

Three Mothers Who Failed

Introduction. The scriptures present several examples of the far-reaching influence a mother has on her child and common experience affirms this truth. God declares that a mother will have a strong influence on her child in the first formative years. In these years, the character of a child will form, which means that habits, feelings, and attitudes are all being taught. This gives mothers great opportunities to lay down the teachings of God through the Bible.

God wants mothers who cultivate a home that has an atmosphere of spirituality, where peace and calmness abound, where there are no conflicts, drama, and hatred, and where godliness is a way of life. It would be wonderful if the Bible abounded with such examples, but it does not. In fact, we will examine three cases where the mothers failed and the results of their failure.

I. Jezebel

A. Who was she?

1. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (1 Kings 16:31; cp. Judges 2:11-13).
2. She married Ahab the son of Omri. He was king over Israel for 22 years. He did more evil than all the kings before him (1 Kings 16:29-30).

B. What did she do?

1. She was a promoter of Baal worship which was a pagan god of fertility and nature (1 Kings 18:19; cp. 2 Kings 9:22).
2. She had a total lack of conscience and exhibited extreme cruelty in murdering many of God's servants (1 Kings 18:3-4).
3. She was full of wickedness (1 Kings 21:8-10, 25). No more notorious husband and wife team is known in the Bible. Christians in Thyatira tolerated a prophetess, figuratively known as Jezebel, who tempted them to sin (Revelation 2:20).

II. Athaliah

A. Who was she?

1. Athaliah was the daughter of Jezebel and Ahab. She was married to Jehoram, king of Judah (2 Kings 8:16-18).
2. Jehoram reigned eight years in Judah and died (2 Kings 8:17). Ahaziah, Athaliah's son, took the throne and ruled one year (2 Kings 9:27). Athaliah then took the throne for herself and ruled for six years (2 Kings 11:1-3).

B. What did she do?

1. She corrupted and destroyed her husband (2 Kings 8:18).
2. She counseled her children to be wicked (2 Chronicles 22:2-3).
3. She murdered the royal offspring — her grandsons (2 Kings 11:1).
4. An epitaph is a statement written in memory of a person who has died, especially as an inscription on a tombstone. It comes originally from a Greek word that means "funeral oration". Would people be better off with you dead (2 Chronicles 23:12-15, 21)? What a sobering thought!

III. Herodias

A. Who was she?

1. Herodias was Herod the Great's granddaughter. Her father became king after his father died.
2. Her father had two brothers, Philip and Antipas. They later became her husbands (Matthew 14:1-3; Mark 6:16-29; Luke 3:19-20). Herod Antipas' first wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of the Nabateans (2 Corinthians 11:32).

B. What did she do?

1. She was an adulterous woman living with a man not lawfully hers (Leviticus 18:16; 20:21).
2. She was violent and vindictive, coldly premeditating and executing her schemes.
3. She used her daughter to tempt Herod to sin through dancing which promotes lasciviousness (2 Corinthians 12:21; 1 Peter 4:3). She should have been encouraging faith and purity in her daughter.
4. She was directly responsible for the death of God's messenger (Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:11).

Conclusion. Every one of these women were servants of sin and their children followed them. With Jezebel, we saw the extreme wickedness which accompanies a rejection of God and His goodness. How many mothers follow after their own idols today? With Athaliah, we saw the corrupting influence she had on her children. How many mothers counsel their children to wickedness today? With Herodias, we saw her immoral character and how she was able to control her children. How many mothers have morals which rub off on their children today?

In all three of these cases, God was not a priority in their lives and you can see the wickedness that ensued. How tragic it is when children are persuaded to follow in wicked footsteps (Ezekiel 16:44).

In all three of these instances, it is plain that these situations developed because God's word was not followed. How different would these circumstances have been if these women were only godly (Proverbs 31:25-30). I do not want to end on a negative note, so consider being a wife and mother like Vashti and her blameless modesty (Esther 1:12), Mary and her humble obedience (Luke 1:38), and Priscilla and her fervent service (Acts 18:26). It is very easy to see that children can and will be influenced by their mothers in the wrong way (Nehemiah 13:23-24). It is best for a mother and father to have obedience to God as a common ground.