

## **CHAPTER 24**

### **THE VITAL NEED FOR RESOLVE AND COURAGE TO PRESS ON, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU ARE UP AGAINST WITCHCRAFT**

<sup>1</sup> *Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,  
which cannot be moved, but abides for ever.*

<sup>2</sup> *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,  
so the Lord is round about his people,  
from this time forth and for evermore.*

*Psalm 125:1-2 (RSV)*

<sup>9</sup> *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*

*Joshua 1:9 (RSV)*

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?*

*The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?*

<sup>2</sup> *When evildoers assail me,  
uttering slanders against me,  
my adversaries and foes,  
they shall stumble and fall.*

<sup>3</sup> *Though a host encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war arise against me,  
yet I will be confident.*

*Psalm 27:1-3 (RSV)*

<sup>24</sup> *Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the Lord!*

*Psalm 31:24 (ESV)*

*Moreover Ahith'ophel said to Ab'salom, “Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will set out and pursue David tonight. <sup>2</sup> I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged, and throw him into a panic; and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down the king only,*

*2 Samuel 17:1-2 (RSV)*

<sup>16</sup> *And his servants said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezeki'ah. <sup>17</sup> And he wrote letters to cast contempt on the Lord the God of Israel and to speak against him, saying, “Like the gods of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hands, so the God of Hezeki'ah will not deliver his people from my hand.” <sup>18</sup> And they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were upon the wall, to frighten and terrify them, in order that they might take the city.*

*2 Chronicles 32:16-18 (RSV)*

<sup>1</sup> *When David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, <sup>2</sup> “I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man,*

*1 Kings 2:1-2 (RSV)*

<sup>13</sup> *Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.*

*1 Corinthians 16:13 (RSV)*

<sup>22</sup> *And when Joram saw Jehu, he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" He answered, "What peace can there be, so long as the harlotries and the sorceries of your mother Jez'ebel are so many?"* <sup>23</sup> *Then Joram reined about and fled, saying to Ahazi'ah, "Treachery, O Ahazi'ah!"* <sup>24</sup> *And Jehu drew his bow with his full strength, and shot Joram between the shoulders, so that the arrow pierced his heart, and he sank in his chariot.*

*2 Kings 9:22-24 (RSV)*

**Before you tackle a wrongdoer, you may be tortured by feelings of self-doubt and agonise over whether you are "doing the right thing". You must expect all of that and resist it.**

Every time I tackle a wrongdoer I am plagued by feelings of doubt beforehand. My mind is bombarded with the thought, or rather the accusation, that I have somehow got it all wrong, or am over-reacting, or doing an injustice. In the early years I was tortured by such doubts, but I learned two facts which made handling the wicked a lot easier. The first is that the accusations and feelings of self-doubt are due to demons whispering into my mind. They want me to abandon my disciplinary procedures, if it is in a work context, or my investigation if it is in a church setting.

The second point is that the very fact that the demons are so eager to stop me enquiring into or tackling a wrongdoer indicates that I am actually on the right road. If I was doing an injustice and was wrongly accusing an innocent person, the demons would be urging me on. At the very least, they would be keeping quiet about it, because any such injustice would suit them perfectly. Therefore, the very fact that I am being hindered, and urged to stop, means that I need to press ahead with even greater determination, and refuse to be deflected from the task.

**After you have tackled and removed a wrongdoer you will feel a "yuk factor" plus self-doubt, anxiety and lowness of mood. This is normal, and does not mean you did the wrong thing.**

The demonic accusation doesn't end once the wicked person has been tackled or removed. Even then, when you might think it is all over, your mind will still be bombarded. I have learned to expect to get a 'yuk factor' immediately after I have confronted the wicked person. It happens so consistently that I am now ready for it, and better able to withstand it. If you want to avoid being worn down by the process of tackling the wicked, you need to expect this second wave of mental bombardment and learn to recognise it when it comes.

I get dark thoughts and anxious feelings, which swirl around in my mind and emotions. The accusation is whispered into my mind that I have got it all wrong, blamed the wrong person, misunderstood the evidence, or over-reacted to events. The thought is also planted in my mind that there will be trouble as a result of my decision to sack that person, or that people will not understand what I have done, or why, and will blame me for it and disapprove of me.

In part this is an illusion, but it is also partly true, because a lot of people really do misunderstand what I do. They will inevitably misunderstand you too, if you ever try to confront the wicked. That said, the demons will also try to exaggerate your perception of other people's disapproval, thereby further intensifying your lowness of mood. Demons find it especially easy to oppress you if you are unaware of their tricks, or don't believe that they have any part to play at all. It can be very debilitating and you can feel isolated, and lacking in motivation.

There is also a natural feeling of anti-climax that comes after facing any battle, quite apart from the demonic whisperings. The adrenalin switches off and one is left feeling tired, even in purely physical terms. The body itself, after the intensity of the crisis, goes back the other way for a while, as it needs time to recover. So, what I call the 'yuk factor' is this combination of negative thoughts and emotions that one gets after a confrontation with the wicked. That is exactly how Elijah felt after he had defeated the prophets of Baal and Asherah.

Let us join the story just after his victory, when you might expect him to be buzzing with excitement. Instead, he feels tired, depressed, paranoid and lacking in confidence. Queen Jezebel learns of the destruction of her prophets and swears to kill Elijah and she sends a messenger to tell him. Her threat, which is also a curse, strikes fear into Elijah, even after all the heroic things he has done. Indeed, it is probably *because* of what he has just been through that her words are so effective. The battle had drained him of energy, so Jezebel's threat was well timed, from her perspective:

***<sup>1</sup>Ahab told Jez'ebel all that Eli'jah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> Then Jez'ebel sent a messenger to Eli'jah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." <sup>3</sup> Then he was afraid, and he arose and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.***

***1 Kings 19:1-3 (RSV)***

Elijah's fear and despondency are so severe he flees and hides in the wilderness and even asks God to let him die:

***<sup>4</sup> But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers."***

***1 Kings 19:4 (RSV)***

The way God dealt with Elijah at this time was very practical. He knew the intensity of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual struggle Elijah had faced and was still facing, even after it was over. So God arranged for Elijah to be given food, sleep and encouragement. Those three things are exactly what you need, and in large doses, after you tackle the wicked:

***<sup>5</sup> And he lay down and slept under a broom tree; and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." <sup>6</sup> And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank, and lay down again. <sup>7</sup> And the angel of the Lord came again a second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you." <sup>8</sup> And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.***

***1 Kings 19:5-8 (RSV)***

However, even after that sleep and food, and the period of time that had passed, Elijah still felt low. He stayed in a cave and we hear him there, expressing how utterly isolated he *feels*. In fact, he's mistaken, or has been demonically deceived, because he is not actually the only one left:

***<sup>9</sup> And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Eli'jah?" <sup>10</sup> He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."***

***1 Kings 19:9-10 (RSV)***

God then prescribes a strong dose of encouragement. Firstly, He speaks to him in a series of miraculous events which culminates in Elijah hearing God's still, small voice. After that, God again commissions Elijah with another task, to anoint Hazael as the next King of Syria. God is giving Elijah something practical to do, and also bringing him out of his self-imposed isolation in the cave. God also gives him good news, and puts things in a better perspective, by revealing that He still has 7000 genuine people who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah really needed to be told that:

***<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Haz'ael to be king over Syria; <sup>16</sup> and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel; and Eli'sha the son of Shaphat of A'bel-meho'lah you shall anoint to be***

***prophet in your place.<sup>17</sup> And him who escapes from the sword of Haz'ael shall Jehu slay; and him who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Eli'sha slay.<sup>18</sup> Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Ba'al, and every mouth that has not kissed him."***

***1 Kings 19:15-18 (RSV)***

For you to recover from the mental, emotional, spiritual, nervous and physical strain and exhaustion that you experience after confronting the wicked, you need to take similar steps. Be prepared so that these things have already been thought of and are available ahead of time. Then they will be ready when you need them to lift you back up. Firstly, ask other people to pray for you before, during and after your confrontation with the wicked. Don't just leave it to them to realise for themselves that you will need all of this. They almost certainly won't, because they have many other things to think of.

Also they have probably never tackled the wicked themselves. Therefore they won't actually know how it feels, or why you need their prayers. They have no practical experience of this in their own lives, so they simply can't identify with what you are going through. Try not to be angry with them at their lack of support, or offended by their insensitivity. Even the best of people can be completely unaware of your need for support and encouragement. That is especially so if you are a generally confident person, because it simply won't occur to them that you need anything.

Secondly, make sure to get your workload reduced, delegated or postponed, at least for a while, so that you have time for rest and sleep after the 'battle'. Even in purely physical terms, you will feel exhausted, so you need to plan some recovery time into your diary. Also eat fully and properly, even if you don't feel like it, in order to recover your strength and resilience. For that reason, the period after a battle is not a good time to go on a fast. You might do that long before the contest, or long afterwards, but not just before, or just after. Those are times for eating, not fasting.

Also take practical steps to *arrange* for yourself to get encouragement from others. Don't just leave it to chance, and don't disappear and hide in a cave, as Elijah did. Seek for the company of others, whom you trust, and who are wise enough to understand what you have been through, and what you are still going through. However, don't rely on them to realise for themselves that you need encouragement, because they probably won't. Therefore tell them yourself, before, during and after the confrontation, and spell out exactly what you need from them.

Literally say "I am feeling low, anxious and sad after what has happened. Please encourage me and help to lift me up, because I need a boost." You may feel foolish saying all that, but it will need to be said. Most people simply aren't sensitive enough, or alert enough, to have any idea how you feel, or how much help you need at a time like this. Moreover, do not make the mistake of seeking all of this encouragement and emotional support from just one person. If you do you will overwhelm them and exhaust their supply. You will need 100 'units' of emotional support, but most people only have 20-50 'units' to give to you.

Therefore be sensible and realistic. Look for a series of people who can share the burden of listening to you and helping you to get through it and to recover from it. They need that because encouraging and supporting you during and after a battle is also a burden for them. I made the mistake of overburdening my wife at times of crisis. That had the effect of getting her down, which compounded the problem, both for me and her. So, think ahead beforehand and prepare a list of people whom you can visit, share with and lean on later, when you are going through this 'slough of despond'.

If you are the spouse, relative or friend of someone who has to tackle the wicked, you also need to take note of their inevitable need for encouragement. Then you can be ready to provide the support they will need before, during, and after a confrontation. If you can be sensitive to this, realise what is needed, and try hard to provide it, you will make yourself a great help to the Body of Christ. In fact, as an encourager of others, you will be a rare commodity, for which there is a desperate need within the Church.

**If you deal with a series of wicked people, one after another, you will feel worn-down and wonder if it is worth all the effort. It is, so brace yourself and keep going.**

It is difficult enough to have to face these confrontations with the wicked once or twice. Even that can take its toll on you. But to have to do it again and again and again, year after year, is extremely debilitating. I can testify to that from long and bitter experience. You reach the stage where you wonder whether it will ever end and whether it is all worth it. Be assured that it is. There *is* a purpose and it *will* end one day. Until then, brace yourself, keep on the ‘helmet’ of hope, and keep on keeping on.

The low moods that you experience during and after the battles are normal and are entirely to be expected. They don’t mean you are doing the wrong thing, or that there is something wrong with you. So don’t let yourself be talked into giving up. On the contrary, increase your resolve, seek the help of others, and set your face to carry on regardless, until the job is done. That is how overcomers and conquerors are made.

**To overcome the wicked, you must learn to cope with isolation and being misunderstood. You must also learn to encourage yourself, because very few people will do that for you.**

You will have to recognise the harsh reality that you are not going to get all the emotional support and encouragement that you need from others. There just aren’t enough wise, sympathetic, discerning people out there to provide it. Even if they exist, and even if you know them, they can’t be there to help you all the time. Therefore you have got to learn how to encourage yourself, at least as a supplement, but possibly as the only source of encouragement

This will largely consist of reminding yourself of God’s promises and of speaking them *out loud* to yourself. Also remind yourself of what the Bible says about God’s character and how He is always with you and has a bright plan for your future. In particular, put on the ‘helmet’ of hope from Ephesians 6:17. Hope is the main protection for your mind and it gives you the resilience that you need to avoid depression and despair.

So, be realistic and provide your own encouragement to yourself and for yourself. It is perfectly possible, once you realise that it can be done and that it is needed. The classic example of how to encourage oneself is David. When he was on the run from King Saul he had an emotionally shattering experience at Ziklag. Amalekite raiders attacked the camp while they were away and kidnapped all the wives and children, including his own:

*<sup>1</sup>Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amal'ekites had made a raid upon the Negeb and upon Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag, and burned it with fire, <sup>2</sup> and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great; they killed no one, but carried them off, and went their way. <sup>3</sup> And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. <sup>4</sup> Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept, until they had no more strength to weep. <sup>5</sup> David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahin'o-am of Jezreel, and Ab'igail the widow of Nabal of Carmel.*

*1 Samuel 30:1-5 (RSV)*

On top of all that, David’s men panicked, fell into despair and even wanted to stone him:

*<sup>6</sup>And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*

*1 Samuel 30:6 (KJV)*

David was utterly alone, in a huge crisis, being blamed and criticised by everyone, and with nobody to support or encourage him. But one of the marks of his greatness was that his immediate response was

to *encourage himself*. He did so by prayer, proclamation, declaring God's Word and reminding himself of God's character and promises. Then, having strengthened himself, by *his own* words of encouragement, David led the men to launch a counter-attack on the Amalekites and to recover all of the hostages:

***<sup>17</sup> And David smote them from twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. <sup>18</sup> David recovered all that the Amal'ekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives. <sup>19</sup> Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken; David brought back all. <sup>20</sup> David also captured all the flocks and herds; and the people drove those cattle before him, and said, "This is David's spoil."***

***1 Samuel 30:17-20 (RSV)***

To be able to encourage yourself when the big crises occur, you must prepare for it now by encouraging yourself when there isn't a crisis, or where the problems are only small. Then you will be ready for the big crises when they do arise and able to encourage yourself through them, even if nobody else is willing, or able, to do that for you. For another example of how David encouraged himself, and others, see the passage below from 1 Chronicles 29, in which King David was speaking in public to the whole assembly.

He reminds himself, and all of them, of God's character and power, by speaking of what God had done in the past and what He is capable of doing in the future. Reminding ourselves of those facts is a vital part of encouraging ourselves. It is about our will forcing our mouth to speak the truth out loud about God's nature and character and what He can do. Those facts are precisely what the demons want you to forget. Therefore they are what you must keep on reminding yourself of:

***<sup>10</sup> Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from thee, and thou rulest over all. In thy hand are power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> And now we thank thee, our God, and praise thy glorious name."***

***1 Chronicles 29:10-13 (RSV)***

Another technique which David used in encouraging himself was to actually *speak to himself*. By a decision of his will, he would literally *tell himself* to give thanks, or to praise God, or to remember God's past deeds and so on. When David did this he would actually speak to his own soul, i.e. to his mind and emotions, and give them instructions. His will was *deciding* what to think and feel, rather than letting his mind and feelings react to bad news or difficult circumstances for themselves and to form their own conclusions.

David knew that he could not afford to let his mind think whatever it wanted to think. Neither could he let his emotions feel whatever they wanted to feel, based solely on his current circumstances. Even less could he do so based on what the circumstances *appeared* to be. This is what Paul meant when he told us to "*take every thought captive....*" We are to *decide* what to think and then to *command* ourselves to think those thoughts, just as David did. Here are some examples of this, in which David interrogates his own soul. Then his will commands his mind, and his emotions, to hope and to bless the LORD:

***Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help  
<sup>1</sup>Bless the Lord, O my soul;  
and all that is within me, bless his holy name!***

***Psalms 42:5 (RSV)***

***<sup>2</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul,***

*and forget not all his benefits,  
Psalm 103:1-2 (RSV)*

David reminded himself of who God was, what He had done in the past and what He would do in future. By so doing, David forced his own mind to dwell upon the truth, rather than on his current circumstances and, even less, on mere appearances. It also built up his confidence and hope:

*<sup>4</sup> Thou art my King and my God,  
who ordainest victories for Jacob.  
<sup>5</sup> Through thee we push down our foes;  
through thy name we tread down our assailants.  
<sup>6</sup> For not in my bow do I trust,  
nor can my sword save me.  
<sup>7</sup> But thou hast saved us from our foes,  
and hast put to confusion those who hate us.  
<sup>8</sup> In God we have boasted continually,  
and we will give thanks to thy name for ever.  
Psalm 44:4-8 (RSV)*

*God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.  
Psalm 46:1-3 (RSV)*

*With God we shall do valiantly;  
it is he who will tread down our foes.  
Psalm 108:13 (RSV)*

It is not enough merely to think the right things about God and our circumstances. We need to *say* them as well, and to say them *out loud*. The main person who will benefit from this is yourself, because what you say will gradually become what you think. So, don't wait until you think the right things and then say them. Speak them now, even if those are not yet your real thoughts or convictions, and they will gradually become so. Search the Bible and find true things about God, or about what He has done, or His faithfulness. Then force yourself to say them, as David did:

*Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,  
whom he has redeemed from trouble  
Psalm 107:2 (RSV)*

*And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!  
Psalm 107:22 (RSV)*

One example of how David would make statements or proclamations about God's character and provision, is Psalm 23. Once you see it in those terms, you realise how David could speak it out, even in his bleakest moments. He was reminding himself of the truth about God, and of His past dealings with him, so as to encourage himself to trust Him now, in whatever situation he faced. Read it from that perspective, with that objective in mind, and see how powerful it is. Don't just read it out passively, as if it only related to David. Speak out each line assertively, as facts which you believe, claim and rely on for yourself:

<sup>1</sup>*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;*  
<sup>2</sup> *he makes me lie down in green pastures.*  
*He leads me beside still waters;*  
<sup>3</sup> *he restores my soul.*  
*He leads me in paths of righteousness*  
*for his name's sake.*  
<sup>4</sup>*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*  
*I fear no evil;*  
*for thou art with me;*  
*thy rod and thy staff,*  
*they comfort me.*  
<sup>5</sup>*Thou preparest a table before me*  
*in the presence of my enemies;*  
*thou anointest my head with oil,*  
*my cup overflows.*  
<sup>6</sup>*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me*  
*all the days of my life;*  
*and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord*  
*for ever.*

*Psalm 23:1-6 (RSV)*

It wasn't just King David who spoke in this way. Isaiah did the same. Here is something he said to, and about, himself. It makes an excellent proclamation, which every one of us can use regularly. Try speaking it out assertively and defiantly to be heard by God, the angels, the demons, other people and, above all, by yourself:

*“Behold, God is my salvation;*  
*I will trust, and will not be afraid;*  
*for the Lord God is my strength and my song,*  
*and he has become my salvation.”*

*Isaiah 12:2 (RSV)*

**Every wrongdoer or wicked person that I have ever sacked or expelled has turned out, in the end, to be even worse than I thought they were when I made my decision.**

I have made a discovery which has proved to be true of every person I have ever tackled. They always turned out to be even worse than I thought they were when I made the decision to sack, punish, expel or confront them. Imagine that at the point of making that decision I had 50 ‘units’ of evidence against them. I would agonise over whether I could be sure that evidence was all reliable. I would also keep questioning myself as to whether 50 units was enough to ‘convict’ them with, i.e. was it sufficient to justify their dismissal or expulsion?

The point is that if you had 50 units when you decided to tackle them, it will inevitably rise, and may even double or treble, over the next few days or weeks. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, after you have made your decision, *but not before*, other people will come forward. They will then provide you with extra evidence, or fresh allegations, that you did not previously know about. That is partly because they weren't aware, until then, that you needed such information. But, it is mainly because people aren't willing to give it to you until *after you have already made a decision*.

That's partly because they fear the wrongdoer, so they won't speak about him until they can be absolutely certain that he has gone and won't ever be coming back. Their logic is that they don't want to be personally responsible for him getting the sack or being punished. They don't want you to base your decision on anything they may tell you. That's not because they care about him, or want to prevent



an injustice. They just don't want him to find out that *they* gave you the evidence, because they fear that he may not be sacked and could end up staying in his job, or in the church.

Another reason why wrongdoers always turn out to be worse than you thought they were is that after you have made your decision and sacked, expelled or confronted them, they tend to take off their 'mask'. Until your decision has been made, it is in the interests of the wrongdoer to keep a low profile, keep up an act, and stay polite. However, once your decision has been made, and is irreversible, he may conclude that he has nothing to lose from giving you a verbal poke in the eye.

He may then come out into the open and reveal his true nature. You will then get some big surprises as you find out just how much hatred and contempt they have been bottling up while your enquiries were ongoing. In the light of all this, the strong likelihood is that you do already have enough evidence. Therefore be willing to act upon it. In all my years, I have *never* made a mistake in the direction of over-estimating a person's wrongdoing or exaggerating the extent of their wickedness.

I have only ever under-estimated it, even with those whom I already considered to be appalling. It always turned out, in the end, that they were even worse than I had thought, and that they had done even more harm than I had realised. You too are likely to under-estimate the scale of people's wickedness and the harm they have done, unless you are someone who cares nothing for truth or justice. But if you were such an unjust person, my advice would not apply to you.

**If you are a person who fears making decisions, remember that *not making* a decision is itself a decision.**

A decision *not to act*, or even a *failure to make any decision at all*, is more likely to harm people than a misguided or premature decision to act. You are likely to forget this, especially if you are an indecisive person who fears making decisions. Such a person may misguidedly comfort themselves that if they make no decision at all, then they cannot make a wrong decision. But that is a profound error, because not making a decision *is* a decision in itself, albeit a passive one. Moreover, it is far more likely to be wrong than a positive decision to act.

You cannot avoid errors, or injustices, merely by not making decisions. Indecisive people therefore make very bad leaders and cause far more problems than they prevent. For one thing, they are letting down the future victims of the wicked. They are also likely to be wrong right now, for failing to act. The very fact that you feel that scared of making a decision suggests that you are up against someone wicked, and even that mind-control is probably being used against you. If so, it makes it all the more essential to force yourself to make the tough decisions that you are afraid of making.

**If you tackle a long series of wicked people you can also begin to get disillusioned. You may wonder if there is anybody at all who is sincere, and who can be trusted.**

Another feeling I have experienced over many years of tackling wicked people in business and in churches is that you can easily become wary of everybody. It can begin to feel like there are very few, if any, honest and trustworthy people anywhere. In part, one gets to feel that way because it actually has a substantial amount of truth in it. The vast majority of people, even in churches, and even in church leadership, *aren't* fully honest. Neither are they fully faithful or fully trustworthy - not even the better people.

Most people, even in churches, will let you down, lie to you and fail to support you when times are difficult or if there is any risk of them having to pay any price for being honest, faithful or loyal. That is the harsh reality of life in this fallen world and you need to get used to it and not allow yourself to be discouraged by it. Indeed, recognising this fact will take away a lot of the bewilderment that you may

have been feeling at being let down over and over again. Begin to search for that small percentage of people who are sincere, faithful and genuine and spend more time with them.

**We still need to uphold righteousness and resist the wicked, even when they are in the ascendant and seem to be winning every battle.**

At every time in history, whether the Church is strong or weak, and whether we are in the majority or the minority, each Christian can do his bit to stand in the way of the wicked. That has to be done whether we succeed or not, and whether people listen to us or not. Therefore, we have exactly the same duty to speak to our generation as past Christians had to speak to theirs. Take abortion for example. We live in a time of unprecedented evil in world history. No previous generation has ever slaughtered its own children on an industrial scale, as we are now doing.

The United Kingdom alone has killed 8 million and the USA has killed 58 million, and the death toll is rising daily. So, for those few who speak against abortion, even within the churches, these are bleak times, with very little visible evidence of ‘success’. However, God measures success very differently from us. As an individual, we can still be considered successful in God’s eyes, merely because we were faithful in resisting evil and proclaiming the truth, irrespective of whether we ‘win’.

That is still the case, even when the whole world is crumbling and degenerating around us. At such evil times in history, the duty is all the greater to carry on the fight. We can try to preserve at least some of the Christian heritage which used to be the foundation of Great Britain and the United States in particular. If we don’t, then those foundations may be lost completely, in which case, the Christians of our generation would be letting down all future generations:

*if the foundations are destroyed,  
what can the righteous do”?*  
*Psalm 11:3 (RSV)*

Therefore we should carry on the fight to the end, regardless of whether we appear to be winning or losing. The duty to be salt and light applies to every generation, without exception, and you never know what might ultimately come of it. There have been many times in the history of Israel, and of the Church, when its spiritual condition has declined to perilously low levels. But even at such low points, a few faithful people have been able, with God’s help, to turn things around.

A classic example is the Wesley brothers, John and Charles. They began the Methodist movement, which God blessed to an amazing extent. It brought a huge revival to Great Britain in the eighteenth century, reversing a period of severe decline in the condition of the British church. However, even if there is no revival, or no visible improvement of any kind, it is still our duty to be salt and light, to speak the truth to our generation and to resist the wicked.

If nothing else, it will serve the purpose of *warning the people around us*. Then each individual has the chance to repent if they wish to. If we do that, we are no longer answerable for them, and their blood will not be on our hands, even if they choose to ignore the message, as many will. That in itself is a major consideration, because it is always the responsibility of every generation, whether in Israel or the Church, to warn the wicked and to give them a chance to escape God’s judgment:

*<sup>16</sup> And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>17</sup> “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>18</sup> If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>19</sup> But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you will have saved your life. <sup>20</sup> Again, if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay*

*a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and you will have saved your life.”*

*Ezekiel 3:16-21 (RSV)*

*<sup>5</sup> When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedo'nia, Paul was occupied with preaching, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”*

*Acts 18:5-6 (RSV)*

**Sometimes the wicked come out into the open and try to terrify you with direct threats. If so, you must brace yourself and stay absolutely resolute.**

Most of the time, especially if you have a position of power and authority, the wicked will stay in the shadows. They generally operate secretly, behind backs, with craft and manipulation. But if you are not in a senior position, and sometimes even if you are in one, they will come out into the open and bare their teeth at you. They will seek to intimidate you directly, hoping that you will not have the will or the courage to resist them. Controlling people openly, through direct intimidation and domination, is just as acceptable to the wicked as doing so by guile and deceit.

From their perspective, any method will be used, open or covert, direct or indirect, provided it works. They will choose whichever approach best fits the circumstances, the occasion, and your personality. So, if manipulation doesn't work, they might try a head-on confrontation to brow-beat you into submission. Or they will seek to stun you into a state of panic and bewilderment in which you are temporarily unable to think straight or to know how to resist them. You must be ready for all approaches and learn to recognise, and anticipate, such tactics so that you can better withstand them.

It is one thing to work out afterwards what you ought to have done, or to realise later that their threats were a bluff, or a pack of lies. It is another matter to be ready, prepared, and able to keep your head at the very moment of the crisis, while the threats are being made. It is precisely at such moments that you most need to be able to brace yourself and tell yourself the true facts. By doing all those things you can wrench yourself out from under their control, like a rabbit forcing itself to look away from the car's headlights. Such fear tactics, whereby the wicked person seeks to control you by intimidation, are an important part of what witchcraft is about.

The 'controller' seeks to gain power over you by an assault on your mind and emotions. Those are within your soul, rather than your spirit. That is why I refer to such forms of witchcraft as 'soulish'. The person is not primarily using demonic power. They are using the strength of their own will, mind and emotions, aided by deception to control your mind, will and emotions. Such witchcraft is soulish because it is operating at the level of the soul. One human being is exerting illegitimate influence over another, rather than demons doing so on the controller's behalf, as with full-blown occultic witchcraft.

### **How Sennacherib of Assyria tried to terrify the people of Judah into surrendering to him**

An example of such soulish power being used to gain control through fear and intimidation is the attempt by Sennacherib of Assyria to terrify the people of Judah into submission and surrender by blood-curdling threats and claims. He had invaded Judah and his armies were encamped around the fortified cities. He wanted the people to be so paralysed with fear that they would be unable to defend themselves effectively, and would even surrender to the invaders.

King Hezekiah of Judah saw through their tactics and he encouraged the people of Judah to be strong and of good courage. He also urged them to remind themselves that the LORD, the God of Israel, was with them and that His power was far greater than that of the Assyrians. Take note of what he said, as this is good advice. You will need to give it to yourself when you face such tactics from others who seem to be powerful, and may well actually be powerful, but not as powerful as our God:

***<sup>6</sup> And he set combat commanders over the people, and gathered them together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, <sup>7</sup> “Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him; for there is one greater with us than with him. <sup>8</sup> With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people took confidence from the words of Hezeki'ah king of Judah.***

***2 Chronicles 32:6-8 (RSV)***

The assault on the people's minds and emotions didn't stop there. The wicked will not stop, or go away, merely because you begin to wake up and remind yourself who God is and how much power He has. They will press on to see whether you can *maintain* that positive confession over a sustained period, while the mental, emotional and verbal assault continues. Sennacherib carried on and made a series of boasts and threats aiming to wear down the people's resistance. Note the things he says. Similar things may be said to you, and you need to see them for what they really are:

***<sup>9</sup> After this Sennach'erib king of Assyria, who was besieging Lachish with all his forces, sent his servants to Jerusalem to Hezeki'ah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah that were in Jerusalem, saying, <sup>10</sup> “Thus says Sennach'erib king of Assyria, ‘On what are you relying, that you stand siege in Jerusalem? <sup>11</sup> Is not Hezeki'ah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst, when he tells you, “The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria”? <sup>12</sup> Has not this same Hezeki'ah taken away his high places and his altars and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, “Before one altar you shall worship, and upon it you shall burn your sacrifices”? <sup>13</sup> Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand? <sup>14</sup> Who among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed was able to deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? <sup>15</sup> Now therefore do not let Hezeki'ah deceive you or mislead you in this fashion, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!’”***

***2 Chronicles 32:9-15 (RSV)***

This went on for some time, which is by no means unusual. If a sudden shock or blood-curdling threat doesn't immediately work, the wicked will carry on. They know, from long experience, that most people will give in and lose heart if such a campaign of intimidation continues. Even Sennacherib's servants joined in, just as the friends and allies of the wicked people in your life will join in. They added their voices to his campaign, seeking to terrify the people of Judah:

***<sup>16</sup> And his servants said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezeki'ah. <sup>17</sup> And he wrote letters to cast contempt on the Lord the God of Israel and to speak against him, saying, “Like the gods of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hands, so the God of Hezeki'ah will not deliver his people from my hand.” <sup>18</sup> And they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were upon the wall, to frighten and terrify them, in order that they might take the city. <sup>19</sup> And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands.***

***2 Chronicles 32:16-19 (RSV)***

King Hezekiah, emboldened by the advice and encouragement of the prophet Isaiah, held firm and refused to submit. He also prayed and even cried out to God to save Judah from the Assyrians, which He did, by sending an angel who killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers as they slept in their beds:

<sup>20</sup> *Then Hezeki'ah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven. <sup>21</sup> And the Lord sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword. <sup>22</sup> So the Lord saved Hezeki'ah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennach'erib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies; and he gave them rest on every side. <sup>23</sup> And many brought gifts to the Lord to Jerusalem and precious things to Hezeki'ah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onward.*

*2 Chronicles 32:20-23 (RSV)*

The parallel account in 2 Kings gives more detail so I will include part of it here, for completeness:

<sup>35</sup> *And that night the angel of the Lord went forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. <sup>36</sup> Then Sennach'erib king of Assyria departed, and went home, and dwelt at Nin'veh.*

*2 Kings 19:35-36 (RSV)*

You must expect, and be ready for, all sorts of scare-tactics, especially if the wicked can see that you are starting to wake up and to discern where you are being deceived or manipulated. If they see that guile is not working as well as it did before, they will try intimidation instead. If their own personality is such that domination and intimidation are their preferred methods, they may even begin with threats and bullying. Either way, be ready for them and have your approach already worked out, so that you don't need to decide, in the heat of the moment, whether to fight on or give in.

Resolve now, before any such threats are made, and before you even meet the wicked person, that you will never, ever, ever give in to intimidation or be influenced by fear in any of your decisions. It is remarkable what a difference it makes to do that beforehand. It means that when the threat is actually made, there is no need to think or to decide whether to give in to it. That decision has already been made, months, or even years, beforehand. Then, when the threat is made, there is no panic, numbness or bewilderment.

Indeed, the very threats they make can actually aid your discernment, by confirming that they really are as wicked as you have been beginning to suspect they were. I have had occasions where I was unsure whether a person was malicious, or just incompetent or misguided. Then they have tried to intimidate me at some stage in my investigation. When they did, it was as if the last remaining scales fell off my eyes and I saw them clearly, for what they really were. Thus the wicked person's tactics, even their witchcraft, can be a form of unintended guidance, of which you can make use.

It can therefore help you to discern the real nature of the people you are dealing with. However, the key point, at least while the fear tactics are being used, is to keep your nerve. You must stay strong, maintain your resolve, and encourage yourself. Remind yourself of God's mighty power. Then speak the truth to yourself to counteract the lies you are being told. I say that because, most of the time, a threat is a *lie*. The person making it almost always has less power than they claim to have. Moreover, you have more power than they want you to believe you have.

That is why it is vital to speak the truth to yourself and to proclaim, out loud, the true facts about God and His power, provision, protection and faithfulness. Even if you are defeated, and even if God chooses not to intervene or rescue you, He still does not want you to give in to fear, or to be influenced by threats. That is especially so if it would involve acting wrongly or letting God or other people down. It is better to be defeated, or even to die, but to have remained faithful to the end, than to buy a temporary peace by doing wrong, or by giving in to a wrongdoer.

## What if the wicked person is a family member?

This book mainly focuses on dealing with the wicked within churches and the workplace. But the wicked are also to be found in our own families. That must be so, because they all have relatives. That can further complicate our dealings with them. We may find that the wickedness we are trying to defeat is coming from a parent, grandparent or sibling, or even from our own child. When we are in that situation we will need even greater wisdom, sensitivity and discernment. But we will also need toughness at times.

That last point is hard to achieve. It is difficult to be tough, and even ruthless, when dealing with our own relatives. The natural instinct is to go easy on them, and to give them the benefit of the doubt, when we ought to take firm action to stop them in their tracks and to expose what they are doing. For example, a sad story was told to me by a former client, 'Mary', about what happened to her in the 1950s. She was a young woman then and had been very kind and helpful to an old man who lived nearby. She visited him, helped him with cooking and housework, and kept him company.

Years later, when he died, the old man left Mary his house in his will. He had never told her anything about this. Unfortunately, Mary's mother, 'Edwina', did hear about it, but told Mary nothing. Instead, Edwina went to the solicitor (lawyer) and told him that *she was Mary*. The house was then conveyed to her and she was given the title deeds. It was in the days before land had to be registered in that area. That made it easier to carry out this fraud. Then Edwina told everybody that *she* had been left the house by the old man and nobody had any reason to doubt her.

She even had the nerve to let Mary and her young husband move into the house, as tenants, and she charged them rent for three years! This could have gone on forever, if not for the fact that Mary's husband wanted to buy the house from Edwina and went to enquire about it. It then emerged that Edwina was not the owner at all, and that the house had been Mary's all along. Mary and her husband then quietly arranged to put the matter right and the title deeds were handed over to her, by her solicitor. So, her mother's wickedness was discovered, and her inheritance was restored to her.

However, Mary did not handle it wisely from then on. She felt sorry for her mother and did not want her publicly exposed as a liar and a thief, even to the family. It was made harder by the fact that her mother then had the cheek to tell the whole family that she had now given the house to Mary "*as a gift*". It shows how brass-faced the wicked can be, and how they feel no shame. That lie about it being a gift was also a calculated act. Once that had been said, Mary did not feel able to contradict what her mother had told everybody, as that too would bring disgrace on her.

The mother calculated correctly that Mary would feel that way, and that she would say nothing. However, the story did not end even there. Mary had several siblings and some were resentful that Edwina had 'given' Mary this house, when they had been given nothing. One sister had an angry showdown with Mary and said "*We've all had to work hard to buy our houses and you've just been given that house by Mum for nothing*". Mary still said nothing and, having stayed silent at the time, it became even more difficult, as the years passed, for Mary to reveal what really happened.

So, Mary said nothing and just learned to live with the resentment, especially from that one sister. She was never fully reconciled with her, even decades later. Mary's misguided sense of decency, or rather her naivety, in not revealing her mother's fraud, damaged her relationships with her family for a lifetime. The point of this story is not Mary's failure to realise she had been defrauded. There was little she could have done about that. Her mother had lied to her from the outset and hid all the letters. Therefore she knew nothing about it for over three years.

Mary's error was in her handling of it *after* she had discovered the fraud. Admittedly, it was her own mother, and revealing the truth would be painful. However, the path Mary chose was far more painful. Moreover, it damaged more relationships than would ever have occurred if she had immediately told

the family what their mother had really done. Mary did what she thought was right, but she did not think through the wider implications, or imagine what the longer-term consequences would be.

It was not only Mary who suffered as a result of her siblings' resentment, and the estrangement it caused. They were damaged too. Even more tragically, when Mary became a Christian, in middle age, some of her siblings did not want to hear the Gospel from her. They were still hard-hearted towards her, *and to the Gospel*, as a result of the mother's lie, 30 years earlier, which they still believed. Thus the estrangement caused by Mary's silence may even have led some of them to a lost eternity, all for the sake of avoiding embarrassment for her mother.

Mary paid far too high a price for being kind and considerate. Accordingly, when you face wickedness within your own family, it may be that some really tough decisions, and firm actions, need to be taken. You have to think of your own interests, and those of other family members, *not just the wrongdoer's*. It is also far easier to be deceived by a family member than by a non-relative, because your guard is likely to be down. You may even know about their wickedness but still feel unable, or unwilling, to tackle it with the same zeal that you would show if it was a non-relative.

### **How a godly daughter, Jehoshabeath, dealt with her wicked mother, Athaliah**

Let's now look at an example from the Bible of how a person had to confront extreme wickedness within their own family. In this case it was another daughter tackling her own mother, with the help of her husband. But she took a very different approach. I refer to a lady called Jehoshabeath. She was the daughter of the wicked King Jehoram and was the sister of King Ahaziah of Judah. Her mother was the wicked queen, Athaliah:

*<sup>2</sup> Ahazi'ah was forty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athali'ah, the granddaughter of Omri. <sup>3</sup> He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly. <sup>4</sup> He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done; for after the death of his father they were his counselors, to his undoing.*

*2 Chronicles 22:2-4 (RSV)*

King Ahaziah only reigned for one year. When he died his mother, Athaliah, seized the throne unlawfully, declared herself to be the Queen and began to rule in her own right. She was exceptionally evil and was herself the grand-daughter of the appallingly wicked King Omri, in whose reign idolatry flourished. Athaliah also took immediate steps to secure her hold on power and gave orders for all the other members of the family with any claim to the throne to be killed:

*Now when Athali'ah the mother of Ahazi'ah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal family of the house of Judah.*

*2 Chronicles 22:10 (RSV)*

She almost succeeded in destroying the whole royal line of King David, and thus the line of descent to Jesus, but she was resisted by her own daughter, Jehoshabeath. She took her infant nephew, Joash, who was only a baby, and hid him away, so that Athaliah could not murder him:

*<sup>11</sup> But Jeho-shab'e-ath, the daughter of the king, took Jo'ash the son of Ahazi'ah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were about to be slain, and she put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. Thus Jeho-shab'e-ath, the daughter of King Jeho'ram and wife of Jehoi'ada the priest, because she was a sister of Ahazi'ah, hid him from Athali'ah, so that she did not slay him; <sup>12</sup> and he remained with them six years, hid in the house of God, while Athali'ah reigned over the land.*

*2 Chronicles 22:11-12 (RSV)*

Jehoshabeath was a godly lady and was the wife of Jehoiada, the godly priest, who later became a faithful adviser and mentor to the young King Joash. Yet, she had the wicked King Jehoram for a father and the even more evil Athaliah for a mother. She was also the great-granddaughter of the wicked King Omri. Yet, to show how complicated families can be, she was also the grand-daughter of the exceptionally godly King Jehoshaphat.

All of that, and more, was in her varied heritage. There was extreme wickedness and exceptional godliness in the same family tree. Jehoshabeath was put into a situation where she had to resist the plans and actions of her own mother. After seven years the level of her resistance was raised even higher. She and her husband took steps to put the boy Joash on the throne and to depose Athaliah:

*<sup>1</sup>But in the seventh year Jehoi'ada took courage, and entered into a compact with the commanders of hundreds, Azari'ah the son of Jero'ham, Ish'mael the son of Jehoha'nan, Azari'ah the son of Obed, Ma-asei'ah the son of Adai'ah, and Elisha'phat the son of Zichri. <sup>2</sup>And they went about through Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>And all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoi'ada[ said to them, "Behold, the king's son! Let him reign, as the Lord spoke concerning the sons of David.*

*2 Chronicles 23:1-3 (RSV)*

They restored Joash to the throne, but they could not just leave it at that, because the wicked 'Queen' Athaliah would inevitably continue to be a menace. So Jehoiada formed a plan, together with senior officials, priests and army officers, to capture her. But first, he had to organise the young King's supporters so that he could be defended:

*<sup>7</sup>The Levites shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the house shall be slain. Be with the king when he comes in, and when he goes out." <sup>8</sup>The Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoi'ada the priest commanded. They each brought his men, who were to go off duty on the sabbath, with those who were to come on duty on the sabbath; for Jehoi'ada the priest did not dismiss the divisions. <sup>9</sup>And Jehoi'ada the priest delivered to the captains the spears and the large and small shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of God; <sup>10</sup>and he set all the people as a guard for the king, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house. <sup>11</sup>Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they proclaimed him king, and Jehoi'ada and his sons anointed him, and they said, "Long live the king."*

*2 Chronicles 23:7-11 (RSV)*

On discovering that there had been a coup, and that she had been deposed, Athaliah was furious. She even had the nerve to call it 'treason', despite being a usurper herself. Indeed, she had murdered almost all the royal family to try to prevent the rightful heir coming to the throne:

*<sup>12</sup>When Athali'ah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she went into the house of the Lord to the people; <sup>13</sup>and when she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration. And Athali'ah rent her clothes, and cried, "Treason! Treason!"*

*2 Chronicles 23:12-13 (RSV)*

Jehoiada knew that the only practical solution to the ongoing threat posed by Athaliah was to have her executed. So, he arranged for that to be done, even though she was his wife's mother:

*<sup>14</sup>Then Jehoi'ada the priest brought out the captains who were set over the army, saying to them, "Bring her out between the ranks; anyone who follows her is to be slain with the sword." For the priest said, "Do not slay her in the house of the Lord." <sup>15</sup>So they laid hands on her; and she went into the entrance of the horse gate of the king's house, and they slew her there.*



*2 Chronicles 23:14-15 (RSV)*

This may seem harsh to our modern eyes, but executing Athaliah was the only realistic way to restore peace and godly government to Judah and to protect the young King Joash. Athaliah had already tried to kill him, and she would have tried again if she had been left alive. The people of Judah had no doubt that Jehoiada did the right thing:

*So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, after Athali'ah had been slain with the sword.*

*2 Chronicles 23:21(RSV)*

Few of us will ever be called upon to execute our mother in law! But, in smaller ways, we may come across wickedness in a family member. We therefore need to work out how to handle them. As a general point, we need to take broadly the same approach with them as with wicked employees or church members. They can be just as dangerous, if not more so. It is just as necessary to identify who they are, what they are doing, and why. The main difference is that we can't generally remove, expel or sack our relatives.

We are stuck with them and usually have to find ways to live alongside them, yet without being controlled, undermined, cursed or otherwise damaged by them. Therefore, vigilance and discernment are still needed, no matter who they are. That said, there are some very sad cases where a relative's actions or influence are so malevolent that there is no realistic alternative but to avoid them completely. It can even be necessary to forbid them entry to your home, or even to refuse to tell them where you live. Such drastic steps are not necessarily wrong, in some families.

**God wanted the Kings of Israel and Judah to stamp out all idolatry, but also the witchcraft and occultic practices that go with it.**

In case you imagine that I am over-stating the significance of curses and witchcraft, or being unduly alarmist about them, ask yourself why God took it all so seriously. He was continually seeking to get the Kings of Judah to stamp out not only idolatry, but also witchcraft and all other occultic practices. That was partly because He knew how much harm they did. If you read the historical books in the Bible, which recount the deeds of the Kings of both Judah and Israel, you will see that God focuses very much on these issues.

He praises those who resist witchcraft and the occult and strongly condemns those who allowed it, or engaged in any of it. Indeed, it is curious how little God has to say in His assessments of the various Kings, of any of their other activities or achievements, in financial, military or agricultural affairs. They barely feature. Instead God focuses on their faithfulness to Him and especially the degree to which they opposed idolatry, witchcraft and the occult and prevented the people from engaging in it.

**God's opposition to witchcraft is not solely because it is sinful. He also forbids it because it has real power and is effective in harming people.**

One reason why God opposed the occult, in every form, is that it is sinful and very harmful. There are many other sinful activities which God focused on far less, such as corruption, theft, lies and sexual immorality. That was partly because the occult is so very damaging to those against whom it is used, but also to those who engage in it. It probably has more power to ruin people's lives, and to take them to Hell, and then the Lake of Fire, than any other sin. That is why all occult activity is regarded as wicked. It is not only direct rebellion against God, but also does great harm to His people.

**King Josiah was highly praised by God for the measures he took to rid Judah of idolatry and witchcraft.**

King Josiah did more than any other king to rid Judah of idolatry and witchcraft. He was the greatest King of all, after King David. What made him unique was not his stewardship of the economy, or his conduct of military affairs. It was his single-minded determination to wipe out all idolatry and witchcraft and to oppose everything that it stands for. In that regard, he was utterly whole-hearted and uncompromising, and so should we be. This passage describes his attitude and actions:

*<sup>4</sup> And the king commanded Hilki'ah, the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels made for Ba'al, for Ashe'rah, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. <sup>5</sup> And he deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places at the cities of Judah and round about Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Ba'al, to the sun, and the moon, and the constellations, and all the host of the heavens. <sup>6</sup> And he brought out the Ashe'rah from the house of the LORD, outside Jerusalem, to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and beat it to dust and cast the dust of it upon the graves of the common people. <sup>7</sup> And he broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Ashe'rah. <sup>8</sup> And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on one's left at the gate of the city.*

*<sup>9</sup> However, the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren. <sup>10</sup> And he defiled To'pheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech. <sup>11</sup> And he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. <sup>12</sup> And the altars on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manas'seh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, he pulled down and broke in pieces, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. <sup>13</sup> And the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ash'toreth the abomination of the Sido'nians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. <sup>14</sup> And he broke in pieces the pillars, and cut down the Ashe'rim, and filled their places with the bones of men.*

*2 Kings 23:4-14 (RSV)*

Josiah stopped at nothing to remove every trace of the occult and to prevent witchcraft from being practised, even to the extent of destroying the 'high places' which were used for those purposes. Other kings had not gone that far, perhaps due to lack of zeal, or fear of people's reactions. But Josiah had no such reservations. Moreover, he also got rid of all the mediums, wizards and witches:

*<sup>24</sup> Moreover Josi'ah put away the mediums and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilki'ah the priest found in the house of the LORD.*

*2 Kings 23:24 (RSV)*

**You need to resist witchcraft with steely determination and even ruthlessness.**

You need to imitate King Josiah in your own family, church or business. Note how strongly God praised his priorities and policies. Why would God tell us how much He approved of Josiah, and how much He disapproved of other kings, if He did not want us to imitate Josiah in opposing the occult? Yet,

somehow this is overlooked by the vast majority of Christians. Most assume that witchcraft, curses and the occult in general have no effect on their lives and can be safely ignored. Far from ignoring witchcraft, we need to oppose it ruthlessly, whenever it rears its head.

We must not tolerate it. Wherever it is seen it needs to be faced down and defeated. Those who engage in it need to be removed, without any hesitation. You can afford to be merciful with many other forms of wrongdoing, but never with witchcraft, even when it is ‘only’ at a soulish level. Manipulation, domination, control, and especially mind-control, are deeply damaging. Our opposition is all the more vital against those who engage in full-blown witchcraft and who add demonic power to their own soulish techniques. They are all the more dangerous and must be opposed and removed without delay.

### **How Elijah dealt decisively with the prophets of Baal and Asherah and wiped them out**

A classic example of the determination and ruthlessness that we need when confronting witchcraft is how Elijah dealt with the prophets of Baal and Asherah. He confronted them head-on and made sure every one of them was put to death. We can’t use force in our dealings with witchcraft and witches. But we can, and must, show the same zeal to resist them and to undo all that they have achieved. Let’s look at some of what Elijah did, beginning with his confrontation with King Ahab. Elijah told him there would be no rain in Israel until and unless he permitted it:

*Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”*

*1 Kings 17:1 (ESV)*

A long drought followed, to show Ahab the power which Elijah had as a genuine prophet of God. Then, after three years, he went to see King Ahab again:

*After many days the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.”<sup>2</sup> So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.*

*1 Kings 18:1-2 (ESV)*

Elijah confronted Ahab and told him to gather all of his 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. Elijah didn’t say so, but he intended to defeat them publicly and then to kill them all:

*<sup>17</sup> When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?”<sup>18</sup> And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals.<sup>19</sup> Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”*

*1 Kings 18:17-19 (ESV)*

When all of these occult-practitioners arrived at Carmel, Elijah challenged them to a contest to see whether the true God, or their false gods, had the most power:

*<sup>20</sup> So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel.<sup>21</sup> And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.<sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.<sup>23</sup> Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it.<sup>24</sup> And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.”*

*1 Kings 18:20-24 (ESV)*

Elijah let the prophets of Baal and Asherah go first. Then, when their demon gods failed to answer, probably because God would not let them do so, Elijah mocked them in front of all the crowds:

*<sup>25</sup> Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it.” <sup>26</sup> And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. <sup>27</sup> And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” <sup>28</sup> And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. <sup>29</sup> And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.*

*1 Kings 18:25-29 (ESV)*

Then it was Elijah’s turn. He was so confident in God that he made it ‘harder’ for himself by telling the people to pour a huge amount of water all over the sacrifice:

*<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been thrown down. <sup>31</sup> Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying, “Israel shall be your name,” <sup>32</sup> and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” <sup>34</sup> And he said, “Do it a second time.” And they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it a third time.” And they did it a third time. <sup>35</sup> And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.*

*1 Kings 18:30-35 (ESV)*

Then, with everybody watching, Elijah called on the God of Israel to show His power and send fire to consume the offering. When God answered powerfully and burned up the sacrifice and the whole altar too, Elijah ordered the people to seize all 850 of the witchcraft-practitioners and kill them:

*<sup>36</sup> And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. <sup>37</sup> Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” <sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. <sup>39</sup> And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.” <sup>40</sup> And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.*

*1 Kings 18:36-40 (ESV)*

If that wasn’t impressive enough, Elijah then brought the three year drought to an end. He even told King Ahab to go home quickly, so his chariot wheels would not get bogged down in the mud:

*<sup>41</sup> And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.” <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. <sup>43</sup> And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. <sup>44</sup> And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’” <sup>45</sup> And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there*

*was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.*

*1 Kings 18:41-46 (ESV)*

### **The steely determination shown by King Jehu in dealing with the witchcraft of Jezebel and Ahab**

Here is another inspiring example of the zeal that needs to be shown in tackling witchcraft and the occult. It is the account of how King Jehu of Israel destroyed the whole family line of the wicked King Ahab and his despicable witch of a wife, Queen Jezebel. She took Israel to new depths of wickedness and was an utterly evil influence over her husband and the whole nation. For that reason God issued a decree, through a young prophet who was sent by the prophet Elisha.

He announced that the entire family line of Ahab and Jezebel had to be wiped out, because of the potential for future wickedness if any of them survived and came to the throne. The story begins here with Elisha giving a message to be taken to Jehu, a commander in the army. It said that he must become King and that he must also entirely wipe out every trace of Ahab and Jezebel's family line:

*<sup>1</sup> Then Eli'sha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, "Gird up your loins, and take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead. <sup>2</sup> And when you arrive, look there for Jehu the son of Jehosh'aphat, son of Nimshi; and go in and bid him rise from among his fellows, and lead him to an inner chamber. <sup>3</sup> Then take the flask of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the Lord, I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee; do not tarry."*

*<sup>4</sup> So the young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. <sup>5</sup> And when he came, behold, the commanders of the army were in council; and he said, "I have an errand to you, O commander." And Jehu said, "To which of us all?" And he said, "To you, O commander."*

*<sup>6</sup> So he arose, and went into the house; and the young man poured the oil on his head, saying to him, "Thus says the Lord the God of Israel, I anoint you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. <sup>7</sup> And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge on Jez'ebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord. <sup>8</sup> For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. <sup>9</sup> And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, and like the house of Ba'asha the son of Ahi'jah. <sup>10</sup> And the dogs shall eat Jez'ebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her." Then he opened the door, and fled.*

*2 Kings 9:1-10 (RSV)*

Jehu took this prophecy, and also the instruction, entirely seriously. He then set about carrying it all out with exceptional severity and thoroughness, which was absolutely necessary. He began by executing Ahab's son, Joram, the King of Israel, without any hesitation:

*<sup>21</sup> Joram said, "Make ready." And they made ready his chariot. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahazi'ah king of Judah set out, each in his chariot, and went to meet Jehu, and met him at the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. <sup>22</sup> And when Joram saw Jehu, he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" He answered, "What peace can there be, so long as the harlotries and the sorceries of your mother Jez'ebel are so many?" <sup>23</sup> Then Joram reined about and fled, saying to Ahazi'ah, "Treachery, O Ahazi'ah!" <sup>24</sup> And Jehu drew his bow with his full strength, and shot Joram between the shoulders, so that the arrow pierced his heart, and he sank in his chariot.*

*<sup>25</sup> Jehu said to Bidkar his aide, "Take him up, and cast him on the plot of ground belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I rode side by side behind Ahab his father, how the Lord uttered this oracle against him: <sup>26</sup> 'As surely as I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons—says the Lord—I will requite you on this plot of ground.' Now therefore take him up and cast him on the plot of ground, in accordance with the word of the Lord."*

*2 Kings 9:21-26 (RSV)*

Next, Jehu turned his attention to Ahab's widow, Jezebel, who was still exerting her wicked influence. He gave orders for her to be thrown from a tall building. Then, in accordance with God's pronouncement about her, the dogs ate Jezebel's body before she could be buried. Even in that grisly detail, God was showing how seriously He took her wickedness and, in particular, her witchcraft:

*<sup>30</sup> When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jez'ebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and adorned her head, and looked out of the window. <sup>31</sup> And as Jehu entered the gate, she said, "Is it peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?" <sup>32</sup> And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked out at him. <sup>33</sup> He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down; and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled on her. <sup>34</sup> Then he went in and ate and drank; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king's daughter." <sup>35</sup> But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. <sup>36</sup> When they came back and told him, he said, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Eli'jah the Tishbite, 'In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jez'ebel; <sup>37</sup> and the corpse of Jez'ebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jez'ebel.'"*

*2 Kings 9:30-37 (RSV)*

Jehu then proceeded to wipe out all 70 of Ahab's sons, so that none of them could ever ascend to the throne and resume the wickedness that Ahab and Jezebel had begun. Note in this next lengthy passage how remorselessly Jehu keeps on and on pursuing them, until they are all gone. He speaks of this to Jehonadab and describes it as his "zeal for the Lord". That is exactly what it was, because he was carrying out God's instructions to the letter:

*<sup>1</sup> Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samar'ia. So Jehu wrote letters, and sent them to Samar'ia, to the rulers of the city, to the elders, and to the guardians of the sons of Ahab, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Now then, as soon as this letter comes to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, fortified cities also, and weapons, <sup>3</sup> select the best and fittest of your master's sons and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house." <sup>4</sup> But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Behold, the two kings could not stand before him; how then can we stand?" <sup>5</sup> So he who was over the palace, and he who was over the city, together with the elders and the guardians, sent to Jehu, saying, "We are your servants, and we will do all that you bid us. We will not make any one king; do whatever is good in your eyes."*

*<sup>6</sup> Then he wrote to them a second letter, saying, "If you are on my side, and if you are ready to obey me, take the heads of your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel tomorrow at this time." Now the king's sons, seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who were bringing them up. <sup>7</sup> And when the letter came to them, they took the king's sons, and slew them, seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to him at Jezreel. <sup>8</sup> When the messenger came and told him, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons," he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until the morning." <sup>9</sup> Then in the morning, when he went out, he stood, and said to all the people, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master, and slew him; but who struck down all these? <sup>10</sup> Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the Lord has done what he said by his servant Eli'jah."*

*<sup>11</sup> So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men, and his familiar friends, and his priests, until he left him none remaining. <sup>12</sup> Then he set out and went to Samar'ia. On the way, when he was at Beth-eked of the Shepherds, <sup>13</sup> Jehu met the kinsmen of Ahazi'ah king of Judah, and he said, "Who are you?" And they answered, "We are the kinsmen of Ahazi'ah, and we came down to visit the royal princes and the sons of the queen mother." <sup>14</sup> He said, "Take them alive." And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of Beth-eked, forty-two persons, and he spared none of them.*

*<sup>15</sup> And when he departed from there, he met Jehon'adab the son of Rechab coming to meet him; and he greeted him, and said to him, "Is your heart true to my heart as mine is to yours?" And Jehon'adab answered, "It is." Jehu said, "If it is, give me your hand." So he gave him his hand. And Jehu took*

*him up with him into the chariot. <sup>16</sup> And he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." So he had him ride in his chariot. <sup>17</sup> And when he came to Samar'ia, he slew all that remained to Ahab in Samar'ia, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke to Eli'jah.*  
*2 Kings 10:1-17 (RSV)*

Even after he had wiped out all of Ahab's family line, Jehu still did not stop. His aim was to wipe out every last one of the remaining worshippers of Baal. He did so by a shrewd trick in which he invited them all to come and take part in a 'solemn assembly' to worship Baal. He told them he was a fellow Baal-worshipper and ensured that they all attended, and that no servants of the LORD were accidentally allowed to remain amongst them. When they were all in one place, he gave orders for every single one to be slaughtered and for their place of worship be turned into a latrine:

*<sup>18</sup> Then Jehu assembled all the people, and said to them, "Ahab served Ba'al a little; but Jehu will serve him much. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Ba'al, all his worshipers and all his priests; let none be missing, for I have a great sacrifice to offer to Ba'al; whoever is missing shall not live." But Jehu did it with cunning in order to destroy the worshipers of Ba'al. <sup>20</sup> And Jehu ordered, "Sanctify a solemn assembly for Ba'al." So they proclaimed it. <sup>21</sup> And Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Ba'al came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. And they entered the house of Ba'al, and the house of Ba'al was filled from one end to the other. <sup>22</sup> He said to him who was in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out the vestments for all the worshipers of Ba'al." So he brought out the vestments for them. <sup>23</sup> Then Jehu went into the house of Ba'al with Jehon'adab the son of Rechab; and he said to the worshipers of Ba'al, "Search, and see that there is no servant of the Lord here among you, but only the worshipers of Ba'al." <sup>24</sup> Then he went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.*

*Now Jehu had stationed eighty men outside, and said, "The man who allows any of those whom I give into your hands to escape shall forfeit his life." <sup>25</sup> So as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, Jehu said to the guard and to the officers, "Go in and slay them; let not a man escape." So when they put them to the sword, the guard and the officers cast them out and went into the inner room of the house of Ba'al <sup>26</sup> and they brought out the pillar that was in the house of Ba'al, and burned it. <sup>27</sup> And they demolished the pillar of Ba'al, and demolished the house of Ba'al, and made it a latrine to this day.*

*<sup>28</sup> Thus Jehu wiped out Ba'al from Israel. <sup>29</sup> But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and in Dan. <sup>30</sup> And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel."*

*2 Kings 10:18-30 (RSV)*

Subject to the points made in chapter 25, we cannot ordinarily use violence in opposing the wicked. Neither would we wish to. However, we do need to match Jehu and Elijah in their general zeal and in how seriously they took witchcraft. It cannot safely be under-estimated or ignored. Wherever you come across it, as you certainly will, you must oppose it in every legitimate way, until all trace of its influence is removed from your church or business.

**Nevertheless, a lot of unbiblical nonsense is being taught about the so called 'Jezebel spirit' and that wrong teaching is then putting people off the true teaching.**

Having said all of that about witchcraft and Queen Jezebel herself, I must briefly address a widespread error about the so called 'Jezebel spirit'. It is fashionable to speak of this, especially in charismatic or Pentecostal churches, but much of what is being taught and practised is unbiblical. The main error is to speak as if there is some high-ranking demon who causes people all over the world to behave like Queen Jezebel. Many people do behave as she did, but there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that any *particular demon* is causing or coordinating all of that.

People often say that a person or group is “*acting in the Jezebel spirit*”, or has “*come under the power of the Jezebel spirit*”. But they are going beyond what the Bible says and have created a man-made concept. To speak as if a single demon, however senior, is behind all such behaviour is unbiblical. The Bible never says that, not even indirectly. My belief is that every person or group that engages in witchcraft, whether at a soulish level, or with black magic and the use of demonic power, is being influenced and empowered by the *ordinary* demons which inhabit or accompany them.

Every demon is capable of tempting you into whatever sinful activity is most likely to appeal to you and to bring about your destruction, and/or that of the people around you. In other words, each demon can multi-task and operate in all sorts of ways, like a Swiss army knife. They will seek to get one man to gamble and another to drink. They will lead a third into witchcraft, a fourth into sexual immorality and a fifth into religious legalism and self-righteousness. The demons are all capable of doing whatever is most likely to undermine you.

There is nothing at all in the Bible to suggest that there are ‘specialist’ demons which focus on witchcraft and others which cause alcoholism or family breakdown. They are clearly organised in a rank-structure, and they do have varying levels of power and authority, including responsibility for geographical regions and/or political or religious institutions. However, there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that any ‘specialist’ demon exists called ‘*the Jezebel spirit*’ who causes people all over the world to behave as that wicked woman did. So, I recommend that that phrase is not used.