDITIONAL EVIL YOKING

List below any other areas of yoking that the Lord quickens to your spirit.

Repentance is really an easy thing. Simply say, “Lord, I repent.” Jezebel wants to make it “religious,” a hard task maybe with fasting and more fasting to *prove ourselves worthy* of repentance. None of that is necessary; it is the false guilt that Jezebel uses against us. Since Jezebel resists repentance, she attempts to make it so difficult that we will not do it. Just say, “Lord, I’m sorry and I repent.” It really is that simple!

Ask Him to cleanse your heart and to show you the way to freedom. Here is a prayer you might want to pray:

Lord, I confess [state the areas of sin, pride and rebellion that the Lord has shown you]. I realize that these sins have affected my relationship with You and have yoked me with the enemy. I bring these sins to the cross, and I ask for forgiveness. I repent for allowing these sins to become yokes of oppression. I thank You for cleansing me with the blood of Jesus and for removing the demonic cords that have yoked me with a Jezebel spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Now, see yourself slipping out from under yokes of pride and rebellion. After you take a few minutes to reflect on this, go ahead and move forward

into freedom.

You have worked so hard! I am certain that God is pleased with your progress. Keep in mind that freedom is not a destination; it is a journey. As we walk faithfully with God, He is faithful to guide and heal us. Thus, we slip out of the grasp of Jezebel and into more and more freedom.

Let's continue our study together now, not forgetting that it is purposed by the Lord that we each slip out of bondage. Before turning the page, talk to the Lord concerning your commitment to breaking any other cycles of sin that He reveals.

Also, since a cycle involves repeated events, let's think of something *positive* to repeat—such as giving God thanks. Take a few moments and thank the Lord for His divine grace that is empowering you to leave your past behind and embrace a new level of freedom. How about thanking Him for perfecting your heart and also placing a holy zeal inside of you to seek His face? Now, those are cycles worth repeating!

The Yoke of Slavery and Generational Sins

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Exodus 20:2–6

Now let’s look into what I classify as a yoke of slavery—in particular, the yokes associated with Israel as she wandered in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. If you recall, the children of Israel wandered in the desert for forty years. Because they were yoked to doubt and unbelief along with murmuring and complaining, they remained in bondage to their old patterns of behavior. They had been literal slaves in Egypt, and since they could not embrace the full freedom God had for them through faith, they became yoked once again with Egypt (the past) and never possessed their Promised Land.

This story of the Exodus gives us important insights into the way that patterns of sins affect us and our families—for generations in many cases. I want to mention this issue of generational sin so that you can be aware of it as you read about the yoke of slavery.

Negative Effects from the Past

In Exodus 20:2–6, we notice the *sin of idolatry*, which places a yoke of slavery on a family line down to the third and fourth generations. The sin of idolatry is linked to many counterfeit gods. Most of us have them without realizing it. Though the word *yoke* is not mentioned, we can understand from this Scripture that if a sin from a past generation is also punishing our generation, then that sin has *yoked* us with the negative effects our past generations suffered. We will look at the yoke of idolatry in the next chapter, but for now just see this as one example of the way a “sin of the generations” becomes a “generational yoke.”

Generational sins begin when one person practices a certain sin (such as slander, hatred, theft) until it becomes a lifestyle. Once it has become a lifestyle, the sin is entrenched in the person’s life. At this point, the sin becomes an iniquity. An iniquity in a person’s life is a powerful tool for the enemy because it affects not only the individual, but also his or her family line. Generations can become vulnerable to the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional effects of the sin. This is how we become yoked to generational curses. If you are yoked with generational iniquities, you will suffer the same effects from it as your ancestors until there is repentance and divine forgiveness.

A good example of a generational yoke is alcoholism. Suppose, for instance, your grandfather was an alcoholic and, consequently, died of liver disease. It is likely that his ancestors were also yoked with addiction to alcohol and, therefore, suffered not only from the addiction but possibly with liver problems as well. Then, as a result of the general curse extended into the third generation, you might also have problems stemming from this early addiction to alcohol.

The problems would not necessarily show up in your life as addiction to alcohol, though that would be very likely. But you might experience instead some other type of compulsive-addictive behavior, such as drugs or sexual perversion. It is also possible that you might not have an actual addiction, but may suffer physical consequences from it just the same. In other words, you might not be an alcoholic, using this example, but because of the sin cycle you walk through an open door to suffering with liver dysfunction as though you had the addiction to alcohol.

I know of someone who follows this pattern. I will call her “Wilma.” She does not drink alcohol, but she had chronic liver disease. After seeking God’s direction on the matter, Wilma was led to study her generations, and it was then she realized that there were four generations of alcoholics in her bloodline. Yet, only Wilma and her grandfather suffered from liver disease. The disease actually skipped a generation and had yoked her as the grandchild!

After extensive research, she realized that there was also a yoke of poverty attached to her generations as a result of the yoke of alcoholism. Alcoholics often cannot handle work and make unwise business decisions due to their chronic alcoholic state of mind. Again, Wilma never drank alcohol but had liver disease, and her medical bills kept her buried in debt.

I sat down with her one day to address the generational yokes of liver disease and debt. After identifying the yokes, breaking the curses attached to the generational sin and praying repentance, she began to improve healthwise. Witnessing her physical improvement was amazing. Soon, since less money was spent for medical treatment, her finances began to improve. Today she is still witnessing breakthroughs!

I would like to mention a few more things regarding debt, because debt is a very common generational yoke, but it can happen for many different reasons.

I minister to people all the time, for instance, who make unwise financial decisions. Quite often this is due to an unteachable spirit. An unteachable spirit, as we learned in the last chapter, is yoked with a spirit of pride. Pride says, “I can control my own finances. I don’t need anyone to advise me about making wise decisions.”

Or, how about this common statement: “I don’t trust God with my money. I can do a much better job investing my money, so why ask God?” Oh, my! This type of attitude will open the door to the Devourer! Once the spirit of pride is repented of, however, finances will improve.

Satan’s aim is to control our lives, in order to destroy our godly worship and cause us to be ineffective as believers. All in all, Satan wants our worship. How does he gain worship? Whenever we believe his lies and bow down to his deceptions. If we listen to his evil whispers and fall into sin and iniquity, then he gets a hold not only on us but also on the family line.

If you are wondering whether or not you have been yoked to evil through a generational iniquity, you might want to check your family tree for any known sins or possible effects of sins. Look for any repeated negative patterns in your heritage—failures, weaknesses, certain lifestyles. This could include specific

things like barrenness, divorce, adultery, debt, sickness, early deaths, alcoholism—even broken legs or allergies.

If you see any repetition of negative patterns, there is more than likely a generational curse in your family. I have provided a specific prayer for you to follow at the end of this chapter, but for now keep documenting as the Holy Spirit leads.

For those of you who have been adopted or do not know your family history, do not despair! The Lord will empower you to break free from iniquitous patterns, even if you cannot identify the reason for them. He knows every hair on our heads. His eye is even on the sparrow! He has definitely not forgotten about you. Trust the Lord to reveal what is needed as you continue to read.

Allow the Holy Spirit to quicken your spirit concerning any issues and take a moment to write them down. You can come back to them later and take these concerns to prayer. (If you would like additional information, I also discuss the topic of generational yokes in my book *Strategies from Heaven's Throne: Claiming the Life God Has for You* [Chosen, 2007].)

I so desire for you to slip out of any yokes and embrace your freedom in Christ! Let's turn again to the story of Egypt and the main target the enemy uses to keep us from recognizing bondage. If we desire to be truly healthy, it starts with a healthy mind. Yet it is the mind that the Deceiver targets with his whispers. Let's now examine this yoke of slavery, and take steps to slip out from under it.

Pressing Through a Narrow Place

The yoke of “Egypt” represents not only slavery but, more broadly, a *slavery mentality*. Our use of this term represents mind-sets, religious legalism, patterns of behavior and false beliefs that keep us from entering into our Promised Land. This yoke is bondage that Satan puts upon us that was similar to the yoke that the Israelites had upon them. Observe Leviticus 26:13:

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.”

The name of the region where Israel was oppressed, *Egypt*, means, among other things “double straits.” Let's take a further look at these “double straits”

that we experience with the yokes of our oppressor.

The word *straits* describes times of great difficulty. In Hebrew, it is the word *yatsar* (pronounced yaw-*tsar*) and it translates as “to press, as through something narrow, and to be in distress.” Another word we can easily identify with it is *trouble*. Remember from Acts 16:18 that Paul was “troubled” over the spirit of divination. We discussed the fact that witchcraft and divination, signals of Jezebel in operation, cause a type of vexation, grieving and anguish.

We can now conclude that a yoke of Egypt implies great pressure, possible trauma and experiencing “a narrow place.” When we are about to break out of bondage, we will be challenged to press through a narrow place where the enemy attempts to hold us captive.

Previously, we talked about the *python spirit* and how it manifests through divination and Jezebel’s yoke. Let me add a brushstroke to the picture of Jezebel’s yoke. Whenever we are about to step into a place of increase or cross over into our Promised Land, we go through a very narrow place. The word *threshold* is the Greek word *pethen* (pronounced *peh-then*) and it means to “twist,” as in contortions. It is connected to the snake, asp and adder. If you will recall, we discussed the adder and its relationship to divination. But, note how closely the word *pethen* is to *python*! And, the translation of *pethen* mentions the “contortions” or the “contractions” of a python.

I believe that the spirit of divination, cast as the spirit of python, is at every threshold of our breakthroughs. It lies in wait to twist itself about us and yoke us with death, discouragement and desolation. Yes, there is truly a narrow place for us to pass through on our walk with God. It is not always an easy threshold to cross. Jesus said that broad is the way but narrow is the gate that leads to life. I choose life, don’t you? Though the Jezebel spirit attempts to yoke me with the temptation to try and control my way, I continue to choose life. Don’t allow the enemy to twist the truth in your ears. Always believe God and what He says about your future!

The Deceiver has planned a “double strait” as we attempt to follow God and break free. This means that he applies twice the pressure. The enemy will pull and tug at our yokes in an attempt to deceive us to follow his path rather than a path to freedom. As he pulls us in other directions, he attempts to get our focus off the intended breakthroughs. It is our season to trust God to break off yokes. Stay with these foundational points so that you can press through the narrow place.

Yokes of Vexation

Another word used to describe a strait is the word *vexed*. We have touched on vexation briefly, so now let's delve deeper. A yoke of vexation has many forms of demonic influence such as sickness, disease, infirmity and being vexed with unclean spirits (see Matthew 15:22; Acts 5:16). *The Jezebel yoke encompasses all of them.*

The words *vex* and *vexation* are often coupled in the Old Testament with anger and being in anguish. For our purposes, I am identifying the yoke of Satan and how he vexes us with sickness and disease and oppression, which are also causes of great anguish. Jezebel yokes us with the same through her many witchcrafts. I can personally testify that every time I have had to battle the Jezebel spirit, I have suffered greatly with a spirit of infirmity. Here is what the Word says about it:

All my enemies *whisper* together against me; they *imagine* the worst for me, saying, "A *vile disease* has beset him; he will never get up from the place where he lies."

Psalm 41:7–8 (emphasis added)

Notice that the enemy desires to yoke us with a vile disease and cause us to "never get up"! That is clearly a yoke of death, but there is more:

- The enemy's "whispers" are linked with Jezebel's yokes of witchcrafts.
- The enemy "imagines" the worst for us. These are what I often refer to as "vain imaginations," or "prideful imaginings of Satan." These must be "cast down" and overthrown. Every lie has to be toppled down and replaced with God's truth (see 2 Corinthians 10:5).
- The enemy wants to yoke us with a *vile disease*. *Belial* is connected to everything *vile*. Here we notice again the yoke of Belial and Jezebel and their intentions of destroying us.

This particular passage of Scripture, Psalm 41, concerns the Belial attack against David. In Bible times, fatal diseases were considered the workings of Belial. The context of this psalm highlights Belial's attempt to destroy David. Remember that David wrote, "All my enemies whisper together against me; they imagine the worst for me" (Psalm 41:7). These whispers include curses of witchcraft against God's anointed ones—and that includes you and me!

The word *vex* in the New Testament makes reference to demonic “possession.” I personally do not believe a Christian can be “possessed” by the devil. I strongly believe, however, that a Christian can need deliverance from a demonic stronghold or a particular demon. Jesus even asked Peter how Satan had found entrance into his heart. This implies that even though Peter believed and followed Christ, he was still influenced by a demonic presence.

Vexation is rooted in other words that imply masses of people and pressure. The Greek word *ochleo* (pronounced okh-leh-o), which means “to mob and to harass,” might imply uprisings that Satan plans against spiritual authority. Again, this is an obvious Jezebel yoke since she will not cohabit; *she* wants to be the authority. It also gives us a picture of how Satan attempts to deceive nations into lawlessness. Think of the uprisings we have witnessed over past years that are simply demonstrations of violence. These mob scenes have nothing to do with freedom; such violence and death are fueled by our enemy. Vexation can easily be linked with a *territorial spirit of lawlessness* in these situations. Please hear me on this: Jezebel loves violence.

For us, then, let’s conclude that *vexation* is another form of intense pressure. Whether a pastor is vexed because his leaders have pressured him into compromise, or a leader is vexing his sheep and applying undue pressure through forms of performance and legalism, that vexation can lead to demonic yoking. Jezebel demands performance. If we comply, we can easily become vexed and exhausted with a people-pleasing personality. I can again testify about this from personal experience. I was one and it almost killed me—literally!

I have also worked with strong Jezebels in non-church environments. It can be devastating to have an employer or coworker who is extremely controlling and manipulating. Jezebel’s demand for performance requires more from us than we are created to give—whether it be in church or out of church.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt He broke their yoke, but they could not enter into their place of rest due to their slavery mentality and the generational effects of that sin. If you recall, Israel had been in bondage for four hundred years before their release. There was most likely a very long line of generational sin of doubt and unbelief. A slavery mentality involves murmuring, complaining, believing lies concerning God, obstinacy, unbelief and even more. This is why we must strive to be not only free, but “free indeed”!

The enemy vexes us with our past and yokes us with distress and pressure. When we determine to break free from Egypt, he will apply even more pressure. Let's remember still that God has promised to remove our yokes of captivity.

The Yoke of Fear

Fear is a yoke of bondage. Fear will always attempt to tell you everything you are not and will never be. Fear reminds you of past failures and frightens you with the future. In fact, did you realize that Israel was *afraid* that God would not be faithful during her times of testing in the wilderness? If we would all admit it, we would confess that during hard times we face the same fear and are possibly yoked with fear.

Look how Romans describes fear as a spirit of slavery and bondage.

For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of *slavery* to put you once more in *bondage* to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father!

Romans 8:15, AMP (emphasis added)

There are so many types of fear that I could never write about them all. You can count on this fact, however: Fear comes from the same source (the devil) and has the same purpose (to cause us to doubt God and not trust Him). Think about this: If you really believed that God was always with you, would you be afraid? If we could ever get that settled in our minds and spirits, we could easily break off yokes of fear.

Satan desires to steal the abundant life that Jesus died to give to us. Fear is so damaging that it affects us not only emotionally, but also physically. Thus, we are yoked not only with a spirit of fear, but also with sickness and disease.

Dr. Caroline Leaf, in her book *Who Switched Off My Brain?* (Nelson, 2009), documents that fear actually “triggers more than 1,400 known physical and chemical responses, and activates more than 30 different hormones and neurotransmitters.” Dr. Leaf goes on to say that “fear is at the root of all stresses.”

Fear will manifest in many unhealthy and deadly patterns of behavior. It is one of the ways a Jezebel spirit can gain entrance into our lives. We can be

yoked with a Jezebel spirit when we are afraid because we feel the need to “control and manipulate” to protect ourselves.

Fear will convince us that we are unworthy to be loved and accepted. We will wear “masks” and hide behind them so that no one really knows us. Of course, we can easily recognize this as isolation—which is deadly to us because we need to remain connected with other believers. To protect ourselves from fear of further harm or rejection, we also develop phony personalities that will block us from understanding our true feelings and aspirations.

There are many, many prophetic destinies that are destroyed because of yoking with a spirit of fear. The Deceiver will lie and convince us that we will never amount to much and, therefore, we shrink back from potential victory and become yoked with fears of failure, oppression and depression.

In my past, I was yoked with a spirit of fear. I suffered with great insecurity and oppression. Most of the yoking came from believing lies of the enemy. Perhaps you can relate to the insecurity that comes from not realizing the authority that we have in Christ. Why does the enemy work so diligently to deceive us? It is because he does not want us to see ourselves walking in the power and authority that God created us to have. He seeks to steal our identity and authority just as he did Eve’s in the Garden of Eden.

We have been given power and authority over our adversary. But, if we believe the opposite of that truth, we are yoked with lies and are subject to oppression and evil plans of the enemy.

Let me simply say that a yoke is basically any form of subjugation. The intention of a yoke is to unite us or connect us with something. When Satan plans a yoke, it is his intent to unite us with his lies in order to enslave us with sin and bondage. In order to be free from this type of bondage, we must continue to focus on the promises of God rather than the voice of the enemy.

Complaining Strengthens a Yoke

The Israelites were never able to enter into their Promised Land because they could not completely trust God. At each test in the wilderness, it was as though their default buttons were pushed and their slavery mentality reset. When given an opportunity to trust God during times of testing, their minds

and hearts reverted to the flesh pots of Egypt. Their murmuring and complaining yoked them even more to their past slavery mentality:

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Exodus 16:2–3, KJV

Murmuring and complaining will always yoke us to our past. We will remain in bondage to past failures or hurts if we cannot control our mouths and attitudes. The word *murmur* is the Hebrew word *teluwnah* (pronounced tel-oo-naw). This word is defined as “a sense of obstinacy and grumbling.” This Hebrew word is connected to another definition that suggests no intention of moving forward or changing. In other words, the hearts of the Israelites were completely bent on remaining ungrateful and hardened toward the goodness of the Lord. Every test in the wilderness was meant to give Israel an opportunity to embrace the goodness and the promises of God; however, Israel remained obstinate.

Do you really realize the demonic intention for God’s children to remain obstinate? We need to examine this because the Deceiver attempts to paint a picture of God for us that is the opposite of His nature—just as he did for Israel. The word *obstinate* is the same word used to describe the heart of the Pharaoh who held Israel in bondage! When we are obstinate, guess who holds the key to our hearts and has yoked us to bondage? Yes, it is the Deceiver.

Obstinate describes someone who is severely stubborn and stiff-necked. Having a hardened heart toward God will cause yokes of iron to be placed upon us. Scripture says, “Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass” (Isaiah 48:4, ASV).

I am convinced that murmuring is fueled by Satan. *Murmuring reveals chronic dissatisfaction and anger with God.* Satan targets our disappointments and then begins to whisper in our ears many lies concerning God. In fact, the word *murmur* is linked to the Hebrew word *nirgan*, which translates as “whispering, slandering and backbiting.”

This “whispering” is important to remember. Know that the enemy is attempting to whisper lies into your ears. Be careful of the whispers of the Deceiver. Let’s never forget that life and death are in the power of the tongue. When we murmur we yoke ourselves with evil.

Renewing the Mind

The Israelites were not able to trust God, and that murmuring generation died in the wilderness. They refused to renew their minds and, by doing so, they were unable to come out from under the yoke of Egypt.

The same can be true for us. The main way to come out from underneath yokes of the enemy is to renew the mind. Renewing the mind involves repenting from an old nature and believing lies concerning ourselves, and then taking off the old man and putting on the new. Repentance involves turning away from sin and embracing God and all that He desires for us. When we are renewing our minds, we are also seeing areas of sin that need to be confessed.

Many of us have been under the bondage of deception for so long, it is difficult to renew our minds in order to believe God and His Word. It is difficult, but not impossible. Our minds must be retrained to think positively rather than negatively. Decide right now that you will be diligent to renew your mind with the intention to break off yokes that hold you captive.

Dr. Caroline Leaf, whom I quoted earlier, is a leading neuroscientist and neurometacognitive learning specialist. In some of her studies, she notes that “The Word and science believe that the mind and the brain are one.” This is empowering information that encourages me because the Word says that “as a man thinketh . . . so is he.” To me, this means that if I “think” something or put much thought into an idea, then my brain and all of its functions begin to align with the thought. The brain directs all of the body’s functions—heart rate, balance, coordination, sensory processing, learning, memory. In other words, if I think *health* and *victory*, my brain will send signals to my body to empower me in these areas concerning the battle at hand. Rather than being afraid or overwhelmed of a demonic assault, I will have “memory” of God’s faithfulness.

Much has been written about the mind/body connection and the benefits of a positive attitude. We are aware that positive thinking is beneficial to our well-being. It behooves us, then, to begin to teach our minds to work *for* us and not *against* us. Make an intentional decision to think positively. The Deceiver will lie to you and declare that thinking positively will not empower you or change anything. That, dear one, is another lie! If you will do this, you will notice yourself slipping out from under yokes of fear and anxiety.

Know that God has victory planned for your life. As you continue to read, keep this Scripture in the forefront of your mind:

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, Here I am. If you take away from your midst *yokes of oppression* [wherever you find them], the finger pointed in scorn [toward the oppressed or the godly], and every form of false, harsh, unjust, and wicked speaking . . . then shall your light rise in darkness. . . . And the Lord shall guide you continually.

Isaiah 58:9–11, AMP (emphasis added)

Contemplate this message, asking God to renew your mind:

God has great breakthroughs planned for me! He will break off yokes of bondage and oppression. I can trust Him! When I call, He will answer. When I cry out, He will say, "Here I am!"

A Time of Self-Reflection

Let's now take a few moments to think about what we have just studied. Answer the questions below, allowing the Holy Spirit to minister truth to your soul and spirit:

1. In your own words, explain what a yoke of slavery is.
2. Can you identify an area, a sin or a lie with which the Deceiver has yoked you?

If the answer is yes, and probably there is at least one, please take some time to write that area down below by filling in the blanks. (You may need to thumb back through the pages and identify these in the margins of the pages where you wrote down your convictions and inspirations from the Holy Spirit.)

- a. I am yoked with the lie that says _____. God's truth says, however, that Jesus came to give me an abundant life. I confess that I have believed a lie and I repent for not believing what God has declared over my life. I now choose to believe God and to trust Him. Second Corinthians 12:9 says that His grace is _____ for me. It goes on to say that His power is made perfect in my _____. Therefore, I rather boast about my _____, that the power of Christ may _____.
- b. I am yoked with the sin of _____. God's Word says that Christ paid for my sin at the _____. I repent for the sin of _____ and I believe that my sin is forgiven. I now choose to receive the grace of God to live a victorious life.

Now record your favorite Scripture that promises forgiveness.

3. Is fear causing you to wear a mask or to develop a phony (counterfeit) personality? Do you realize that you are unique and fearfully and

wonderfully made by His hand? Yes, you are so very special to God. Before you read further, ask for forgiveness for wearing a mask that negates the person that God has created. Ask the Lord for divine grace to be the person He has created you to be!

GENERATIONAL PRAYER

Let's now repent for any generational sins.

Father God, I thank You that Jesus Christ was slain from the foundation of the world. This means that even before time, Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice for my sin. I repent now of the generational sin of _____ [list the sins that come to your mind]. I repent on behalf of my ancestors and also on behalf of myself for my involvement. I believe that the generational sins I have confessed are nailed with Jesus Christ at the cross and that His blood was shed to cover my sin. I thank You that as I confess my sins, You are faithful and just to forgive me. I now believe and confess that the yoke of generational sin has been removed from me and my generations. In Jesus' name, Amen.

AFFIRMING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Hosea 11 is a lovely passage of God's faithfulness. Even when Israel was in idolatry, sacrificing to Baal and burning incense to false idols, God still offered healing. Though His children rejected Him, He continued to lead them with "cords of human kindness and with ties of love." Wow! I pray that this passage ministers life to you. It is a perfect example of God's unfailing love and His desire to break off every evil yoke—even while we are deceived.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them."

Hosea 11:1-4

What does this Scripture say? Go ahead and fill in the blanks:

"I led them with _____ of _____, with _____ of love; I lifted the _____ from their neck and bent down to _____ them."

This means that God is leading you by the strength of His love. Dear one, you are going to make your shift into great victory—I am sure of it! He is

promising to lift from you the yokes of oppression and slavery.

DETHRONE THE ENEMY—ENTHRONE JESUS!

Isn't it refreshing to know that before the beginning of time God had a plan to redeem us from the wiles of the Deceiver? My heart desires to remind you that our Savior defeated Satan at the cross. Because He overcame the enemy, we have been empowered to defeat him also. As you continue to read, you will have more opportunities to dethrone the enemy through repentance.

But we will not stop there! We will also be enthroning God through much praise. It is very important as you renounce any area of sin (especially the sin of idolatry) that God is once again enthroned through praise. Your continued victory against the enemy involves replacing anything that has been uprooted and then filling that empty place with praise, inviting God's divine presence.

Much of our praise involves rejoicing. Other areas of praise are in our thanksgiving. God desires for you to "un-yoke" from evil and yoke with Him. How awesome is that? So let's end this chapter with a few Scriptures of praise.

Read this passage aloud as you lift your heart to the Lord in adoration:

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonders.
I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.
For you have upheld my right and my cause;
you have sat on your throne, judging righteously.
You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.
Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.

The LORD reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
He will judge the world in righteousness;
he will govern the peoples with justice.
The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
Those who know your name will trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Psalm 9:1–10

Did you notice that verse 1 gives us an opportunity to tell of His wonders? Take that opportunity now to write a short testimony below concerning *the wonders of your God*. When we document our thoughts, it can become similar to a written decree, which is a legalized action in the Kingdom of God. In other words, a written decree is a binding force between you and God that not only enthrones Him, but also defeats your enemy.

Ask yourself these questions: What promises has He fulfilled in my life? Why can I be thankful for life today? What does it mean that I was born for such a time as this?

MY DECREE AND TESTIMONY OF THE WONDERS OF GOD

Dated the _____ day of the month of _____ in the year _____.

Thank God today that He has chosen you and set you apart for a divine purpose. After spending a few more moments in His presence, turn the page. We will continue our journey together. I am praying for you along the way!

The Yoke of Idolatry

You shall have no other gods before me. . . . You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

Exodus 20:3, 5

Corruption of a nation can start in any number of ways—moral degradation, apostasy, immorality, the lack of fear of God. During the reign of King Ahab, corruption of the throne began with his marriage to Jezebel. Destruction came when she expanded her power and influence by introducing her false gods to the Israelites. She was devoted to two principal gods, Baal and Ashtoreth. Baal was the male deity of power and sexuality. Ashtoreth was the female goddess of love, fertility and war. Due to Jezebel's allegiance to her false idols, evil spirits consumed her. Her every motivation was demonically inspired.

We can learn a lot about someone by observing the idols he or she bows down to. In Jezebel's case, we will now study the gods of Baal and Ashtoreth in order to see more clearly what this spirit "looks like." The more we understand about our enemy, the more successfully we can slip out of her evil yokes.

As we look closely at Jezebel's idols, keep in mind that we will attempt to explore the possibility that we also have counterfeit gods and may not even realize it! Think about it: Do we struggle to trust God for our provision? Do

we fight an unhealthy need to control our own lives—or other people’s? Are we yoked with doubt, unbelief, fear? If so, it is highly possible that we are also yoked with *idolatry*.

As we have noted, Exodus 20:2–5 says that this particular yoke affects a family even to the fourth generation. This generational iniquity is a strong one. Jezebel brought her false gods with her, just as our forefathers brought their idols with them into our family lineage. Corruption in our own lives may have begun with idol worship generations ago. There are many family issues that lead to idolatry.

Maybe you can identify this particular yoke in your family and see some of the effects of it today. Idolatry can occur very subtly. We do not even realize that we have substituted our faith in God for alternatives such as sports, sex, money, fulfillment, success. These alternatives are, quite simply, idols of the heart. We will discuss this more in a moment. You will see the thread of generational yokes and counterfeit gods being intertwined throughout this chapter.

Jezebel developed a culture filled with idols; our ancestors may have done the same. (And we may also be doing the same now.) Most people today tend to think of idolatry as some primitive exercise, such as bowing down to carved wooden images. Keep an open mind, and let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart about this powerful yoke of idolatry that finds expression easily today.

The False God Baal

To understand idol worship, we start with the concept that people worship false deities for a reason. Baal, which was symbolized by a calf or bull, was the male god of power and sexuality. When the people wanted power, or for a powerful god to do a certain thing, they worshiped Baal. If they desired heightened sexuality, they again turned to Baal. As you read, you will understand the different areas in which Baal influenced Israel, and how it affects us even today.

If you recall, Exodus 32 documents the history of Baal influence while the Israelites were in the wilderness. When Moses delayed descending from Mount Sinai, where God was giving him the Ten Commandments, his absence caused the hearts of the people to fear. They felt as if they needed a leader they could

see and touch at all times, so they built a golden calf, an idol to worship. The Israelites told Aaron, “Come, make us gods. . . . We don’t know what has happened to [Moses]” (verse 1).

It is a sad commentary that Aaron was also influenced by the Baal god the people had left behind in Egypt. He took up a collection of gold and made a golden calf in Baal’s image. The people mocked God. They bowed down and worshiped the image of Baal, proclaiming it to now be their god. Since Baal was a god of sexuality we can only imagine the many perversions that occurred while Moses was receiving instructions from God. God defined His people as “stiff-necked and rebellious” and sent Moses down from the mountain to address their sin of idolatry.

Keep in mind that Jezebel brought this principal god, along with Ashtoreth, into Israel. Recall that in Revelation 2:18–25, Jesus addressed the church of Thyatira and rebuked them for “tolerating” Jezebel. Though it was not the same woman, physically, that He was speaking of, her demonic spirit and influence had infiltrated the church in Thyatira, as it still does. We will never totally destroy a Jezebel spirit, nor can we demolish completely the Deceiver—only Jesus can do that; *however*, we can break off the yokes of oppression attached to these evil spirits.

The church of Thyatira *tolerated her* or “permitted her” to teach false doctrine. In other words, they did not silence this spirit’s voice, and they gave her opportunities to seduce the saints into sexual immorality and to eat the foods sacrificed to idols. These idols were Baal and Ashtoreth. She had brought her idols to church and the Jezebel spirit (if tolerated and not corrected and silenced) will do the same in our churches today.

Baal Worship Today

Beloved, let’s face it. Baal is still in operation. We are yoked with idolatry and still do not recognize it. We need to consider seriously the fact that the Jezebel spirit has not been completely silenced. We have all known extremely controlling, manipulating and rebellious personalities that have attempted to gain power in the local churches, businesses, families.

All too often we choose leaders that we know are *always there for us*. This could mean that we have a “personal god” through a pastor or leader that we

can contact anytime or anywhere. In our “dot-com” world, communications are fast and easy, but this can also be a hindrance when the Lord is teaching us patience. Learning to wait on Him for guidance and leadership is a challenge when we can dial *1-800-give me a word from God*. Idols are substitutes for all that God offers—especially answers to prayer.

Below are some other manifestations of Baal worship and Baal influence due to tolerating Jezebel. As you read, please realize that each of these manifestations represents different types of yokes with Jezebel and deception:

- Baal worship promotes rebellion against God. The Israelites turned from God and declared that the golden calf had brought them out of Egypt.
- Baal worship encourages conspiracies against godly leaders. Jezebel conspired against Elijah and the prophets of God.
- Baal causes people to be impatient and not wait for God’s divine timing. Impatient at waiting for Moses to return, the Israelites demanded an idol to worship. We can all default to a familiar yoke when God does not meet our timetable.
- Baal worship causes people to doubt the ability of God’s leaders to guide properly.
- Baal worship preys upon congregations or businesses that are susceptible to evil whisperings and false accusations—especially concerning leadership.
- Baal worship encourages distrust and chronic dissatisfaction. Some of us are never satisfied with the leaders or supervisors God places over us. If we desire more power, recognition and attention, it is a yoke of Jezebel and her idols.
- Baal worship encourages sin and apostasy.
- Baal worship causes God’s people to “[sit] down to eat and drink and [get] up to indulge in revelry” (see Exodus 32:6). In this passage the word *revelry*, or *play* in some translations, means to “laugh and mock God.” This is directly connected to the Deceiver, for the Word says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7–8, ASV).
- Baal worship encourages people to become “stiff-necked,” which means “stubborn.” First Samuel 15:23 says: “For rebellion is as the sin

of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim (household good luck images)” (AMP). Here we connect Baal worship with the Jezebel yoke of witchcraft.

Beloved, remember that when Jezebel has a voice, she is also giving voice to her idols. Baal is the deity of sexuality, which promotes not only sexual perversion, but also *religious perversion*. Jezebel’s roots are deeply entrenched in deception; people are easily deceived when this spirit is active. None of us would purposefully “bow down” to a wooden image—no way! We are deceived into idolatry through seductive evil spirits.

Baal Seizes Authority Illegitimately

Now that we understand that idolatry is a sin of the generations, it will benefit us to look at Jezebel’s father. Ethbaal was king of Tyre, and he seized the throne illegally. The city of Tyre was never conquered fully by Israel. Tyre was a promised parcel in their Promised Land, but Israel was never able to take possession. Historically, Tyre was also a merchant city of trade and tremendous wealth. Ethbaal (notice the name *Baal*; yes, he was a Baal worshiper, too) became king of Tyre when he plotted murder and seized the throne. Jezebel had a very good teacher—she learned well both how to plot murder and how to seize power illegitimately.

Jezebel’s daughter, Athaliah, received the mantle of her generations, as she did the same things: She plotted murder and seized the throne—the throne of Judah. The evil power that influenced this family was Baal. This is the same evil power behind governmental *coup d’état*,—the seizing of a throne or authority through death, manipulation or control.

The Jezebel spirit seeks control no matter how it occurs. The spirit will find others to work with it—becoming controlling, manipulating and seductive. The powers behind Baal will yoke us with complete deception; therefore, we are blinded to our idolatry.

Baal and Jezebel Promote Religious Spirits

We discussed previously how religious Jezebel was. It is important to understand that she worshiped Baal and Ashtoreth with tremendous passion. One way she performed for Baal, as we have noted, was by murdering God's true prophets.

The prophets of Baal were, like Jezebel, fanatics and performers for their false god. When Elijah addressed the prophets of Baal in the great showdown on Mount Carmel, they cried out for hours hoping Baal would answer. They danced around fanatically, shouting, and then began to cut themselves with spears and sharp instruments and bled—hoping to attract Baal's attention. Baal did not answer. (See 1 Kings 18:25–29.)

Jezebel thrives on attention. Being dramatic is her prideful calling card. Using false flattery along with control, she manipulates her way to the top so that she not only gains the spotlight but also uses her power to teach and seduce others. Jezebel shows up for everything in the church that will allow her to look religious. The spirit behind her and Baal teaches that religious acts are keys to being super-spiritual. Baal and Jezebel teach that “doing” is much more important than “being”; there is, therefore, no integrity in their service to God. Jezebel is a liar. You cannot trust her in any way or in anything—especially with delegated godly authority!

Truth is, God considers all of this “dead works,” as none of it is devoted to Him. I have pastored pastors for years, and it saddens my heart to see how leadership has suffered due to the calamities caused by a Jezebel spirit. Too many times I have witnessed leaders who are *mesmerized* (this is witchcraft) by a Jezebel who uses false flattery and manipulation to work her way into a prominent position. A Jezebel spirit threatens a church atmosphere by causing the pastor or leaders to believe that they cannot operate effectively without her. This has always amazed me—but this is what Jesus referred to as “tolerating” Jezebel. Jezebel performs well, prophesies well (though it is many times a false word), dresses really well and is many times a large financial giver in the church. She will threaten to leave your church (ministry or business) if she does not have her way—and take others with her!

A Jezebel spirit is so intimidating that it is difficult to take one's rightful position of authority and resist her evil tactics. I have seen many pastors crumble when the Jezebel threatens them with leaving their ministry. And, since Baal worship travels with her, if leaders bow down to Jezebel's control, it strengthens idolatry in the ministry. The Jezebel yoke is a strong one—this yoke becomes a fortress that protects her idols.

Let's now study Baal's bride, the other principal god of Jezebel, Ashtoreth.

The Goddess Ashtoreth

Besides being completely devoted to Baal, Jezebel also worshiped another principal idol, the goddess Ashtoreth. She convinced her husband, Ahab, to build altars to them both. Jezebel made covenant with these idols and, therefore, became "one" with them. This is how we know that when Jezebel is active, so are the manifestations of her idols.

Remembering that we can learn a lot about a person by the idols he or she serves, it is important to examine her other false god, Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth was the female goddess of love, fertility and war. Again, understand how idolatry works—you worship that idol so that it will do something for you or provide something you need. In other words, if barrenness was a problem, Ashtoreth offered solutions because she was the goddess of fertility. And, if power was needed for battle, altars were erected to worship Ashtoreth.

Ashtoreth had a number of different titles. By examining each one we gain revelation about Jezebel's characteristics:

The Queen of Heaven/Bride of Heaven

The Goddess of Good Fortune

The Goddess of Holiness

The Goddess of Sex

The Goddess of War

Astarte

Ishtar

Ashtart

Asherath

Aphrodite

Why is it important to take a look at these different names? Because if we are yoked with Jezebel, we are yoked with her gods. As such, we can become completely deluded and blinded, looking to idols for our provision, love and completeness. Sexual perversion, for example, becomes a substitute for complete fulfillment meant to exist between a husband and wife. The feminist movement is another example where the spirit of Ashtoreth is strong. Though,

naturally, I believe that women should be given equal opportunity, training and credentials, I do not embrace the Jezebel manipulation and offensive demonstrations of many members of feminist organizations.

I also believe that the Jezebel spirit and her idolatrous worship promote abortion, same-sex marriages, gay rights and pornography. Colossians 3:5 relates idolatry directly to sexual degeneration and perversion. Can anyone disagree with the fact that sexual perversion is completely out of control in our world? Drug trafficking has taken a backseat to sex trafficking. Young girls from the age of five are being trafficked as slaves to sexual perversions. If we tolerate this, we also tolerate Jezebel. Jesus rebuked the church of Thyatira for tolerating Jezebel—we are also rebuked if we bow down to idolatry.

Contemporary Idolatry

There are other gods that Jezebel worshiped, such as Molech and Rephan, which were associates of Baal. Molech was the god of child sacrifice. We can equate this today with abortion, the murder of children in the womb, but it is more. As we climb the success ladder, for instance, have we allowed the greed of the god Mammon to control us to the point that we neglect our families? Especially our children? We can easily let idolatry concerning money and success cause us to sacrifice our children's futures and emotional health that only a parent can nurture.

Rephan was an idol worshiped secretly by the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. Its name means "lifeless," and indicates a curse of death associated with its worship. The Israelites kept this idol hidden while in the wilderness—yet their hearts were still attached to the idolatry behind it. Every one of the adult Israelites died in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb. This tells us that the yoke of Rephan is linked to death and an inability to possess our Promised Land.

Located in Athens during Paul's time of ministry was the Parthenon of Athena, which was preeminent, even though other deities were represented in the city. There was Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, and Hephaestus, the god of craftsmanship. There was Ares, the god of war, and Artemis, the goddess of fertility.

Today, our contemporary society is not fundamentally much different from that of ancient idolatrous worship. Many different “priesthoods” are prevalent. When we study the different world cultures, we notice that each is dominated by its own set of idols. Each also has its own rituals and totems. If you look closely, you can identify the different shrines that house the idols—whether they be the office, spa, gymnasium or—should I mention?—stadium. Many sacrifices are being made with the desire to be completely fulfilled. Can you agree with me that we have made gods of success, power, money? How many of us yield to the gods of money and success to the point of sacrificing the happiness of our families? We have become a fatherless generation—and a motherless one as well.

And what about beauty? Though we do not physically bow our bodies down to a graven image or a totem pole of Ashtoreth, we devote ourselves to her nonetheless. I think of the many young women who are driven to eating disorders so that they might feel acceptable to society. I should know this—I was one of them. My obsession over body image almost destroyed me as I became yoked with idolatry and premature death.

I mentioned earlier how shrines were built to house idols. After studying more about Jezebel, I came to realize that this evil spirit is seeking a “house” within our own personal temples. Satan wants our worship; allowing Jezebel and her idols into our lives automatically provides that for him.

Idols of the Heart

Timothy Keller, in his book *Counterfeit Gods* (Penguin, 2009), aptly describes idolatry. He refers to a time in the 1830s when “Alexis de Tocqueville recorded his famous observations on America. He noted a ‘strange melancholy that haunts the inhabitants . . . in the midst of abundance.’ Americans believed that prosperity could quench their yearning for happiness . . . but such a hope was illusionary. Because . . . ‘the incomplete joys of this world will never satisfy (the human) heart.’”

Keller goes on to explain the difference between *sorrow* and *despair*. He writes: “Sorrow is pain for which there are sources of consolation. Sorrow comes from losing one good thing among others, so that, if you experience a career reversal, you can seek comfort from your family to get you through it.

Despair, however, is inconsolable, because it comes from losing an ‘*ultimate thing*.’ When you lose the ultimate source of your meaning or hope, there are no alternative sources to turn to.”

We have become a generation in the depths of despair. We have allowed success, jobs, beauty, sports, etc., to be the *ultimate thing*. The loss of these things shows each of us the idols in our hearts.

As a pastor I witness how many families are affected by Jezebel and money—the god Mammon. Ultimately, greed breeds poverty—it is a spiritual principle. When there is a strong Jezebel manifesting in a church, family or business, finances suffer. They might do well for a season, but eventually the idol destroys any financial blessing. Idolatry consumes the sacrifice—sometimes the money and the people along with it.

Because money represents power, those blessed with finances are targeted by a Jezebel spirit. I have witnessed a Jezebel spirit attempt to manipulate the wealthy with false prophecy and manipulation. Jezebel also uses self-pity to attract victims to give to her “cause.”

The apostle Paul wrote about the “ultimate thing” of greed. He wrote quite simply: Greed is idolatry (see Colossians 3:5). It is easy to worship money without realizing the sin attached to it, but this becomes an addiction and affects us spiritually. To worship Mammon is to become an idolater. In fact, we do not recognize the effects of this until we experience a type of breakdown. When we begin to recover from its ill effects, we are left scratching our heads and asking, “What got hold of me? What was I doing? What was I thinking? How could I have been so blind?”

The Deceiver blinds us. And when Jezebel is promoting her idols, we are completely blinded to our worship of them. This is because when most of us think of idols, as I have said, we visualize a literal statue. Yet, think about this: Our idols actually could be something that we see and touch—a famous actor, actress, football star or an “American Idol.” Though we would not actually confess to idolatry, still, by the pedestals we place them on we must admit that we are truly serving idols that are in our hearts. Again, these idols are deep desires such as material possessions, success, love, fame and beauty. Any of these can become the *ultimate thing*! What are we really seeking? We are seeking security, love, freedom, safety and fulfillment—all of which only God can give us.

If we are addicted to idols, we cannot imagine living without them. I remember when I tried to quit smoking years ago. I knew I had made an idol

of it because when I tried to lay cigarettes down and walk away from them, I was consumed by the thought of not having them. When I had to walk away from the yoke of anorexia and bulimia and risk weight gain and my lack of control, I had to trust God for my future. I was addicted to the control of my weight; it made me feel successful. Distorted and twisted as my thinking was, I truly believed it was what would fulfill me. What a deception! The Jezebel influence of control had me completely bound up and yoked with death structures. My body had become an idol.

Anything Can Become an Idol

Beloved, anything can become an idol. Any area (altar) upon which we build in order to ensure happiness is an idol. Whatever we trust in, hope in, believe in other than God is an idol. In *Counterfeit Gods* Keller goes on to state: “[An idol] is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.” Though I had many other idols in my lifetime, I can easily confess that my primary ones were food, cigarettes and my weight. Can you name some of your own? Let’s look at some of our counterfeit gods.

A *counterfeit god* is just what it implies—a complete imposter, a counterfeit to the real. This imposter god or idol could be anything so important to us and so very necessary that if we should ever lose it or have to lay it down or walk away from it, we would feel that we cannot survive. In fact, life may not even feel worth living without it! I once believed the lies of the Deceiver that said I could not live without my addictions. It was spiritual warfare and trusting in God’s Word that delivered me from that oppressive yoke.

I have realized that an idol can be anything—your spouse, children, career, friends, romantic relationships, beauty, money . . . even success in Christian ministry. You can easily identify these idols because their demands consume your thoughts and energy.

One of my personal idols was to “fix people” or “fix the situation.” I worked diligently to be there for those in need. I spent time, money and resources providing help. I finally realized that I was allowing myself to be a “god” for others. This was a difficult yoke to break as I had become codependent upon being needed. I found value in this rather than

understanding my value in God. Though it is referred to as codependency, it is fundamentally an idol. An idol is what lives in our heart of hearts. I guess I needed to feel “worshiped” so I made myself available. I needed “praise” so I would perform! The lie of the Deceiver says, “I need to feel significant and secure.” When we embrace it, he joins it to the yoke of Jezebel, which says, “I will take control. I will fix this situation.” We have an entire culture of codependence that, bottom line, is idolatry.

The Love Gods

Jezebel’s idols could be referred to as the “love gods.” Think about how we also, today, are addicted to love. Romance and success in love promise to connect us to idols, false lovers that can never replace what we really need: God’s love. Though God loves us unconditionally, we cannot seem to wrap our minds around that concept. This is why our minds must be renewed.

We must remember that an idol will consume our imaginations. Let’s face it: We idolize love and then we worship the lover attached to it. I have counseled countless women who believe the lie that says, “My mate will bring me the happiness I long for.” This means that their husbands are becoming something to them that only God can fulfill. Women look to men for security, protection, fulfillment, worth and significance. Men do the same, but in a different way. Both, however, are looking for love in all the wrong places!

If we can honestly look at our fears, we can identify our idols. Since Jezebel yokes us with fear, we can also understand how she yokes us with idolatry—a sin passed on through the generations. Whatever controls us becomes our lord.

Lord, help us S-L-I-P out of this yoke. The way out is to look up! God is our source of significance. He is our fulfillment. To move forward in life and freedom is to discern the idols hidden in our hearts. Break free from the yoke of idolatry now. The only road to success is to turn away from idols and back to the one true God.

A Time of Self-Reflection

Dear one, I know the Holy Spirit is tugging at your heart right now. It is all about laying your life on the altar and surrendering every area to Him. He desires total control.

If you have been in a wrestling match with Jezebel, if you are yoked with a constant power struggle, then know that Jezebel wants entrance to your heart so she can erect her idols there. The apostle Paul described the warfare with this principality of Jezebel and her cohorts of bondage and deception:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12, NKJV

The wrestling Paul wrote about is the Greek word *ballo* (pronounced *bal-lo*), which means “to throw down with violence.” This is particularly pertinent because Jezebel was thrown down from her exalted place: She was literally thrown out the window to her death! If you have been wrestling with powers of darkness, you must wrestle with the faith of Jehu—as we will see, he was the one with the mantle to throw Jezebel out the window.

It is now time to dethrone Jezebel and her idols and enthrone our God. The first thing we must do in order to remove idolatry and the yoke of Jezebel attached to it is to replace the idol with God’s Word. So grab your pen or pencil once more and a prayer journal if necessary. It is time to allow the Holy Spirit to inspect your heart. Let’s ask Him to shine His light into your heart and expose any idols that have attempted to remain hidden. Pray this prayer and then take the necessary steps for God’s forgiveness:

Holy Spirit, I submit to Truth. I desire to become unyoked with any idols in my heart.

Hebrews 4:12 says that Your Word is living and active, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow. It is also a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Lord, it is You who knows my heart. You know every thought. I bind the spirit of Jezebel and her idols in my life. I surrender to the power of God’s Holy Word her every plan to keep me yoked. Lord, I declare that Your Word is more powerful than the power of Jezebel and her idols. I declare that Your Word will quickly destroy the Jezebel yoke of idolatry. I choose no longer to surrender to counterfeit powers or desires. I submit myself completely to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit, speak to me and show me any area in which I need to repent.

1. Now, dear one, take some time and begin to document false idols in your life. Ask God to show you any area that has become too important. Does your mate take the place of God? Your children? Your ministry? Your

job? Write down anything that has become the “ultimate thing” over God. (Again, you may need a journal for further documentation.)

Say this aloud and then fill in the blanks as you repent:

Lord, I repent that I have allowed these things to become the “ultimate thing” over You. I repent of these sins concerning the idols in my heart:

2. It is now necessary to break the curse of idolatry from your life. This is another yoke that God will break as you pray this prayer:

Father, I confess that I have allowed a curse of idolatry to yoke me with spirits of darkness, including Jezebel and her false gods and Belial and its wickedness. I break off the curse attached to sexual immorality, deception and idolatry that has yoked me. I break the curse attached to the yoke of Jezebel that attempts to steal my life and destiny. I break off chronic dissatisfaction, unworthiness, wickedness, poverty and every form of immorality that is attached to idolatry. I also break off the curse of the deception that keeps me from being empowered to renew my mind and become completely clothed with Your Spirit. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

3. It is now necessary to identify every lie that caused you to embrace an idol and repent for believing that lie. For example, if beauty has become an idol, you might write:

Lord, I repent that I believed the lie that said I was not a beautiful person. I have allowed beauty to become an idol, and I have sacrificed much time, money and worship to the idol of beauty. I now replace that lie with Your Word that says that I am the apple of Your eye and that You alone keep me and protect me (see Deuteronomy 32:10).

Use the space below to identify any idols and to replace them with God’s Word. Remember that to dethrone an idol we must replace it with God and His presence. Since He *is* the Word, His presence will invade your atmosphere and break yokes as you declare truth!

Now take a deep breath. Allow the Lord to comfort you. See yourself in His arms. He has protected you thus far—you can trust Him with the rest of your future!

In the next chapter we will take another opportunity to identify Jezebel’s connection to the Deceiver as we explore the beginning of deception in the Garden of Eden. Then in chapters 8 and 9 we will take two more very

important steps to freedom. One is to understand the blessing of God—this will really cause idols to topple—and the next is to become mantled with authority.

You can begin to get excited! Did you feel that yoke just S-L-I-P?

The Roots of Jezebel and the Yoke of the Deceiver

I love to use my imagination, especially when I think about the Garden of Eden. Allow me to start this chapter by painting a picture in words of Eve's encounter with Lucifer, the master Deceiver. We will begin this journey in the Garden of God's creation, the home of Adam and Eve.

Iniquity and deception lived in Lucifer's heart before the creation of Adam and Eve, while he resided in heaven with God. From the moment of the creation of mankind, Satan despised the fact that we humans were created in the image of God. After all, he wanted that position for himself. When God gave Adam and Eve dominion—including over him—Satan took it as a personal insult. He began to devise a plan to destroy not only the couple in the Garden, but all mankind.

We have already identified Jezebel and her false teaching and false doctrines. Now it is time to focus on this Deceiver who empowers Jezebel and her cohorts. The first chapter of Genesis tells God's story; it is documented in the Bible for our benefit. Unless we understand the significance of the historical record of Scripture, the enemy will continue to hold us captive—yoked to lies—and lead us astray.

Lucifer detested God's creation, especially the man and woman made in His image. This Deceiver and Tempter desperately wanted that honor himself—

not only an exalted position, but the most exalted position, to be like God Himself.

“I will ascend to heaven,” he said in his heart (as recorded later in Isaiah 14:13–14). “I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

While in heaven, Lucifer had been a worship leader and had guarded the throne of God. Lucifer wanted not only to *guard* the throne but also to *have* the throne. He was bent on making himself like God. He would attempt to speak and even look like God. He would simulate light in order to impersonate Light Himself—whatever it took to ascend in power, even if that power was illegitimate.

Satan had led a rebellion and was able to seduce a third of the angels to follow him. For this sedition, God had cast him out of heaven. Now Satan was attempting to start a rebellion against God on the earth.

As we journey through the remainder of this book, keep in mind that any of us can be deceived and led down the wrong paths in life. The deceptions of our enemy become an easy yoke for Jezebel. After all, who in his right mind wants to be deceived—and viewed as a Jezebel control freak?

The enemy lurks around different turns and corners of our journeys in order to ensnare us, just as he did Eve. Yet we have a Savior who died on the cross to bring us life, to empower us and to grant us victory over the Deceiver. Read this chapter with one important fact in mind: We need to understand the entrapments of Satan, Jezebel and her cohorts if we are going to slip out of their evil yokes. Now let’s continue the remaining part of our journey together down Freedom Road.

The Story: Where Deception Began

The warm sunshine felt like liquid layers of gold on Eve’s face as she walked through the Garden. She was immersed in the sun’s rays as she inhaled the Garden’s diverse fragrances. She always enjoyed the sun as it filtered through various forms of vegetation and illuminated unsuspecting patches of plant life. Today Eve had decided to walk alone. Just minutes earlier, Adam had sped off in a different direction and Eve embraced the opportunity to linger and stroll

at her own pace. Adam was a perfect walking companion, but today Eve wanted to bask in the sun and spend some time savoring the exquisite Garden that God had given them as a home.

Their home did not require a roof, walls or doors. The rich ground of the Garden was their floor, the bounteous trees their walls. The man and woman had no idea of the concept of safety, since there was nothing to fear; and their faith in God was the only door they needed.

Eve meandered through the lush Garden, examined the birthing of new blooms. *These blossoms are ready*, she mused, as she anticipated the rainbow of fragrant colors that would be in view within a few days. Her world was full of God's glory.

A NEW PATH

After some time Eve noticed that she was on a path she had not traveled before. *A new trail!* Eve marveled. God had many beautiful paths in His Garden of Life. Since she knew no fear, she walked on without hesitation.

The light was resplendent. All during the day God's glory seemed to illuminate different sections and paths in the Garden differently. There were times of shadow, of course, but Adam and Eve did not know true darkness. Eve often tried to play with her shadow and laughed as she darted about. The Lord was always nearby and walked with her and Adam when the sun went down and the air had cooled.

Created in the image of God, they enjoyed every delight, especially His presence with them in the Garden. There was only one thing He had told them not to do, but she and Adam had no interest in the tree that stood in the middle of the Garden. Why should they, since He desired them not to?

Eve's days were filled gloriously with following the light and the Light—God Himself. Enjoying the paths that were illumined each day, as well as the Light, was Eve's fulfillment.

Now her thoughts lingered on Adam, who had his own path to follow this day. He loved spending time with the animals. He especially enjoyed the days when he gave the seemingly endless parade of creatures their names.

How does he come up with such incredible names like camel? She giggled as she thought of its bushy eyebrows. *And . . . antelope? The name of gazelle definitely fits its elegance, and the name of lamb goes perfectly with that cuddly ball of wool.*

Eve smiled as she pondered Adam's unique ability to give animals names that seemed to fit them.

Eve kept walking. She knew they would find each other before the end of the day and share their joy and fulfillment. One of their most exciting times was hearing one another's stories and what the other had seen and done.

She continued along this new pathway. It was illumined with light—yet the light seemed to be growing fainter. Eve saw a waterfall ahead and forged on. One of her favorite pastimes was to stop along her walks and bathe her feet in the cool waters of prevailing springs.

It's the heat of the day, she thought. Cool waters will soothe me. Eve spent some time skimming her feet across the top of the springs and then began

walking again. It was such a glorious day. Unable to contain herself, Eve began to skip along the Garden path while soaking in the beauty. She began to thank God for her wonderful home and for all her blessings.

Suddenly she halted. Here before her was one of the animals Adam had not yet named in the Garden of Life. *What's this? I have not seen this creature before.*

A NEW VOICE

The serpent scurried across the path and hid under a large bush farther up. He peeked out from under the leaves, rustling the vegetation as if to get her attention.

“Eve,” called the serpent.

She did not recognize the voice.

“Eve. Can’t you hear me calling?”

“Who’s calling my name?” she asked.

Eve looked around trying to locate the source of the words. When she realized that this creature was talking, she was surprised; it was the first time she had heard someone speak to her other than God or Adam. She summed up this serpent quickly. It stood on two legs and had two short arms. How odd it looked—with that darting tongue!

Eve stood quietly, wondering at this strange sight, this creature that moved so fluidly, its dark eyes hooded and staring so intently. Gradually, it moved out from the bush and swirled rhythmically toward her. As it did so, the serpent’s words slid into the sound of hissing. The sound perplexed her greatly. It was different from anything she had ever heard—a sound not companionable with the beauty of the Garden. She did not have a word for it.

Eve.

She heard the creature call to her again, but this time, rather than that strange hissing sound that drifted up to her ears, the word seemed to come directly into her thoughts.

Eve grew confused—another sensation she had never experienced. *This voice sounds almost like God’s*, she thought. *What is it about this voice that is so enchanting? Is it because it is so close to God’s own voice? It’s marvelous to listen to.*

Eve felt charmed, yet hesitant. The serpent’s voice called again, drawing her a step closer to him. She moved only inches, yet it seemed as if the serpent leapt miles in her direction.

Then Eve noticed something more. The serpent was surrounded by a strange light. It was not the familiar brilliance that surrounded God, nor did it resemble the sunshine that lit even the shadowy places in the Garden. At first this sallow light seemed to overshadow the purity Eve had known. It was intrusive, but it was also alluring and seductive. She felt drawn to its power.

Eve strained to see the path that lay behind the serpent. It was illuminated, like the serpent himself, with a strangely different light. The light was dull, not glorious as she usually experienced in the Garden.

“Yes, I am Eve,” she replied at last. “Where does the path behind you lead? And how do you know my name? I haven’t seen you before.”

“I know who you are, Eve. You are made from Adam. He and you are created in God’s own image.” The serpent paused. “You are no doubt looking for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That’s the tree I would be looking for, if I were you.”

“Oh, no. We are not allowed to eat of that tree. God said if we eat the fruit of it, we will surely die.” Recalling God’s words Eve spoke boldly.

Lucifer’s voice faded to a whisper. Eve had to take a step closer to hear him.

“You will not die!” he hissed softly. “Rather you will become like God Himself. You will know good and evil.”

Just what is this knowledge of good and evil? Eve suddenly wondered. She had never given thought to it before. *Surely this is something good. Is God hiding that good thing from me?*

She looked up from the dark eyes, lost in the thought of trying to remember God’s exact words, and suddenly she saw the tree itself, there behind the serpent. She took one step toward that tree—so delightful did it seem!—and then another.

The rest is history—that is, His story.

God’s Story

God always has a story to tell—and He has written it in His Word. He desires to reveal history in order to empower us. He will often expose human weakness and, at the same time, empower us to resist the enemy. I read His story every day; I pray you do, too.

Second Timothy 3:16 states, “All Scripture is inspired by God and [is] profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (NASB). Not everything called *scripture* in the world’s literature is inspired by God. There are other historical documents, considered holy, that are not breathed upon by the Holy Spirit. They are what Paul refers to as “false doctrines” (1 Timothy 1:3). These false doctrines are intended to ensnare

us though deception. The Deceiver seeks to discredit God's Word through false doctrines and false teachers. As I mentioned above, unless we understand the historical significance of the infallible Word of God, the enemy will continue to keep us yoked to lies.

The word *history* appears many times in Scripture. In the first book of the Bible, for instance, that incredible word *history* includes the account of what took place during Creation. And since the passages concerning Creation and the forming of Adam and Eve are inspired by God, they are, therefore, profitable for us. Our entire belief system begins with Genesis and ends with the last verse in Revelation. Thus, I believe that we need both Old and New Testaments to understand the human story. We cannot separate ourselves from any history (especially biblical history) and rightfully understand the present.

Any doctrines or books that point to any conflicting belief system about God are false. Think of this, too: Satan's lies concerning us are not God's Word about us, so why do we listen to him, consciously or otherwise? It is because we have been yoked with Jezebel's seductions and deceptions.

In this chapter, we will discuss the blessing God imparted to Adam and Eve at the time of Creation, before the serpent arrived on the scene, and how this blessing still relates to us today. It is important to discover the importance of "blessing" because we will not run after idols if we know we are blessed! But I am getting ahead of myself again. Let's dive in right now to exposing more of Jezebel, the deceiving spirit that attempts to steal that very blessing that God has given to each of us.

We begin with a quick study of what deception actually is.

What Is Deception?

Deception is information that conceals the truth and deploys levels of distraction and camouflage in order to mislead another person. If we are misled by Satan or demonic influences, we are, thereby, deceived. Satan does come to us as an angel of light—but it is counterfeit light. If we embrace counterfeit light, we will seek counterfeit idols.

There is no doubt about it: Satan intends to deceive us. These three words—*deceive*, *deception* and *deceived*—are all rooted in the same Latin word

meaning “to ensnare” and “to seize.” (Do you see how a yoke puts us “under siege” and we are “seized” with bondages?)

Three other words used in relation to deception are *beguile*, *beguilement* and *beguiled*. I use these words interchangeably with *deceive*, *deception* and *deceived* because they have almost identical meanings. Please keep in the back of your mind that the enemy deceives us into *believing* the very opposite of what God says and *seeing* ourselves in the very opposite way that God sees us. This yokes us with Jezebel through the need to be more and more in control because we come to believe that we cannot trust God to orchestrate our lives.

Satan is after your identity, your birthright and your authority in Christ; so is Jezebel. Remember how she stole Naboth’s vineyard, his birthright. If you cannot identify with what God says about you, you have an identity crisis. Off the top of my head, I think that *crisis* means simply, “Help me, Lord.”

No one likes to believe that he or she can be deceived. But James 1:16 warns us of the potential: “Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers.” Jeremiah 49:16 gives another warning—that a prideful heart opens the door to deception. One way to be deceived, in other words, is to say that we cannot be deceived.

We must all be on guard against the Deceiver and against spirits that operate in deception. Not to do so is to take on the yoke of Jezebel and her seductions (with curses attached!). God warns us about our vulnerability to be deceived. So, never let yourself surrender to the misconception that you cannot be deceived. Scripture is very clear that we are to “test” every spirit in operation. Yes, we are responsible even to test the spirits operating in the Church: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

It is evident that John was concerned about false spirits influencing believers and threatening their relationship with God. He warned them, therefore, of their need to test the spirits and not to believe every voice they heard. Many false prophets were, even then, speaking lies.

All too often today, we toss discernment aside and assume that we need not test the spirits. Big mistake. Not only are there false prophets abroad speaking as Jezebel, but there is the main false prophet, the devil himself, who prophesies falsely to you and me concerning our relationship with God, our birthright and inheritance and our very identity.

When we *test* a spirit, we look for a combination of different characteristics. Suppose someone speaks prophetically, for instance. Do the words the person

speaks line up with Scripture? Are the person's words inspired by God's Spirit or a demonic spirit? This is something we can know only within our own spirits. Discerning a Jezebel spirit requires an understanding of her many different manifestations, as well as remaining *on guard* or even better *on watch* for her false teachings, doctrines and demonic seductions.

God's Plan: Blessing

One of the most powerful ways the enemy prophesies falsely concerning our identity is to block our understanding that we are blessed by God and that we can speak blessing over one another. Let me mention in this regard that the spirit of Jezebel loves to ruin our sense of identity as people of blessing. She attempted to nullify the identity of Elijah with the threat of death, and it threw him completely off guard. He forgot who he was (a powerful prophet) and took off to the mountains! If only Elijah had rebuked the evil messenger and focused on who he was in God. Elijah was blessed, empowered by God to overthrow her idolatrous worship, and yet he was seduced by a spirit of fear that had teamed up with Jezebel.

It is so important that we grasp the significance of blessing that I would like to empower you in this chapter with this understanding. The revelation of blessing is, I believe, the foundation for exposing and defeating the Deceiver, and it will destroy the yoke of Jezebel.

The Hebrew word for *blessing* in the Old Testament is used more than six hundred times. The biblical sense of blessing basically spells out God's plan for mankind at Creation, as well as showing ways that we can encourage and embolden one another. Here are just a few examples of blessing.

In Genesis 12:3, God promised Abraham that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This blessing was to occur through Abraham's descendants, ultimately through Jesus Christ. This blessing was not limited to a family, but was extended to a united group of believers.

We notice in Genesis 14:19–20 that Melchizedek blessed Abram.

Moses assembled the entire nation of Israel together while in the wilderness and blessed them (see Deuteronomy 33). Others did the same, such as Aaron, David and Solomon (see Numbers 6:23–27; 2 Samuel 7:28–29; 1 Kings 8:14).

Supernatural strength comes from blessing, especially when given to an entire group. Blessing a group also increases unity within that group.

In Old Testament times, it was customary to release a blessing before a traveler set out on his journey. Blessing in this sense releases divine protection from God. This is a usual type of blessing among believers today. Whenever my husband drives me to the airport, for instance, he prays a blessing on my travels.

How Were Adam and Eve Blessed?

Before Adam and Eve were given dominion over the created world, God first blessed them (see Genesis 1:28). You will understand later that this authority was actually a mantle placed upon them by God. It is also a mantle that we are destined to wear.

To be blessed implies being happy and fulfilled. Notice that word again, *fulfilled*. We saw earlier that feeling unfulfilled links us to idolatry. But when we know we are blessed, every tendency toward idolatry is destroyed! In this passage, the word *blessed* is the Hebrew word *barak* (pronounced baw-rak). Its primitive root means “to kneel”; by implication it means to bless God as an act of adoration. It is connected with all of the following words: *abundance, adoration, blessing, kneeling down, praising, saluting* and *thanking*.

Notice the words *adoration* and *saluting*. I love those words. I can just picture God creating mankind and then adoring what He did to the point of saluting His handiwork! My mind also races to the place where God later referred to His people as His mighty army (see Joel 2:10–11). At the time of Creation, I believe He was already saluting His generals, even as they salute the chief General, Jesus Christ.

Let’s back up and examine the word *kneel*. To kneel or bow down is a form of reverence. When we thank God and praise Him (other words connected with the word *blessed*), we are kneeling before Him as Creator and Almighty God. We bow down only to Him and His Word. When He declares us *blessed*, we should honor Him by bowing down. To bow down is to show reverence. When God speaks our destiny over us, we honor Him by kneeling and praising Him for the blessing. “‘I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD,

‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11).

God’s plan for Adam and Eve was for them to have dominion over the creation:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26–27

Created in God’s own image, they were empowered to rule and reign over every living creature:

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

verses 28–31

The following list of blessings is drawn from Genesis 1:

- fruitfulness
- dominion
- plenteous provision
- increase and harvest
- blessings (promises)

All these blessings were intended for human beings created in God’s likeness.

The Deceiver Imitates God’s Voice

I love to read God’s Word and discover His promises, don’t you? I am overwhelmed when I study the first chapter of Genesis. I imagine God creating the heavens and the earth and speaking His entire universe into existence.

Yes, the created order was contingent on God's voice speaking all things into life. In the beginning there was nothing, but when God spoke, things sprang into being. There is divine power—limitless power—in the voice of God. He spoke what needed to be created.

Satan knows that if he can counterfeit God's voice, attempting to sound like Him and, in the words of Isaiah 14:14, "make [himself] like the Most High," he can deceive us. His main objective? To steal the blessings of God related to our identity. And he often does this through those "evil whispers" we discussed previously.

Now think about this: If we listen to the words of the Deceiver and heed those words, we are bowing down to him. So, please be aware that we must never give reverence to the devil when he lies to us concerning our identity and our future.

Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). We have examined already the yokes of "kill and destroy"—that is, death and destruction; we must also be aware that the enemy desires to "steal." And the main thing Satan wants to steal is our identity. From the very beginning, the enemy has been out to steal what God gave us in the Garden—the list of blessings we looked at a moment ago: *fruitfulness, dominion, plenteous provision, increase, harvest and blessings*.

Hold On to Your Birthright

Many believe that bestowing a blessing began in Orthodox Jewish homes, as the father blessed his children. But blessing actually began in the Garden of Eden when God blessed Adam and Eve.

We, too, are blessed by God. If we do not understand that we are special and truly blessed, we may seek acceptance from others through counterfeit blessings and, ultimately, counterfeit gods. This can take many forms—codependent relationships, for example, or even gang and cult membership. These relationships have a tendency to become idols in our lives.

We must be aware of how these relationships (and our idols) rob us of our inheritance and blessings from God. Nothing can take the place of His blessings. Let's face it: We live in a world of insecurity. We are drawn to those who give us strokes of acceptance. The Deceiver loves to set us up for failure as he tells his lies concerning how much God does not love us. He works day and night to cause us to feel unwanted, insecure and abandoned.

Genesis 27 tells the story of twins, Jacob and Esau, and their struggle for their father's blessing. According to their birthright positioning, Esau, as the older, was to receive the full inheritance. But Jacob desired the blessing so much that he finagled his brother into selling his birthright for a bowl of soup; then he deceived his father to obtain it.

Thus began a struggle for the rest of Jacob's life to walk in his inheritance. Since he stole the birthright, he was never positioned properly with God. Yes, he received his father's blessing, but his life was filled with performance issues, having to prove his worth.

I have read the story of Jacob and Esau many times, but I have never seen it in the light I see it in now. The story has changed my life. I am gaining more understanding of how I have been deceived and robbed of my own birthright. I have spent a lifetime searching for fulfillment. Just as Jacob became desperate enough to steal his brother's blessing, I, too, have felt as if I would do anything to be content and fulfilled.

Over the years I have witnessed many believers striving to be recognized for their talents—writers who feel that if their masterpieces were published, the world would change for the better, and ministers who are still waiting to put

“international minister” on their résumés. Many, many others in all walks of life believe that they must obtain certain credentials or important titles to prove their self-worth.

I can relate to all of the above. Maybe you can, too. I finally realized, however, that unless I understand that God has already blessed me from the beginning of time, and that my hope and fulfillment are in Him, I will never have dominion over my internal demons.

We all have them, don't we? We all struggle with something—because we live in a fallen world. But, dear one, although the perfect mate, a faster car, a bigger home, a more lucrative job, a public ministry might make us *happier*, nothing can replace the *joy* that comes from knowing God intimately. Unless He is the ultimate thing, we will never know pure joy and fulfillment.

Beloved, the Deceiver is bent on robbing you of your identity, birthright and blessing. When Esau realized that he had lost his birthright, he cried out and begged his father with tears to “bless me too, my father!” (Genesis 27:38). He was devastated when he realized that he had devalued and actually sold his inheritance.

You may have missed out on your parents' acknowledgment of your virtues or being blessed by them. But if you know for sure that God is blessing you, you will be empowered to move forward and break the yokes that enslave you. Knowing that you are blessed by God empowers you to be victorious!

(Note: If you have not read the awesome book by Gary Smalley, *The Blessing*, I encourage you to do so. It is one of the most life-changing books I have ever read.)

Keys to Engaging God's Blessing

I long for you to have hope and to believe that God wants you to press through and receive your future promises. God is speaking into your future just as He did for the prophet Jeremiah. Will you journey a bit with me?

God told Jeremiah that before he was even formed in his mother's womb, He knew him (see Jeremiah 1:5–12). How awesome to know that, like Jeremiah, we were in God's heart before we came into existence! The word God uses in this passage to indicate that He “knew” Jeremiah is the Hebrew word *yada* (pronounced yaw-dah). It means that God was already acquainted

with him. But there is more to it than mere acquaintance. The word *yada* is also the word used to imply *intimacy*.

God was already intimate with us before we were born. He knew our strengths and the challenges that lay ahead of us after our birth. He also knew our destinies.

How did God empower Jeremiah to reach his potential?

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

“Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.”

But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.” The word of the LORD came to me: “What do you see, Jeremiah?”

“I see the branch of an almond tree,” I replied. The LORD said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.”

Jeremiah 1:5–12

I believe that Jeremiah had been struggling with a spirit of deception causing him to be challenged about his identity. Why do I believe that? Because Jeremiah was not pleased with himself; he was disappointed with his inability to succeed at what God had called him to do.

I love the way God spoke to His prophet. He speaks into our future as well, to empower us to subdue any potential deceptions we have concerning our abilities, and to fulfill our destiny.

We find at least four keys in this account to help us engage with our future blessings and destiny.

KEY #1: AN IDENTITY PROBLEM WILL DECEIVE YOU ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES IN GOD.

Jeremiah had an identity problem that God enabled him to overcome. To be blunt, I believe he was yoked with insecurity and fear. Though God told Jeremiah that he was set apart and “appointed” to the nations as a prophet, Jeremiah had a negative response concerning his ability to fulfill that calling. He responded by saying that he was unable to speak well, and that he was too young for God to use him.

This is a true sign of a yoke—not believing what God says about us.

Let me ask you a question: When God tells you that you are precious to Him, how do you respond? Are you like Jeremiah? When God speaks to you concerning a potential strength, do you immediately point out a weakness? If God says, “You are a blessing, and you are blessed,” what is your response?

KEY #2: DISAPPOINTMENTS MAY DISABLE YOUR APPOINTMENTS IN GOD.

If you are not quite sure of your potential in God, it may be because you are disappointed in life. When God told Jeremiah that he was “called” and “appointed,” Jeremiah’s response proved that he was “disappointed” with himself.

Regarding his age, I do not believe that Jeremiah was too young chronologically; I believe he did not feel qualified to speak for God. He did not feel that he was seasoned enough to speak for the Lord. Who really is? Still, his focus was on himself and his inabilities.

It is possible that he stuttered, as it is suspected Moses did, and that he felt ineffective. Maybe he was truly not a good speaker. Jeremiah might have thought, *Who wants to listen to someone who is not a good teacher? Boring!*

As I mentioned, I believe Jeremiah was disappointed in his abilities—just as we are at times. Disappointments can yoke us to our past. I know I focus on my weaknesses far too often. And, if you will admit it, so do you. Focusing on our weaknesses proves that we can all be disappointed and disqualify ourselves. If we are disappointed in life, we can allow those disappointments to cause us to miss our divine assignments and appointments. Think about it. If God assigns us a divine appointment, a “dis”-appointment can disqualify our faith to achieve that blessing.

Examine your responses concerning your own abilities. Is your response positive? If not, simply repent for not agreeing with all that God says about you. Ahead of you lie many divine appointments. God believes in you and has a divine destiny for you to fulfill.

KEY #3: GOD WANTS TO TOUCH YOUR WEAKNESSES, BREAK OFF YOKES AND EMPOWER YOU WITH VICTORY.

When Jeremiah confessed his weakness, the Lord did something unusual: He touched Jeremiah’s mouth.

The word *touched* in this passage is the Hebrew word *naga* (pronounced *naw-gah*), which implies a “violent action” against Jeremiah’s weakness. Some

of the words used in the translation of *naga* are “to strike, punish, defeat, destroy, bring down and smite.” We can conclude that when God touched Jeremiah’s mouth, He was actually smiting the enemy, the Deceiver, who had lied to Jeremiah concerning his identity. God was also taking violent action against Jeremiah’s negative confession.

Something supernatural took place when God touched Jeremiah’s mouth. How do we know this? Because of the immediate change in Jeremiah’s confession. When the Lord touched the prophet’s mouth, He put *His* words into it, words that Jeremiah spoke out.

I believe that when God smites our enemy, He also judges the Deceiver as guilty and negates the enemy’s plans by imparting fresh vision to us. This fresh vision empowers us to confess the Lord’s words concerning our abilities to achieve our destiny. Read again what happened to Jeremiah after the Lord touched his mouth:

The word of the LORD came to me: “What do you *see*, Jeremiah?” “I see the branch of an almond tree,” I replied. The LORD said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.”

Verses 11–12 (emphasis added)

Jeremiah finally realized he could not allow weakness to keep him from his godly assignments and appointments. When God touched him, therefore, Jeremiah was able to see his future as God saw it. When God asked him what he saw, he responded that he could now see the branch of an almond tree—one of the first trees to bloom in a new season. This tells me that when Jeremiah saw the almond tree, he was also seeing his new season in God. In other words, he was shifting into his destiny. No longer would he allow a disappointment to yoke him. Jeremiah’s entire focus had changed.

Ours can, too. We will talk about the Jehu mantle in the very last chapter and how he was “appointed” to defeat Jezebel. Each of us can be disqualified in our appointments if we do not see our future and then step into our destiny.

When God touched Jeremiah’s mouth, He was also imparting His blessing. Wow! Take a moment and think about that. When God touches our areas of blindness concerning ourselves He is also imparting His divine blessing. Dear one, God desires to bless each of us. How awesome is that? In the next chapter, we will discuss the original mandate for Adam and Eve. They were to be fruitful and multiply. But there is more. They had to understand that they

were blessed before they could fully walk in authority and take dominion. And when God touched Jeremiah, He was imparting the blessing to him.

When a child receives a spiritual blessing from his father, there is an impartation as the father places his hands on him. In that blessing, there is an impartation for success as well as letting the child know he is loved and accepted. Talk about double portions being given whenever God touches us! When God touched Jeremiah, He was both blessing Jeremiah and empowering him for his new season.

God desires the same for you. He desires for you to shift into your destiny. And He wants you to know that you are blessed. If you have allowed weakness to disqualify you from your assignments in God, He desires to touch you right now and empower you to shift into your destiny.

Will you ask Him to touch your areas of weakness? God wants to smite the Deceiver who has lied to you and attempted to disqualify you. When God touches you, He is also defeating the Deceiver and other spirits of deception that rob you of your divine destiny.

KEY #4: GOD WILL WATCH OVER HIS PROMISES AND FULFILL THEM.

Recall God's words to Jeremiah: "I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled" (Jeremiah 1:12).

God promises you, just as He did Jeremiah, that He will watch over His promises and bring them to fulfillment. If there is any area in your heart, mind, attitudes or belief system that needs a Holy Ghost tweaking, commit it fully to the hand of God. If you can do that right now, you are ready to move forward into a greater place of completion.

Precious believer, you are being perfected by the hand of God as we continue to journey together. But I want to add just one more strategic thought to this chapter before moving on to the next. It involves a more careful study of the word *watch*. We will look at this once more when we study the Jehu mantle in the last chapter (the mantle needed to destroy Jezebel) because God promises to watch over His Word to perform it—to defeat Jezebel in your life!

The word *watch* in this passage is the Hebrew word *shaqad* (pronounced shaw-kad), which means "to be alert," that is, "sleepless." Hence, it means to be on the lookout. I love the fact that God is on the lookout and is watching out for me so that I can fulfill my destiny. I am also excited that He is watching out for the Deceiver on my behalf. In fact, if God is "sleepless," He is alert day

and night watching over His Word concerning you and me. What an awesome God we serve!

As you continue to read, I expect the Lord to empower you with a fresh vision concerning your future. The Deceiver is relentless to camouflage God's desire concerning your fulfillment. But, he is a liar and a thief. Never forget that God is the author and finisher of your story. And your story is connected to His story.

Summing Up

Exposing the Deceiver's tactics, which yoke us to defeat, has been a common thread throughout our study. You have learned to *slip* out from under the yoke and into your destiny as you are set free from the enemy's deceptions. In the next chapter, you will discover how the Lord gives us mantles of divine authority to gain ultimate victory over Jezebel and her cohorts. When you fully realize who you are and the power you have as a child of God, the enemy does not stand a chance.

For years I have fought hard to renew my mind concerning my identity. Knowing the tactics of the Deceiver has empowered me along Freedom Road. If we trust God and believe His Word concerning our identity and our future, then we are empowered to defeat any spirits of deception attempting to whittle away at our lives and eventually destroy us.

In his attempts to sound like God, Satan tries to steal our blessings by speaking lies—the very opposite of what God has spoken. Believing the lies of the devil is actually a form of “bowing down” to his words. The Deceiver's lies will hurl us into an identity crisis and provide one of many counterfeit gods to whom we bow to fill the void we feel. (We discussed these counterfeit gods in chapter 6.)

The Deceiver is waiting for you, like Eve, to distrust what God has said concerning your identity and your blessing. If you do not understand how blessed you are, you will never be thankful. Never forget this one thing: If you remain thankful, you cannot be seduced by Jezebel. Jezebel targets chronic dissatisfaction and ingratitude. Be on guard and be thankful in all things!

Beloved, your legal right through God is to be blessed. Knowing that you are a son or daughter of God entitles you to your godly birthright. Settle for nothing less than all God desires for you.

A Time of Self-Reflection

Every one of us is challenged with some kind of identity crisis. Most of us have battled with a constant need for love and acceptance and success. If we are not

careful, we run the risk of attempting to control the future without including God. And that attempt to control turns the key in the lock of Jezebel's yoke on us. We must trust God and Him alone. Knowing we are blessed will help secure our future.

Jezebel and the Deceiver are bent on yoking us with inadequacy, insecurity and lies. Take another close look at your life. Take out your spiritual magnifying glass. . . . Do you see anything more? How about asking the Holy Spirit if He does? Have you been unthankful? Do you truly know that you are blessed? If not, why? Let's now take a few more steps together to break that yoke.

1. Write down any ways you believe you are *not* blessed.

I believe that I am not blessed because:

2. Now identify those beliefs as lies.

I have believed the lie that says:

3. Now repent for believing the lie of the Deceiver, who has yoked you with the deceptions of Jezebel and her idolatries. Write your prayer of repentance below.

Believer, that yoke is being removed! You can now completely slip out from under that awful yoke of the devil. This is exciting because you are about to receive a fresh mantle of empowerment from God. In the next chapter, you will take off the old man and put on the new.

I cannot begin to express how proud I am of you! Look at what you have accomplished:

- You have laid your life on the altar and completely surrendered to God.
- You have dethroned Jezebel and her idols.
- You have repented of sin and of allowing yourself to be deceived and yoked with darkness.

- You have become thankful and know that you are blessed—thus destroying seductive yokes of Jezebel and spirits of deception.
- You have slipped out from under the yoke of Jezebel and the clutches of Satan.

Good job! Now, believer, get ready to receive a new mantle. More freedom and authority await you.

Mantles and Anointing

Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I *anoint* you king over the LORD's people Israel. You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD's servants shed by Jezebel.'"

2 Kings 9:6–7 (emphasis added)

Thus far, we have learned how to slip free from the different yokes of Jezebel and her cohorts—the spirits of deception. Now it is time to study the *anointing* and the *mantle* that are required for our full victory.

This chapter lays the foundation for greater understanding of what anointing is and how we can prepare ourselves to receive mantles of authority. We will look at a number of individuals in the Bible whom God clothed with mantles. Then, in the final chapter, we will discuss Jehu's mantle and anointing, which are necessary in order to defeat Jezebel. Second Kings 9:6–8 tells us that the same anointing and mantle are also needed to destroy the house of Ahab, which symbolically represents other demonic spirits that work alongside her.

Jesus' Eyes of Blazing Fire

In discussing prayer strategies that defeat Jezebel, we have noted the New Testament censure of a church that actually tolerated her. Considering that today *we believers are the Church* (each individually a temple), we can learn much from Revelation 2:18–29 concerning the reasons why Jesus rebuked the church at Thyatira and its passivity toward a strong Jezebel spirit.

As I mentioned earlier, this Jezebel was not the same as the woman in the Old Testament; it was her spirit still manifesting in later history. Please take a few moments and read Revelation 2:18–29 to understand why the Lord was calling this church into accountability and repentance.

Why was this church in Thyatira charged with the wickedness of Jezebel? It is because that church tolerated her seductions of the people of that city. Though the church was commended for its good works, the people did not reject Jezebel's false doctrine and, thus, allowed her to operate freely. The Jezebel seducers responded to this open door by drawing the servants of God into fornication and offering sacrifices to idols.

One might ask how the church could be held responsible for this devilish action; after all, the church did not have civil powers to banish or imprison Jezebel's followers. The church was rebuked because it *did* have the ministerial power to censure her words and excommunicate her worshipers from their fellowship. Like that church, believers today too often fail in our responsibility to use the authority we have been given to gain victory over the Jezebel spirit.

Jesus revealed Himself to the church of Thyatira as the "Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze" (Revelation 2:18). When I am leading a group of intercessors in war against a Jezebel spirit, I instruct them to pray to Jesus "whose eyes are like blazing fire" to purge Jezebel (with His holy fire) from our midst. This proclamation greatly increases our authority, because we are confronting Jezebel in the name of Jesus and declaring *who He is* in the situation.

Reaching the Nations

When we understand and rightly use this authority, we can be equipped to reach out to others who also need to be freed. We are encouraged in this following Scripture to be “overcomers” by gaining victory over the Jezebel spirit and her evil influence.

“To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—‘He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Revelation 2:26–29

For years when I studied this passage, I focused on having greater authority that would deal with the principality of Jezebel and its evil effect on nations of the world. After doing a more thorough study, however, I came to realize something about this word *nations*. It is a Greek word, *ethnos* (pronounced *eth-nos*), and while it refers to the ethnicities and customs of different parts of the world, it also refers to people who do not respect or adhere to the Word of God. *Nations* refers to Gentiles—in this sense, pagans and idolaters. This was telling me that God wants to give us authority not only over foreign nations, but also over yokes of idolatry and areas in our lives where we are not fully yoked to His Word.

I began to understand that God desires us to look at our own lives *first* and become completely unyoked from the deceptions of the enemy before we actually focus on carrying the Gospel to the nations. Don’t get me wrong; God does send us to nations, if that is our assignment. Satan, however, cannot cast out Satan, and if Jezebel lives in our personal “houses,” our temples, we might not be empowered to exercise full authority over a Jezebel spirit in foreign countries.

It seems obvious that *we need first to break yokes from our own lives before we can break yokes off of others*. The bottom line, though, is for us to understand that if we overcome Jezebel, we are given great authority! Jehu was the one originally anointed to defeat Jezebel—he had a *mantle* of authority to destroy her. For us today, I believe that we need a Jehu mantle and a Jehu anointing—but also we must hold fast to the truth that our victor is Jesus

Christ, and it is truly His eyes of blazing fire that will purge Jezebel from our midst.

We have examined what a yoke is and how to be free from it; now it is time to discuss the anointing that is needed to break the yoke. Then we will look at different mantles of authority that empower us even further. The anointing and the mantles are both needed to defeat Jezebel.

The Anointing That Destroys Yokes

Bible scholars have differing opinions on the meaning of the following verse of Scripture: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing” (Isaiah 10:27, KJV).

When we examine Isaiah 10:27, we notice that the yoke is destroyed “because of the anointing.” In Hebrew, the sense of *anointing* is literally “from the face of oil.” I love this definition, because to me it means that when we look at Jesus, we see His face, fully anointed with oil. After all, He is “Christ,” the “Anointed One”!

Anointing also means “to pour out.” The Bible stipulates that priests be anointed for service by pouring oil over their heads. Christ “poured out” His life for us to have eternal life. So we can conclude two things from this. First, when Christ went to the cross, His obedience broke the yokes of oppression off of us. Second, when we look to Jesus, the Anointed One, yokes are also broken just because we look into the face of oil. Yes, it is possible simply to seek His face and experience ultimate freedom as we do so.

Each of us is anointed because we are in Christ. We are anointed because Christ was anointed. Christ poured Himself out for us, and we are called to pour ourselves out for others. There will always be a pouring out so that we can become filled up again. This is a spiritual principle that cannot be avoided if we are going to be bondservants of Christ. We must always be clear, however, that it is the *anointing* and *not we ourselves* breaking the yokes.

Each of us is anointed for a specific purpose. And without God’s anointing on us, we will not experience any lasting fruit for His Kingdom. This is because the anointing comes only from the Holy Spirit and our relationship with Christ. It is a supernatural empowerment, not something that one achieves through competent study or good works or stellar behavior. Please hear my heart: I am thankful for these. But I have learned that anointing does not originate in performance; it originates in relationship. Too much head knowledge, too much action, too much striving will dry up the flow of anointing. In other words, performance can create a dam in the flow of anointing.

Jezebel is legalistic. Her spirit demands performance and perfectionism—totally the opposite desire of one flowing under the anointing of God through relationship with Him. Let me state this again: Jezebel wants to steal your anointing. This spirit provokes you to “prove yourself” and is quickly critical of your identity in Christ. The anointing cannot rest upon things of the flesh; it resides only within your spirit. We experience anointing solely because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ and the cleansing of His blood—without Him there is no anointing.

Any time an idol overtakes His place in our hearts, the resulting yoke of idolatry will block our anointing. This is because we are no longer centered in Christ. The Lord will not allow any flesh to have glory in His presence—thus, cleansing needs to take place so that the anointing can flow fully. Once the anointing is flowing, then the yokes will begin to break!

I find it interesting that one of the Hebrew words for anointing is the word *balal* (pronounced baw-*lal*). This is a primary root word that means “to overflow.” Notice the “flowing” that needs to take place in the anointing. Baal worship, that is, idol worship, blocks that flow. Don’t embrace Jezebel’s false doctrine of Baal; embrace the godly *balal*! The enemy will always have a counterfeit.

Another word, *mimshach* (pronounced mim-*shakh*), defines the anointing as “rubbing with oil,” in the sense of spreading the oil around. This definition excites me because it is connected to the concept of expansion and increase—the very opposite of desolation and barrenness. Is it any wonder the enemy tries to steal the anointing upon our lives? Believer, the Jezebel spirit does not like it when we are expanding into new depths in Christ—or expanding our territories!

Another word, *mashach* (pronounced maw-*shakh*), is a word that means the same as *mimshach* but includes the idea of consecration.^[1] Now this is where holy fire comes into action. If you recall, I mentioned earlier that in Revelation, Jesus reveals Himself as the one with “eyes of fire.” Well, those eyes of fire are an all-consuming fire that destroys the yoke of Jezebel. In other words, if we want victory over Jezebel and we desire to break her yoke, we must embrace the fireball! It is a simple procedure: Just ask for His holy fire to cleanse you right now. Go ahead, take a few minutes and submit your heart anew to Him.

Now, allow me to sum this up with a simple definition of *anointing* and how it relates to breaking the yoke of Jezebel.

The anointing is the overflowing of Christ's life and His holiness into us as consecrated believers. The anointing sets us apart for His purpose for our lives and empowers us to defeat every yoke of darkness. Through our relationship in Christ and the cleansing of His blood, we receive His anointing—the divine empowerment to defeat demonic strongholds.

I encourage you to re-read this paragraph and let it sink into your spirit. Take a few extra moments to repeat it out loud as it will become a godly decree over your life. As you meditate on it and declare it, see the anointing of Christ flowing onto you. You are anointed; you are Christ's chosen one and His representative upon this earth. His eyes of blazing fire have cleansed you and prepared you for such a time as this.

Picture yourself being rubbed with holy anointing oil—for as you slip out from under that heavy yoke, you will “slide” right into your mantle of authority.

The Mantle of Authority

Let's turn to the concept of mantles now. In the natural the word *mantle* means "that which is thrown on or around someone." A mantle is usually an outer garment designed to protect the body against natural elements. In common use, the word carries the idea of covering whatever it needs to protect. In other words, the mantle needs to be large enough and wide enough for one's protection against wind, rain, etc.

Spiritually, we can conclude that when the Lord gives us a mantle, He clothes us. When we read of certain testimonies in the Bible where God clothed someone, it means that basically God's Spirit covered them and, therefore, that person received a mantle from God. Figuratively, a mantle represents the power, anointing and ministry of the Holy Spirit—God-given authority—upon the person who is wearing the mantle.

We now look at several of these Bible personalities and the various ways they received mantles of authority. Keep in mind that each of us has been given a mantle of authority. When God created Adam and Eve He created them in His own image. This means He also mantled them with His authority and His likeness. A little later you will read about how God has actually mantled all of us with His glory. Let's study the different mantles in Scripture and believe for even greater mantles! See if you can identify with the biblical examples provided for you.

Lessons from Gideon's Mantle

Let's start with Gideon. He was born during a season when Israel did much evil in God's sight, and the people's sins delivered them into the hands of the Midianites and other children of the East. (You can read the entire account in Judges 6.) Every year at harvest time the Midianites would plunder Israel's harvests. Obviously, since this oppression happened year after year, Israel became yoked with hopelessness and despair. Can you imagine how Israel must have grieved when, after sowing and tending their seed, their enemy came at harvest time and seized all they wanted and then destroyed what was left?

To make matters even worse, upon leaving, the Midianites would gather all of the sheep and oxen they could find, leaving no sustenance for Israel.

If we observe closely the sins of Israel at that time, however, we see that they had neglected to honor God with their substance in tithes and offerings. Again, we notice the yoke of idolatry and see how this locks us into seasons of great oppression. For seven years, year after year, these enemies made inroads upon Israel, yoking them more and more with severe bondage until at last God called Gideon, anointed him and clothed him with a mantle of authority to break the yoke.

Do you recall where Gideon was when he was called by God? He was threshing wheat—but not at the threshing floor, which was the proper place. Rather, he was working within the seclusion of the winepress. The threshing floor was too vulnerable, almost an open invitation to the enemy. But, as you know, we can *never* hide from God, and so Gideon was summoned by an angel of the Lord (possibly *the* Angel of the Lord) to become God’s deliverer.

Gideon was like so many of us who are yoked with fear, hopelessness and distress. His family worshiped Baal; thus, he was yoked generationally with the ill effects of idolatry, as are some of us. He was obviously yoked with doubt and unbelief: When the angel called Gideon a “mighty man of valour” (Judges 6:12, KJV), Gideon exclaimed, “Who, *me*?” I can relate—this is an easily identifiable yoke, isn’t it?

And how did the angel respond? I love the translation by commentator Matthew Henry, quoting from the Chaldee: “He inspires him [Gideon] with all necessary qualifications for the execution of his commission. ‘The Lord is with thee to guide and strengthen thee, to animate and support thee.’”

Well, this encouragement was needed, wasn’t it? After all, Gideon had a job to do for God, and he certainly could not do it alone. Now, this is where many of us make a big mistake: We assume that when God commissions us, we have to do it alone. Not so! When we receive an assignment and the authority with it, then God is going to fight the battle for us. We must never neglect the grace of God that empowers us to walk under the mantle of authority. When God calls and anoints us, He is anointing us *with Himself*—meaning He causes His own anointing to flow over us.

God prophesied into Gideon’s potential and referred to him as a mighty warrior, but Gideon could not bring one single thing to pass without the presence of God. This is why God had to *clothe* (mantle) Gideon with Himself. Gideon was still too weak in faith, distressed and oppressed. I believe little by

little the Midianite yoke (the yoke that continues to steal harvests and breakthroughs) was being broken off of Gideon. Each time God spoke of his potential, I believe Gideon heard a *crack*. His yoke of oppression splintered with each prophetic word, and, eventually, the entire yoke was shattered. This allowed his new mantle to fit perfectly. Hallelujah!

This is what the prophetic word will do—it will break yokes. Observe the power of the voice of the Lord in the emphasized words of Scripture below:

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of *glory thunders*; the Lord is upon many (great) waters. The voice of the Lord is *powerful*; the voice of the Lord is *full of majesty*. The voice of the Lord *breaks the cedars*; yes, the Lord *breaks in pieces the cedars* of Lebanon. . . . The voice of the Lord *splits* and flashes forth forked lightning.

Psalm 29: 3–5, 7, AMP (emphasis added)

To get the full effect of God’s powerful voice, you need to read Psalm 29 in its entirety, but notice the emphasized words: *glory thunders*, *powerful*, *full of majesty*, *breaks in pieces the cedars*, *splits*. Wow! This means that God’s voice is so thunderous, so glorious and so powerful that it breaks wood into pieces. Imagine every time you receive a prophetic word (whether in a vision, dream or personal prophecy) that God is breaking off a demonic yoke. If we continue to hear and heed His voice, we will be completely free from the enemy’s yokes.

Let’s observe now the commissioning of Gideon. “The LORD turned to him and said, ‘Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?’” (Judges 6:14).

I believe that with each instruction from God, Gideon had to shift into a greater level of faith. Each time God gave him an instruction, action *by Gideon* was required. Let’s take a few moments to observe these necessary steps each of us must make to destroy yokes.

STEP ONE: ACT THE PART

Gideon was commissioned to appear and act as Israel’s deliverer. Think on this: He had to *appear* and *act* like a deliverer. I know firsthand that when Jezebel manifests around me, I, like Elijah, would rather take off in the opposite direction. Gideon did not think too highly of himself to start with; he was hiding from his enemies when God called him. There may have been others more qualified, but Gideon was told, “You’re the man!”

The enemy was a Midianite, and we can see how this intimidating spirit could easily team up with Jezebel, as she is one who demands perfection and

performance and focuses on inadequacy. Plus, she is the major intimidator. Though Gideon was humble and self-effacing, the angel still honored him. Similar to Elijah, he was one of no reputation and from a “nobody” type of family. We now understand, however, that reputation means nothing as far as what is required to receive God’s anointing.

STEP TWO: BELIEVE IN GOD’S PRESENCE

God told Gideon that he, Gideon, would strike down all the Midianites, but that He, God, would be with him. “The LORD answered, ‘I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together’” (Judges 6:16).

Dear one, a Jezebel spirit and spirits of deception try to convince us that we are *alone* and that *God really doesn’t care about our situation*. If we believe these lies, we are certain to be yoked with fear and intimidation. So God told Gideon otherwise. He made it clear that He was in the battle, too. In other words, Gideon would be yoked with God and no longer yoked with fear.

STEP THREE: HOLD TO GOD’S FAITHFULNESS

Gideon needed reassurance of his calling, so he asked for a sign—actually more than one. He first asked for this sign: that the angel would wait for him as he put a meal together. The next signs involved a fleece being wet and then dry on successive mornings. Gideon asked for signs, and God honored his requests.

Many times we need confirmation, too, don’t we? First Peter 5:10 says that though we might suffer a little while (with a Jezebel yoke or other yokes of opposition), God will “restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” God desires to prove His faithfulness by empowering you with strength.

I believe that when you receive your new mantle, God will prove Himself to you with new strength, and you will be able to take a firm stand against your enemy.

STEP FOUR: RECEIVE GOD’S PEACE

Gideon experienced the peace of God when he accepted his assignment and believed God for strength. Judges 6:24 says, “Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace.” You will begin to walk in peace when God calls you and yokes you with His assignments.

STEP FIVE: BREAK GENERATIONAL YOKES

Gideon was instructed to tear down the idols in his father's backyard—a generational yoke. Gideon was also instructed to use the wood of the Asherah pole in making a burnt offering to God.

That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering."

Judges 6:25–26

In other words, God used what the enemy meant for harm (the idolatry) and used it *against* the enemy! So Gideon did as he was told. He tore down Baal's altar, along with the Asherah pole beside it, and built a new altar to the Lord. We can almost hear the prophetic word cracking those wooden yokes!

Is the Lord asking you to tear down generational idolatries also? To receive a new mantle, it must be done. Take a few moments and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to remembrance any ungodly beliefs or fears with which you may still be yoked. Are these part of your family belief system? Do you recognize any area where fear or doubt has been exalted above what God says? You can tear down those false belief systems right now. Simply repent of the sin of your ancestors' involvement in idolatry and forgive them for opening the door. Take a few moments before you move on. You do not want to rush through this process as God prepares you for your new mantle and increased anointing.

THE LORD CLOTHES GIDEON WITH A MANTLE

I pray that you now understand the heart of God to break off *all* yokes of oppression so that He can in turn clothe us with His glory. When we are clothed with the Lord, we have a new level of authority—thus, a mantle. Gideon needed a new mantle, a new covering: After he destroyed his father's idols a hostile group of people wanted to kill him. Doesn't opposition also come to us when we rise up and take a firm stand for God? The enemy will pull out all the stops when he is threatened. I believe this is what Jezebel did when she devised a scheme to kill Naboth.

Thank the Lord that He came to Gideon's rescue. Though the Midianites, Amalekites and Eastern peoples joined forces, crossed over Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel, the Spirit of God laid a mantle on Gideon. Observe: "But the Spirit of the Lord *clothed Gideon with Himself* and took possession

of him, and he blew a trumpet, and [the clan of] Abiezer was gathered to him” (Judges 6:34, AMP, emphasis added).

From that point forward, Gideon walked in the authority of God to defeat the Midianites. Remember these two important things regarding this mantle that allowed him to destroy the yoke of the Midianites. First, he did not battle alone—he was *yoked* with God and His power. Second, he *obeyed* God. To flow in God’s anointing and to be clothed with a mantle of authority, we must do the same.

Elijah Overcomes Fear

Like Elijah's apprentice, Elisha, many of us think that we need the anointing and mantle that Elijah had in order to go forth into our particular ministries. This is true; we do. But let's recall what happened to Elijah before he anointed Elisha as his successor.

We have alluded to this amazing story found in 1 Kings 18. If you recall, Elijah defeated the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, killed them all at the brook Kishon and declared that the drought was over.

Ahab went home and told Jezebel what Elijah had done to her prophets. Immediately Jezebel sent a message to Elijah:

So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of [the dead prophets]." Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

1 Kings 19:2-4

The King James Version gives this wording about Elijah's response to the message: "*When he saw that*, he arose, and went for his life" (emphasis added). Elijah had a picture in his mind. . . . He *saw* Jezebel killing him! This visual element is what sent Elijah running away in fear, wishing to die and then hiding in a cave.

Jezebel will always attempt to send evil messages—by that I mean her main attack will be against our minds. I am sure you have experienced this tactic. The threats of a Jezebel spirit will send you running, wishing to go to heaven, but, instead, ending up in isolation.

God, however, told Elijah to leave the cave, and to return to anoint Elisha as his successor and Jehu as king of Israel. This is what will also empower us against Jezebel. We must rise up, put on our new mantle of authority and embrace the anointing for His purposes.

Though it was years later before Jehu was actually anointed—he was anointed by a servant of Elisha (see 2 Kings 9:1-13)—God set things in motion through the prophetic charge to Elijah. I believe that when God prophesied Elijah's future, his yoke of fear was broken off. Because of this, Elijah left his

wilderness and headed into his future. Again, one of his commissions was not only to anoint Elisha, but also to set in motion the anointing of Jehu—the commander who would destroy Jezebel. Yes, we need a new mantle and a fresh flow of God’s power to put Jezebel underfoot.

Elisha’s Diligence

The next mantle that we want to consider is the mantle of Elisha. Elisha received his double-portion mantle from his mentor, Elijah, but it did not come easily. Elisha served his mentor for years before he received his mantle of authority. Since he was a student in the school of prophets, he most likely faced competition and rejection for his preferred status. Think of your own seasons in school—especially high school or college. Did you ever witness competition and jealousy surrounding a “teacher’s pet”?

When it was time for Elijah to be taken to heaven, Elisha began to beg him for his mantle. Three times Elijah tried to separate himself from Elisha, but Elisha kept pressing, believing for the mantle of authority. Finally Elijah said, “If you *see me* when I am taken from you, it will be yours” (see 2 Kings 2:10). The power of sight is so important, isn’t it?

On the day Elijah was taken to glory in the whirlwind and his mantle fell to earth, Elisha was there to receive it. His diligence paid off.

I personally believe that Elisha faced much of the same persecution we do today. You may believe that your mentor never notices you . . . but God does! You may feel that you have served your mentor long enough. Think again: Your times are in God’s hands. *Waiting until the right time to receive your mantle is insurance against aborting your future.* Remember that fornication is wanting something before its time—a Jezebel assignment. Jezebel was not just after Elijah; she wanted to destroy his generational spiritual heritage as well.

Elijah had to be willing to *invest* in the next generation. One of the definitions of *invest* is “to clothe.” When we invest, we also receive a mantle from heaven to clothe us! But think about Elisha’s training: It may take time until the mantle fully “fits.” Full authority often comes through purification and preparation.

Our mantles are given us for the purpose not only to defeat Jezebel and the yokes of oppression, but also to empower the next generation. Moses passed

his authority to Joshua—and a new generation. Elijah passed his mantle to Elisha. Christ has given us His anointing and His mantle of authority. We also must pass our mantles to our successors and be willing to “invest” in others.

Adam’s Mantle of Glory

Jezebel’s daughter, Athaliah, became queen of Judah and was more evil than her mother, if you can imagine that. She seized the throne of Judah by murdering all but one of her own grandchildren—thus, nearly destroying her own generational line. Dear one, can you understand why it is so important to destroy every seed of Jezebel? Not only does the enemy desire to destroy your mantle, he also wants to destroy the generations. And yet, he wants more; he wants the *glory*.

Each of us has a mantle of glory. Let me explain. God, the Creator of heaven and earth, desired that Adam be the exact image of Himself. In other words, Adam was created to look like God, act like Him and even dress like the Father. A close examination of Psalm 104 reveals the clothing of Father God (or His mantle):

Praise the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
He wraps himself in light as with a garment;
He stretches out the heavens like a tent
and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.
He makes the clouds his chariot
and rides on the wings of the wind.
He makes winds his messengers,
flames of fire his servants.
He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.
You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

Psalm 104:1–6

God’s clothing, or mantle, involves splendor, majesty and light. His mantle is over the heavens, the earth, the waters, the winds and the mountains. Yes, His power stretches over all of creation. Can you imagine the glory and light upon Adam . . . upon creation? According to ancient Jewish writings, Adam

was considered to be “like one of the angels,” beautiful and bright like the sun, until he sinned and lost that covering.^[2]

We can conclude that Adam actually *wore* the glory of God. God had wrapped Adam and Eve in His light, His splendor and His glory, as He took great pleasure in His creation. Think about this. It meant that all of creation had to respond the same way to Adam as it did to God Himself. Every time Adam passed by the angels, they saw God’s glory upon him. It is even suggested in different Hebrew commentaries that at times even the angels may have had trouble distinguishing between God and Adam.

It was this mantle of glory that Satan desired for himself.

Satan’s Mantle

Ezekiel records that Satan at one time was clothed in perfection, wisdom and beauty. Let’s take a look at Satan’s covering, or mantle, before he was cast out from heaven:

“You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your *covering*: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.”

Ezekiel 28:12–15, NKJV

Yes, Satan had a “covering” of beauty and wisdom. He also had a covering of precious stones. I believe it is safe to say that since a “mantle” is something that covers, Satan had a mantle of beautiful gemstones. But, though he was mantled with beauty and wisdom it was *not* God’s mantle of *glory*. Satan was not created in God’s image, and I believe that this is why he targeted Adam: to steal the glory mantle. The glory mantle is a covering of *God-likeness*. Satan desired to be like God—so much so that he led a rebellion in heaven thinking he could become king. This was the iniquity that was found in Satan’s heart.

The glory mantle also gave Adam authority in the Garden. This authority was God-given power to oversee and keep the Garden, as well as to be fruitful and multiply—extending God’s authority in the earth. This is what I refer to as the *original dominion mantle*. The power to take dominion; to subdue the

earth as God had originally planned for mankind. The Father wanted our success so much that He clothed us with Himself.

We quoted from Genesis 1 earlier, but let's look at this remarkable passage once again:

Then God said, "Let us make man in *our image*, in our *likeness*, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, in the *image of God* he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; *fill the earth and subdue it*. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 1:26–28 (emphasis added)

And yes, Satan wanted Adam's authority also. He set his goal to seduce, beguile and deceive Eve, and he succeeded in stealing Adam and Eve's glory mantle. And, dear one, he is after yours also. Satan has not changed over the centuries. It is the same devil—just different maneuvers and working through different evil spirits. Yet, after thousands of years he is still attempting to be like God. Think about how he tries to "sound" like God and whispers in our ears. Many Christians mistake Satan's voice for God's.

We need to be aware of this fact: *Satan wants to steal your mantle!* Christ suffered on the cross, shed His own blood and conquered the grave to give *you* and *me* all power and authority over the enemy. Dear one, we have a mantle of glory upon our lives because Jesus bought us the victory over Satan. Jezebel has a plan to yoke you with shame, doubt, fear and idolatry. If we ever truly realize that we are clothed with God's glory, however, we can put Jezebel underfoot and keep her there.

Go ahead, use your mantle now! Rise up. Stand up straight so that your God-tailored mantle of authority fits well. Your mantle is powerful; you are anointed, and you can do *all things* through Christ—especially resist Jezebel and break yokes off of yourself through your faith.

Your Covenant with God

As we close this chapter and head to the next to examine the mantle and anointing of Jehu, see yourself wrapped and mantled with God's covenant.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God still loved them and desired to cover their shame. When we give the devil our mantle (when we fail to exercise our authority over him), we have been “de-mantled.” Adam and Eve were now naked and God had to slay animals to clothe them. Yes, the first death upon the earth was required from innocent life: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21, KJV).

Think a moment on this: They received a new *mantle*—one that would remind them day after day that their sin required a sacrifice of atonement. This was the blood covenant made for them, and we have a blood covenant made for us—through Jesus Christ. This is how we can wear Christ's mantle and operate in His anointing and power. Through the shed blood of the Lamb, we now have eternal covenant with Christ—and a covenant mantle of authority.

A Time of Self-Reflection

Aren't you thankful for your covenant with God? I know that I am. Yet, all too often we are not thankful and content. One of the manifestations of being yoked with Jezebel and deception is to remain constantly dissatisfied in life. Chronic dissatisfaction causes us to be unthankful. To remain empowered, Christ requires that we become thankful believers. I am sure you are aware of various Scriptures concerning thanksgiving. One of my favorites is Psalm 95:2, which declares, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!” (AMP).

If we desire to remain in God's presence, we must become thankful. Jezebel is a seducing spirit that breeds dissatisfaction and discontentment. Look at the way Timothy groups those who are *unthankful* with others who are also *unholy*:

But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, *unthankful*, *unholy*, without natural

affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power therefore. From these also turn away.

2 Timothy 3:1–5 ASV (emphasis added)

The word for *grievous times* is *chalepos* (pronounced khal-ep-os) and means “reducing strength.” Do you see that if the enemy steals your mantle of authority, he also steals your strength? Further interpretation of this Greek word indicates that these grievous or *perilous* times (KJV) are also *difficult and dangerous times*. And, interestingly, it is connected to the word *chalao* (pronounced khal-ah-o) and means “to lower.” In other words, the enemy can cause evil seductions that will ensnare you and cause you to be “lowered,” losing your glory mantle and your authority in Christ! And this can all occur when you are unthankful and out from under the covering and protection of the Lord.

In this special time of self-reflection, ask yourself if you have been chronically dissatisfied. How about being “unthankful”? To remain this way will block you from the very presence of God and His glory. I know that you do not want to do *anything* that would cause you to allow Satan to steal your mantle—this is why we must always determine to remain thankful. *Sin is a yoke, and a yoke will not allow a mantle to fit fully about us. Sin, therefore, blocks our godly power and authority.*

A Time of Repentance

Because the Jezebel spirit hates repentance, this evil spirit is bent on keeping us from humbling ourselves and repenting before God for our sins. If we are yoked with pride, repentance is almost impossible. But remember this: We broke off that yoke of pride. You now have another opportunity to examine your heart and actions, and then come into His presence with a repentant heart.

Take a few moments and examine your mantle. Does it fit well? If not, maybe a heavy yoke is blocking it from fitting properly. Examine your anointing: Are you flowing with the goodness of Christ? Are you experiencing His peace, love and victory? These are all signs of one experiencing the fruit of the anointing.

Now, carefully consider the areas in which you are not witnessing fruit. Take a few minutes and read through Galatians 5:22–6:1. In this passage you will read about the fruit of the Spirit being “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, (and) self-control” (verses 22–23, ASV). Ask yourself: Are you walking in love? Maybe you have a difficult time forgiving others? Do you have peace? How about joy? In verses 25–26 you will notice that if we are envying someone else, we are not walking in the fruit of God’s Spirit. As you use this time of self-reflection ask for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and His divine grace to transform you into His divine image. Close your eyes for a moment and meditate on His love for you. As you do this, I believe He will touch your heart and wrap you firmly in your mantle of glory!

If you are like me, you will need to ask the Holy Spirit to empower you in various levels of anointing. Commit your life to Him, and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how to develop your gifts and anointing. In fact, this is a good time to write your prayer request to the Lord concerning your mantle and anointing. Go ahead—Jesus has taken your hand. He is now strengthening you and leading you into all truth. Allow me to help you get your personal prayer started:

Holy Spirit, I come to You completely submitted to the Father’s divine plan for my life. I realize that I am an anointed vessel, and that I have been set apart to receive a mantle of glory in Your name. I am thankful that You have chosen me to be Your representative upon the earth. Lord, I also realize

that there are certain areas in which I need to grow. Some of these areas are: [List these areas here. You might, for example, wish to be healed or to flow in the anointing of healing. Or, you may recognize a particular weakness and you wish to repent of it. List that also in your prayer.]

I now choose to believe what You, Lord, have said about me. Your Word says that I have been given all power and authority over every spirit of darkness. I choose to believe that I am no longer clothed with darkness or yoked with sin. I choose to submit my entire life to following You and flowing in Your power and anointing. Amen.

[1]. I am indebted to Frank Damazio, *The Making of a Leader* (Bible Temple Publishing, 1988), for the translations of the Hebrew words *balal*, *mimshach* and *mashach*.

[2]. For descriptions from the Haggadah and Hellenistic literature, see <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=758&letter=A&search=adam>. This quote is taken from the Slavonic Book of Enoch, xxx. 11.

The Authority of the Jehu Mantle

There is much to learn from Jehu. God anointed him to end Jezebel's monstrous reign (by her death), to destroy the house of Ahab (by taking the lives of his seventy sons) and to kill the worshipers of Baal with the sword (see 2 Kings 9:30–10:28). The mantle of authority with which Jehu carried out his mission is revealed within his name and his generational lineage.

Iniquity, you will recall, attaches itself as a yoke and afflicts families down to the third and fourth generations. But there is also a positive side to this movement down generational lines: Godly family destinies and mantles of authority can also be passed from one generation to another, and these can destroy yokes! Jehu was a third generation of many who were named after powerful attributes of Jehovah. This shows why we need to become free from all bondage—in order to empower the next generation to do the same.

Now, let's look at Jehu, his name and his generations. As we study this, I want you to use your imagination some more so that you get the full impact of a mantle of authority being passed down through the generations—and see *why* the next generation walked powerfully in that mantle.

Generations of Anointing

First, Jehu's grandfather (I am considering him the "first generation" that had an anointing) was named Nimshi (pronounced *nim-shee*). (See 2 Kings 9:2.) His name translates as "one who sets free" and "rescued." We can conclude, therefore, considering the importance of names in that culture, that God had removed a yoke of some type from Nimshi. This needed to be accomplished so that a mantle of authority could be passed to the next generation. This mantle represented the anointing to break yokes and set people free, obviously rescuing them from destroying yokes of oppression. Thus, we notice the mandate of Isaiah 10:27 once again:

And it shall *come to pass* in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

KJV (emphasis added)

God desires that certain events *come to pass*, especially for yokes to be destroyed by an anointing. God will always use mankind in His plans upon the earth. I believe the generations of Jehu were destined to be carriers of God's anointing and that this anointing was used to destroy God's enemies. The anointing to set people free was on its way to Jehu. I shudder to think what might have happened if the mantle had never been passed to him! (Now that will cause us to consider the importance of destroying yokes in our own generation, won't it?)

Second, the name of Jehu's father, Jehoshaphat (pronounced *yeh-ho-shaw-fawt*), when translated means "Jehovah judges." When considering the anointing required to set people free, I can also imagine just how someone might need to be reminded that it is always God who is doing the judging. I believe that this might be where the Christian cliché "We hate the evil, but we love the person manifesting the evil" (or, "We hate the sin, but love the sinner") originated. It is not our responsibility to *judge*; we are called only to *discern* the evil spirits and cast them out in order to remove the yokes.

Jehovah God is the righteous Judge; we are simply the obedient vessels He uses in the process to carry out His directives. God will always work His plans through the hearts of His people—but it is His power at work, and we can never forget that. As believers we can discern the presence of an evil spirit—or that a person is allowing the evil spirit to operate through him or her—but any judging must always be left up to God.

Hence, when we examine Isaiah 10:27, we see that it was God who was destroying the yokes. Notice that He refers to Himself as "the Lord of Hosts,"

who accomplishes this:

Therefore thus saith *the Lord GOD of hosts*, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. And *the LORD of hosts* shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

Isaiah 10:24–27, KJV (emphasis added)

This passage reveals clearly that it is *God's own power* that breaks yokes. There is no reason for any of us to become puffed up when He uses us powerfully. We might be anointed, but that is only because *He is anointed*.

Third, Jehu's name translates as "Jehovah is." Now this is where your imagination can really become active. I promised you that these word studies would not be cumbersome. So picture this: someone with a generational mantle of authority, anointed by God to destroy His enemies, who is *confrontational and discerning* but is *not judgmental*. This person is completely obedient to God, and at the same time committed to breaking yokes off of people. By doing so, he is *also* helping the individuals break out into a place of enlargement and freedom. In fact, he is like Christ, completely submitted to the Father. Look at how Micah 2:13 describes Christ, "the Breaker":

The Breaker [the Messiah] will go up before them. They will break through, pass in through the gate and go out through it, and their King will pass on before them, the Lord at their head.

AMP

Use your imagination some more and consider the fact that Jesus desires to "break through" for us and at the same time "break yokes"—truly He is the "Breaker." Yes, Christ, the Breaker, desires to break us *out* of the old patterns (yokes) that have contained us and at the same time break us *into* our future! See it: *out and into!* Repeat it to yourself: *out and into, out and into!* Please allow that to sink in and take deep root in your heart, because those three little words are releasing life into your future. Yes! Whatever has seemed barren and desolate in your life due to the yokes upon you is now becoming alive. Yet, dear one, it is not up to us to make this happen—our complete dependence must be on Him. This is why "Jehovah is!"

So, we can safely say (and, again, please get this visually) that someone anointed by God to defeat Jezebel must be someone in close relationship with God—intimate and in covenant with Him—which would mean that “Jehovah God *is* everything.” In other words, we live for Him and all that we do is committed to Him. He is our strength and our salvation. Then, as we obey, it is completely up to Him to judge our enemies. We, as co-laborers in Christ, given power and authority over the enemy (especially Jezebel), are not the ones in power. When Elisha’s servant anointed Jehu to defeat Baal worshipers and Jezebel, queen of Israel, it was never “Jehu’s power” that defeated God’s enemies. Jehu responded to that call with God’s own power and zeal.

Godly Zeal and Right Timing

When Jehu was anointed, he was addressed as captain (see 2 Kings 9:5, KJV), which means “commander.” Jehu had a *commanding* anointing—and so do we!

One of the words used in the Old Testament for *command* is *tsavah* (pronounced tsaw-*vaw*). This Hebrew word implies putting things in order through commanding. It also refers to someone who is appointed and charged to fulfill a responsibility. Jehu was “charged” and “appointed” by God to fulfill his destiny.

Jehu had mighty victories under that anointing and mantle, but he defeated the false god Baal to a large degree before he ever went into battle. How? He *waited* until his time, even though he was fully possessed with great zeal. God had told Elijah that Jehu would be crowned king of Israel and would bring God’s vengeance on the worshipers of Baal. Yet it was not until Elisha succeeded Elijah that Jehu was released to his mission. If you recall, Baal, the god of Jezebel, promotes fornication—desiring something, especially religious promotion or power, before God’s timing.

I referred earlier to Jeremiah who also was appointed by God to perform a specific task. He was given a charge by God to fulfill a certain responsibility. When Jeremiah was able to see his future, he was then empowered with zeal to fulfill it. This is why it is so very important for us to see all that God has for us, which includes our future, our calling, our anointing and destiny. When Jeremiah said, “I see the branch of an almond tree budding,” he was seeing his

future. How is that? Well, the almond tree is the first tree that blooms in a new season. Jeremiah saw his new season. Yokes of fear were broken off of him as he “saw.” God said to him that he was seeing correctly, and then He said this: “You have seen well, for I am *watching* over My word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:11–12, NASB, emphasis added).

Believer, when we see it, we can have it! And the benefits applied are this: God will “watch” over His promise and then “fulfill” it. When God watches over His words, this means that He promises to remain alert and on the lookout for us—watching over us to ensure that we fulfill our potential. Wow! What a promise to hold on to! And please take a moment to ponder this also: God gives us the ability to take command in our own lives. This is all the result of a supernatural zeal that comes when we step into our God-given authority—or when we “see” our future and are willing to walk in God’s perfect timing. And this is another way we can break off yokes of oppression: We “see” them broken.

Yet, all the while, we must realize that our mantles of zeal come from the Lord Himself. Read the inspiring passage below and notice that Jesus took it upon Himself to deliver us from every evil yoke. When He looked upon us and saw that there was no justice, He desired to intervene on our behalf. He put on His own righteousness and garments of vengeance (against our enemy!) and then clothed Himself with zeal. This was all done on our behalf.

The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

Isaiah 59:15–17

The Power of Commanding with Full Strength

Acts 16:16–18 recalls the incident when the apostle Paul commanded the spirit of divination to come out of the slave girl. (Remember that Jezebel is a false prophetess operating in divination and the occult.) It is clear that Paul had a “commanding anointing”:

Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I *command* you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

Who cannot testify that the apostle Paul had a mantle to destroy yokes of Jezebel and deception just as Jehu did? Though he did not have this slave girl thrown out of a window to her death, as Jehu commanded concerning Jezebel, nonetheless he destroyed the yoke of Jezebel upon her life.

Now, back to Jehu's commanding anointing. For one to be a commander requires not only courage but also strength—*full strength!* Jehu's zeal empowered him to move full force against God's enemies. More on that in a minute. Jehu was anointed by God and instructed to smite the house of Ahab so that God could "avenge the blood of [His] servants the prophets, and the blood of all [His] servants, at the hand of Jezebel" (2 Kings 9:7, NKJV).

The word *smite* is the Hebrew word *nakah* (pronounced naw-kaw). Again, get a visual representation of this (in other words, see yourself doing this to the enemy). It means to strike, beat, wound, kill and clap in the sense of placing the enemy between your hands and, as you clap over your victory, crushing the devil.

Now if you envision yourself doing any of this "smiting," you are actually required to use your "full strength" just as Jehu was—and you will have the same anointing. Second Kings 9:24 demonstrates this: "And Jehu drew a bow with his *full strength*, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot" (KJV, emphasis added).

Full strength means just what it says—every ounce of energy and determination that Jehu had went into drawing back his bow to defeat his enemy. This is exactly what is required as we defeat every yoke of Jezebel. We cannot be half-committed to this—that would actually be tolerating Jezebel, and Jesus rebuked the church of Thyatira for that very reason.

Where does godly zeal originate? Well, from God, of course! Let's observe Scripture concerning this. It involves governmental authority, which actually originates in heaven:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The *zeal of the* LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 9:6–7, KJV (emphasis added)

Keep this in mind: When Jezebel is in operation, there is no peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and He has the eternal zeal to establish the increase of His government on this earth. As we pray the Lord's Prayer and ask for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are actually asking God to bring heaven to earth and establish His Kingdom here. He desired to use Jehu—and He did—to establish a level of governmental authority over Jezebel and Baal. He wants to use us also; will we submit to co-laboring with Him? I pray that you answer yes in your heart.

Heartfelt Emotion

The zeal of the Lord involves not only deep commitment, but also heartfelt emotion—full-strength emotion! It is okay to be emotional concerning the commandments of the Lord. Scripture says that God laughs, He dances and He rejoices. All of these involve emotions. David had emotions—you can read through the Psalms and discover them—and none of his emotions seemed to steal his anointing.

So go ahead: Dance before the Lord like David—with all your might! Laugh loudly at the breaking of Jezebel's yokes over you! Rejoice over the throwing down of Baal in your life! You are being unyoked again—did you know that? From what? God just unyoked you from the fear of being emotional. Though we are not led by the flesh, we still have emotions. So, dear one, you are now free again from another oppression of Satan.

Consider these Scriptures:

Why do the nations assemble with commotion [uproar and confusion of voices], and why do the people imagine (meditate upon and devise) an empty scheme? The kings of the earth take their places; the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His Anointed One (the Messiah, the Christ). They say, Let us break Their bands [of restraint] asunder and cast Their cords [of control] from us. *He Who sits in the heavens laughs*; the Lord has them in derision [and in supreme contempt He mocks them].

Psalm 2:1–4, AMP (emphasis added)

The Lord laughs at [the wicked], for He sees that their own day [of defeat] is coming.

Psalm 37:13, AMP

Believer, it is time to laugh out loud and also *live* out loud! Scripture says that laughter does good, just like a medicine. So let go with your emotions and

let freedom come. You have been yoked far too long. Psalm 2:1–4, given above, describes how the enemy might assemble against us with commotion and confusion. He (or others used by him) might meditate upon empty schemes to keep us yoked with oppression. The enemy may also devise wicked plans against you. But do you know what? All-powerful, almighty God is *laughing*! If you will also *laugh* with God right now, I believe that you will slip out from under more yokes that bind you. Every time that you agree with God, you slip out from their bondage.

When Abraham and Sarah named their son Isaac, they did so for a reason. It was a declaration of victory over the yoke of barrenness. How? Isaac's name means "he laughs." His birth was an assault of laughter over the yoke of barrenness. So go ahead; laugh over every barren situation in your life. God is watching over the promises that He has given concerning your future.

In Closing

Well, precious believer, our journey together has come to an end. Whenever you feel those old yokes trying to re-attach, take yourself through deliverance by repenting for anything the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. At times, you may need to re-read this book and re-examine your notations along the way. Then, repent (change your thinking) once again and re-establish your faith in God's ability to deliver you.

I am so proud of you for hanging in there with me. I had a deep burden to help you and empower you to fulfill more of your destiny. You are slipping out from under yokes. Yokes are lifting from your shoulders. You are using your full strength to command the enemy to loose you from the grips of Jezebel and all her oppression. You have the zeal of the Lord, which has mantled you with power. The Breaker has broken you free. I am so encouraged for you! Now, dear one, go and set others free also.

Sandie Freed and her husband, Mickey, are the founders and directors of Zion Ministries in Hurst, Texas. Together they pastored a local church in Texas for more than fourteen years, and today they apostolically oversee the Zion Kingdom Training Center, which trains and activates the Body of Christ in the fivefold ministries and spiritual gifting. Their ministry also encompasses hands-on prophetic team training, deliverance team training and leadership development. Sandie and Mickey have recently taken an apostolic role in the licensing and ordination of ministers needing connecting and accountability.

In addition, Mickey and Sandie have launched Win Ministries in Hurst, Texas, a nonprofit organization to empower women in need. Davis House has been established through Zion Ministries not only to house unwed mothers and women seeking counseling and deliverance, but also to provide spiritual mentoring and impartation.

Sandie is an ordained prophetess with Christian International Ministries and travels extensively teaching prophetic truths to the Body of Christ. She has written eight other books:

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Breaking the Threefold Demonic Cord: How to Discern and Defeat the Lies of Jezebel, Athaliah and Delilah

Destiny Thieves: Defeat Seducing Spirits and Achieve Your Purpose in God

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Dream On: Unlocking Your Dreams and Visions

Silencing the Accuser: Eight Lies Satan Uses Against Christians

Heaven's Voice Touching Earth

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The Jezebel spirit is one of the most cunning spirits you will ever face.

Its lies are so subtle, and whispered so softly, that you may not even be aware it is slowly binding you, yoking you to itself.

How can you tell if you are yoked with darkness? Among the most common signs that a Jezebel spirit, or its allies, is at work in your life are

CONFUSION • DISSATISFACTION
PERFECTIONISM • FEAR • ANXIETY • GOSSIP
LEGALISM • MANIPULATION

Respected spiritual warfare expert Sandie Freed exposes the demonic spirits attempting to control you—and the tactics they will use to try to steal your spiritual birthright. She provides clarity and insight into various ways you may be deceived without even knowing it, and she offers biblical keys to breaking free.

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SANDIE FREED and her husband, Mickey, are the founders and directors of Zion Ministries. The author of eight other books, including *Breaking the Threefold Demonic Cord*, she is an ordained prophetess with Christian International and travels extensively, ministering deliverance and life transformation to God's people.

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