

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Deuteronomy 18:9-14.**
- B. At the threat of over-simplification, there are 3 types of religions:
 - 1. Church type. A formal organization complete with doctrines, priesthood, and ministry.
 - 2. Sect type. A group that specifically rejects social or theological compromise with world.
 - 3. Cult type. Mysticism, ritual, and individual experience to support religious longings.
- C. The cultic type religion will see some or all of the following:
 - 1. A center around a very strong personality.
 - 2. A strong reaction against orthodoxy.
 - 3. Success orientation.
 - 4. A belief in masters, gods, or spiritual brothers to aid and assist in achieving higher levels of spiritual awareness.
 - 5. An elite group usually forms out of the rank-and-file members.
 - 6. An appeal more toward individuals than to families.
 - 7. In the case of the occult: healing powers, ceremonial magic, eclecticism and syncretism.
- D. Over the next several weeks, I will be preaching on different kinds of practices associated with the occult. These sermons are intended to be more informative than evangelistic. With Halloween approaching, I thought it good to review the anti-Xian practices of the occult.
- E. Why are occult-type religions on the increase in America?
 - 1. The influx of oriental religions.
 - 2. Disenchantment w/major traditional "Xian" denominations. Occultism represents the new man-centered religions.
 - 3. A reaction to rational thinking. Occultism retreats to emotionalism and the relieving of personal responsibility.
 - 4. The search for a better life, and return to a simple life.
 - 5. A keen interest to know the future.

I. ASTROLOGY.

- A. The practice of astrology (the belief that the movement of the stars determines life's outcomes), is very old. Moses warned against such practices in Deut. 18. Extensive astrological information was found from Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria (668-626BC).
- B. But the Romans, at the time of X and the beginning of the church, were not in favor of the practice of astrology. Cicero said, "Superstition has nearly stole everyone's senses and scored over human silliness."
- C. Copernicus heliocentric theory (1543) dealt a death blow to astrology. He said that the sun, rather than the earth, was the center of the universe, thus dispelling the idea that the stars prefigured the movements of the creatures on earth. (We move, not the stars.)
- D. Beliefs of astrology:
 - 1. Natal or genephiacal. To ascertain the potential of one's life from birth.
 - 2. Judicial mundane. To understand the fate of nations, world events and leaders.
 - 3. Natural or physical. Tips on earthquakes, science, gardening, and farming.
 - 4. Horary. To ascertain the outcome of questions on any subject.
- E. The *zodiac* is an imaginary path of the sun through the heavens. It is divided into 12 signs and over the years certain characteristics have been determined for each sign. (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, and Pisces.)
- F. **A Xian response to Astrology:**
 - 1. Astrology denies complete freedom of human will and responsibility.

See 1Cor. 10:13; Lk. 9:23; 2Pet. 2:20-22.

2. Astrology is a form of nature worship (Deut. 17:2-5; Rom. 1:22-25).
(Deut 17:2-5) "If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns, which the LORD your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, by transgressing His covenant, and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded, and if it is told you and you have heard of it, then you shall inquire thoroughly. And behold, if it is true and the thing certain that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, then you shall bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed, to your gates, that is, the man or the woman, and you shall stone them to death."
(Rom 1:25) For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
3. Astrology limits the role of God in the world (Job 38:33; Gen. 18:25; Phil. 4:5; Mt. 28:20).
(Job 38:33) "Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, Or fix their rule over the earth?"
(Gen 18:25) ...Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"
(Phil 4:5) Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.
(Mt. 28:20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
4. Belief in astrology gradually paralyzes the human will (Isa. 47:13; Dan. 2:2, 9).
(Isa 47:13) "You are wearied with your many counsels; Let now the astrologers, Those who prophesy by the stars, Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you."
(Dan 2:2, 9) Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. 9 ...that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."
5. Astrology is a form of polytheistic idolatry.
See Jo. 24:23; Jud. 3:7-8; Mt. 4:10; Psa. 50:6; Jer. 10:2; 1Cor. 8:5-6.
(Jo 24:23) "Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."
6. Astrology undermines genuine faith in God.
See Deut. 18:13-14; Mt. 6:24; Heb. 11:1.
(Deut 18:13-14) "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so."

II. FORTUNE TELLING.

- A. Divination is a natural outgrowth of astrology. The Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians all practiced some form of fortune telling.
- B. Common methods are:
 1. Tarot cards. This consists of 78 cards, and they reflect the mythology of the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians.
 2. Crystal balls. Glass, quartz, beryl, and crystal are used in making the balls. Users claim that the ball reflects the world in microcosm and enables one to see the whole of life.
 3. Dice throwing. Three dice are thrown into a circle with 12 sections. The placement and number give advice on a wide range of topics. Roman soldiers may have "cast lots" in this manner for Jesus' clothes.
 4. Palm reading. This originated in India before the time of Christ. Even Aristotle described the hand as a symbolic reference to the whole person.
 5. Tea leaves. The fortune teller turns the cup in a certain way and reads the leaves to look for letters of the alphabet or shapes of small animals.
 6. Wax drippings. Wax drippings from candles into cold water form patters, objects, numbers, and letters, by which the diviner interprets much like that of the tea leaves.
 7. Numerology seeks to assess character and paths for making one's life easier. This is not to be confused with John's use of numbers in Revelation because the Biblical use is not to determine a

person's potential or character.

C. **A Xian response to Fortune Telling:**

1. God has prohibited divination, fortune telling (Lev. 19:26; Micah 5:12).
(Lev 19:26) 'You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.
(Mic 5:12) "I will cut off sorceries from your hand, And you will have fortunetellers no more.
2. Divination is equated with sin (see 1Sam. 15:23; 2Kgs. 17:17; 21:6; Deut. 13:1-5).
(1Sam 15:23) "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king."
3. Divination conflicts with divine revelation (Gal. 1:8-9; Rom. 3:21-26; Jn. 1:14).
(Gal 1:8-9) But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.
4. Divination is deceitful (Jer. 14:14).
Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.
5. Divination is a self-centered practice (Jer. 10:23).
I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.
6. Divination stresses success in this life (Rom. 11:36; 1Cor. 15:19).
(1Cor 15:19) If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.
7. Divination is fatalistic (to assume the future is fixed).
8. Divination is foolishness (Dan. 4:7; Hos. 4:12; Ezek. 8:17).
(Hos 4:12) My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them; For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, And they have played the harlot, departing from their God.
9. Divination appeals to desire for secret knowledge (Deut. 29:29; Dan. 2:27-28).
(Dan 2:27-28) Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.

III. **SATANISM.**

- A. There are many churches of Satan in this country. Some popular ones are the *Church of Evil*, the *First Church of Satan*, and the *Church of the Satanic Brotherhood*.
- B. Zoroastrianism (about 538BC) taught dualism, in which came the beliefs of demons and demon possession. The Gnostics rejected the God of the OT, and enthroned the serpent as the "illuminator of mankind."
- C. Accounts in the Middle Ages reveal an abundance of beliefs in people making pacts with the devil in exchange for wealth, pleasure, wisdom, and youth. These pacts involve the denial of the Xian faith, an acceptance of Satanic baptism, and a swearing of allegiance to the devil.
- D. A man by the name of LaVey began the *First Church of Satan* in April of 1966. He wanted a religion that was completely new, based on indulgence rather than abstinence. LaVey does not believe in the Biblical Hell; a place of pain and agony for the things done wrong in life.
- E. **A Xian response to Satanism:**
 1. Satan always appears as man's adversary.
The Bible gives him many descriptions and none of them are profitable for any good thing. He is the enemy, the evil one, the tempter, Beelzebub, the adversary, the dragon, the deceiver, the father of lies, a murderer, Lucifer, and Apollyon (the destroyer).
 2. All sin is a result of heeding Satan's deception (2Cor. 11:3; 1Jn. 3:8; Rom. 6:23).
(2Cor 11:3) But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.
(1Jn 3:8) the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

3. God is the supreme ruler of the universe.
The Bible clearly reveals that the power of Satan is vastly inferior to that of God (Ex. 15:18; Deut. 4:39; Mt. 19:26).
(Ex 15:18) "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."
(Deut 4:39) "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.
4. Satan cannot be invoked to work on behalf of men (Eph. 4:27; 6:11; Jas. 4:7).
(Eph 4:27) and do not give the devil an opportunity.
(Eph 6:11) Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.
(Jas 4:7) Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
5. Satanism teaches trust in human wisdom. Human wisdom appeals to the ego and one's desire to elevate himself while disregarding God (Prov. 3:7; 16:25; 1Cor. 3:18-19; Col. 2:8).
(Prov 3:7) Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
(Col 2:8) See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.
6. Satanism repudiates the 2 great laws given by Jesus, see Mt. 22:37-39.
7. Satan and his followers will be destroyed Mt. 25:41; 13:30; 1Jn. 3:8; 1Cor. 15:24-27).
(Mt 25:41) "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
(Mt 13:30) 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As one can clearly see there is no mixing the beliefs of astrology, fortune telling, and Satanism with that of the Bible.
- B. Those who desire to be obedient to God will turn from these beliefs and practices.
- C. Jesus is the answer to all things; respond to Him for eternal life.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.