

title: Occult

Text: I Timothy 4:1-2; Deuteronomy 18:9-12

The future has always had a strange fascination for people. It has taken many forms through the ages - fortunetellers, witches, soothsayer, palm and tea leaf readers, ^{and} sorcerers. Today, just as the Bible prophesied, we are having an epidemic of "deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

Originally astrology and horoscope reading was done by Babylonian priests for the kings. Then the Greek and Romans adopted the practice, and during the superstitious Middle Ages it swept through Europe. Luther called it a "shabby art," but many universities of his day had professional chairs of astrology. It faded during the rise of rationalism but since the turn of this ^{20th} century there has been a consistent increase in its following.

The Spiritualist Church in American was founded in 1906. Since that time astrology has grown into a household word. Leading magazines, newspapers all dignify this fraud by showing beautiful color pictures of the signs of the zodiac and informing readers and listeners of the assumed implications of the names.

Horoscope reading is so widespread in this country today that most daily newspapers have a horoscope column. Thousands of people would and will not start their day without first consulting their horoscope to find out whether it is going to be a good or bad day. The pure joke of this whole thing was exposed recently by a certain local newspaper. This newspaper, due to the absence of fresh material, decided to run back issues of the column. They did this, and although they had over 100,000 readers, they did not receive one complaint until the 22 daily fraud was printed. THE GULLIBLE ARE WILLINGLY DECEIVED AND THE CULT IS GROWING.

A quiet "Blessed Be." passes between two people as they slip out of their neighbor's home late at night. They are brothers in witchcraft wishing each other well until their next sabbat.

"Hail, Satan, Our Lord and Master," is chanted by hundreds in a dark room; ~~And~~ another petition has been offered by people who have given themselves as a "living sacrifice" to Satan.

"Now, wait a minute, preacher," you might be thinking. "You can't tell me that civilized, educated people of this century still practice witchcraft or really put faith in those metaphysical thought patterns or worship Satan. That sort of thing went out with the witch-hunts nearly three hundred years ago."

But when you start reading your newspaper or talk to ~~the~~ a teenager or look in the window of a bookstore you begin to realize that people do believe in the occult. And you conclude that the religion of the occult is spreading everywhere.

The News media gave quite a widespread coverage of a Satanic wedding ceremony in San Francisco in February of 1967. It seems an unemployed journalist married a former New York society figure with a nude woman as an altar. The man who calls himself the "first priest of the Satanic Church" explained that the nude "symbolized the temple of the flesh, the earthly passion, and earthly indulgence."

Anton La Vey, founder of the Church of Satan, conducts worship purposely intended to stimulate human lust. He goes by the title of "Black Pope" and claims a membership of 10,000.

Paternal Covert

TIME magazine, June 19, 1972 describes a U.S. Army officer who is a fourth-degree satanist priest, a member of the Satanic Church "Council of nine."

At a large midwestern university, a co-ed approached the librarian and asked where she could find books about witches. "What do you want to know about witches?" asked the librarian. "I want to know how to become one," she answered. *300,000 witches in U.S.*

NEWSWEEK, August 16, 1971: "Today tens of thousands across the U.S. some of them middle-class adults with advanced university degrees - are dabbling in Satanism, witchcraft, voodoo and other forms of black or white magic...But a good deal of the experimentation results from plain blind faith in Satanic power, which sometimes produces acts of violence and sex.."

According to press reports, the women arrested in the gruesome 1969 Sharon Tate murders obeyed Charles Manson as "god" and "satan." Their victims' mutilated bodies were carved with "X" marks, a black magic sign.

Billy Graham, on a crusade telecast November 29, 1971, said, "Eighty percent of the young people in Great Britain have been in touch with witches and wizards."

The occult is deceptive. People, convinced that it is Christian, or at least religious, are drawn into it because they are fooled by the use of familiar Bible quotations or religious terminology.

Susy Smith, in TODAY'S WITCHES, tells of three church-going "Christian" who prayed to the Lord Jesus to kill the husband of one of the women. They took seriously the words of Jesus "where two or three are gathered together in my name," and agreed to ask that the unappreciated husband die. He did - of a heart attack.

Before each seance one "christian" group, led by an ex-minister, begins with the Lord's Prayer, sets the tone for the experience with the singing of "Have Thine ~~Own~~ Way, Lord," and prepares for the visitation of spirits with the song "In the Garden," because ~~they~~ ^{she} say it has a message about spirit visitation.

You can be sure of one thing - the closer we get to the end of the age, the more we will observe the increase of the Occult worship. Timothy said: "In later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

I.

Let me discuss very briefly the various forms of the occult. An understanding of these forms can help the Christian be alert and responsive to the occult as it spreads around him.

NOTE TO REMEMBER: The modern occult movement is a do-it-yourself religion. Whether it includes the study of horoscopes or the worship of Satan, it is built on man's quest for completion and fulfillment. The answers in the occult come not from Divine revelation but from human speculation.

ASTRAL PROJECTION

This is the belief that the spirit can leave the body and travel to other areas and other times and be free of the physical confinements of one's body. While traveling in their astral bodies, they believe that they can even be transported back into a previous incarnation.

ASTROLOGY

This is the belief that with elaborate charts the life of a person can be drawn and studied astrologically. The believer in astrology is convinced that he is functioning in conjunction with the planets and stars. The entire order of the universe guides his life. Thus we are influenced by the planets and stars just as the tide is influenced by the moon.

~~Q. B. S -~~

Many people are led astray by astrology because of the attitude of a follower toward horoscopes is like the attitude of a christian to discipleship. He wants to be one with God; he wants to fulfill his responsibilities and consciously be part of the universal purpose or plan. So he seeks cosmic harmony, adjusting his life by his Zodiac chart. A persons chart will give direction on how to be one with God. By being faithful to his chart, he will not be buffeted by natural or world events and will live in harmony with God and the universe.

RF Astrology has captured the interest of many Christians who think that they are following their Lord more closely. Arguing will not convince them otherwise. A careful biblical explanation of the true meaning of the Lordship of Christ and a loving but firm sharing of the statements of God found in Deut. 18:9-12, undergirded by prayer can help a person in astrology begin to see how faithful discipleship and astrology are really going in opposite directions.

BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC - Witchcraft

Black magic is meant to bring harm to someone; and white magic is called "good magic." Magic is as old as man. This involves the use of charms, spells/ incantations to bring about a desired result on someone or something.

THE BLACK MASS

Extreme satanic worshipers, who have committed their lives and souls to the Devil, practice the black mass. The ritual is the reverse of the Roman Catholic Mass, with adoration given not to God, but to Satan. If wine and bread are used, they are purposely desecrated. The altar is usually a young woman, nude, with the elements served on her body.

ESP

Extrasensory perception is the ability to perceive beyond the capabilities of the ordinary senses.

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MEDIUMS - Spiritualism

Mediums are psychics who claims to hear from departed spirits on "The other side of death." These mediums are the channels through whom concerned people can receive information about departed loved ones. Mediums explain that they can hear the voice of someone on the other side because people in the spirit world are alive, but on a different plane or level.

SATAN WORSHIP

The worship of Satan. Satan become lord and Master.

WHY do people follow the occult or become part of it? Two reasons - Man is increasingly apprehensive about the future and his desire to know what the future holds. (2) And the Bible predicts an increase in satanic activity as we approach the end of the age.

The Sign that the end is near

?TEST?OF?A?PROPHET

SUPERNATURAL SIGNS

God in his Word gives us several prophecies which indicate that Satan will use supernatural powers in the last days to deceive the people.

Consider two:

1. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10
2. Read Revelation 13:13-15

Just Because someone use supernatural powers, it does not mean it is of the Lord.

These miraculous powers are scheduled for the tribulation period, but they will start to take place before the tribulation. After all, the time of the greatest recorded demon activity in history was just prior to and during the first coming of Christ to the earth. Does it not follow that Satan, the master deceiver of men, will increase his activities again just before the second coming of Christ? It seems to me, that the increase in the Occult religion indicates an increase in these activities.

Arny Duester

TEST OF A PROPHET

Since, "many false prophets are gone out into the world" and because we are told to "try the spirits", what are some simple rules to follow which will help us to know the true from the false.

1. Does the spirit(or person representing the spirit) "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?"(I John 1:2) Don't be deceived if spiritists are nice, gracious, pious sounding folks; they wouldn't deceive anyone if they were coarse, crude or rude. It is not what they say that is important, but what they confess about Jesus Christ. So -- do not be deceived by semantics; know your Bible.

You all know that it is possible to use clever words and say one thing while meaning quite another. For example, there is one group of people who say they believe in the virgin birth of Christ. What do they mean? This particular group means that all people are virgin born when they are born in the love of God. Obviously they do not believe in the physical virgin birth of the N.T.

Another group say they believe in the resurrection of Jesus, but they merely believe that the "spirit of Jesus" rose again and is in the world today. That is not the bodily resurrection of the N.T.

But you see -- naive Christians fall for that line. In these last days we must carefully test the spirits concerning their acceptance of Jesus Christ as the eternal God.

2. Does the message, prophecy, sign, or miracle glorify Jesus?

TURN TO AND READ JOHN 16:13-14

The Christian is less likely to be deceived if he understands one thing: there are two sources of supernatural power -- divine and demonic. The existence of a miracle does not guarantee its origin from God. There are many illustrations in the Bible where Satan had power to perform supernatural feats. You should also understand that Satan is a deceiver and a liar. But God is consistent. And anything he does will glorify Jesus Christ.

3. Does the person performing the sign teach anything that violates the clear teachings of the Word of God. (Deut. 13:1-5)

This passage tells us that God sometimes tests us by permitting a false prophet to have power, to see if we love the Lord with all our hearts. At times like this we must know and believe the Word of God. If ever there was a day when God's people should read, study, and memorize scripture it is today.

CONCLUSION

These tests can be applied to any Christians who wants to avoid being carried away by false teaching. And you can be sure of this: God's standards and commandments never change. And we have no release from these commandments just because we are living in a so called "modern age." The "new Morality" is just the old immorality that has plagued man since Cain slew his brother Abel, and since "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all whom they chose" ---way back in the book of Genesis

It is time for God's people(you and me) to stand up and be counted. To avoid (with a clear statement of ~~why~~) lust, vice, spiritism, and witchcraft.

Much of the interest in witchcraft and astrology today is caused by heart emptiness - a characteristic of those who do not know Jesus Christ. Some people(good people) are sincerely seeking direction through the layers of the Occult fog. They are desperately seeking some source of supernatural guidance.

This is why it is so important for us to go and to seek ^{Them} out and to tell them of the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus Christ is the answer. For 2000 years He has been Billing the emptiness of peoples lives. Christ is still in the saving business. And Christ is here tonight offering to you the way of peace and joy. Accept him tonight. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"
Romans 10:13
