

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [Deuteronomy 18:9-14](#).
- B. During the month of October, 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.
- C. 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. WITCHCRAFT.

- A. Witchcraft is not something that is done "behind closed doors." Those who profess to be witches or warlocks practice their religion out in the open.
- B. Some recognized groups are: Religious Order of Witchcraft, the First Wiccan Church of Minnesota, American Order of Brotherhood of Wicca, Witches International Craft Associates, and the Witches Liberation Movement.
- C. There are several publications by which one can receive news and updates of the practice of witchcraft; *Witch's Almanac*, *Earth Religion News*, *The New Broom*, *Moontides*, and *Witchcraft Digest*
- D. **Beliefs of Witchcraft.** Craft papers discuss what constitutes witchcraft today; whether it is strictly a religion that is practiced as a form of nature worship or whether in fact it is some kind of magical society that seeks to gain spiritual power.
- E. Martin Luther and John Calvin accepted Witchcraft, but attributed its power to Satan, advising Xians to avoid it at all times. A French judge wrote the following in trying to define witchcraft, "A witch is one who knows the law of God and tries to bring about some other deed through agreement with the devil."
- F. Witchcraft derives its name from the old Celtic word, "wicca," which means wisdom. Witches today prefer the term *wicca*, because it does not carry the stigma of the term witchcraft.
- G. Wiccans conceive of God as present in nature in a pantheistic sense. This means that witches believe that God is not a personality but is laws, forces, and manifestations of the universe. This is the reason for spells, witches brews, herbs, etc. By these things a witch comes in touch with God.
- H. Reincarnation is essential to the philosophy of witchcraft. Upon death all persons go to a place called Summerland. There the soul grows young again while resting and relaxing. It comes back to this life later.
- I. Covens cannot exceed 13 witches. When the group grows one is named to head the new coven and she is called the "witch queen." Witchcraft has a variety of special festivals along with regular coven meetings.
- J. **A Xian response to Witchcraft.**
 1. Witchcraft is condemned and forbidden by God (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; 20:27; 20:6; Deut. 18:10-13.
[\(Ex 22:18\)](#) "You shall not allow a sorceress to live."
[\(Lev 19:31\)](#) 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.
[\(Lev 20:27\)](#) 'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.'"

2. Witchcraft is polytheistic (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:5-6; 1Tim. 2:5).
 (Ex 20:3) "You shall have no other gods before Me.
 (Eph 4:5-6) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.
 (1Tim 2:5) For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
3. Witchcraft denies Jesus as Lord and Savior (Ac. 4:12; Jn. 14:6; 1Th. 5:9).
 (Ac 4:12) "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."
 (1Th 5:9) For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
4. Witchcraft glorifies the flesh and this life (Eph. 1:12; 1Chr. 16:28-29; Gal. 5:20-21).
 (Eph 1:12) to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.
 (1Chr 16:28-29) Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array.
 (Gal 5:20-21) idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
5. Witchcraft does not deal with sin (Rom. 3:23; 3:10; 6:23; Jn. 1:29).
6. Witchcraft denies the reality of eternal reward and punishment (Ac. 17:30-31; Mt. 12:36; 16:27; Heb. 9:27; 2Cor. 5:10; 5:1; Rev. 22:14-15).
 (Ac 17:30-31) "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."
 (2Cor 5:10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
7. Witchcraft necessarily believes in reincarnation (2Sam. 14:14; Jas. 4:14; Heb. 9:27).
 (Heb 9:27) And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

II. **MAGICK.**

- A. The occult spelling is "magick" which differentiates it from stage magic.
- B. 20th century magick involves more than performing spells. It searches for personal meaning. Ceremonial magick professes a basic reverence for nature and mysterious powers, which magicians seek to harness for their benefit.
- C. Astral travel, the alleged separation and flight of the spirit from the body, has long fascinated young people. Astral travel epitomizes the emphasis of modern magick upon discovery of ways to escape, paths to pleasure, and self-actualization.
- D. The University of California in 1971 granted a B.A. degree in Magic and Thaumaturgy (miracle working and magic). But even with this type of credibility, magicians of the occult rely on intuition and imagination rather than logic and reason.
- E. Like all practices of the occult, magick has been around for a long time. The ancient Celtic priests practiced it. The legend of King Arthur; his birth and coming to the throne, is history mixed with magick. Merlin was the reason for Arthur's success, even the pulling of *Excalibur* from the rock.
- F. ***The beliefs of magick.*** Four major kinds of magick:
 1. Sympathetic magick. This is voodoo, and relies upon the confidence of the persons in the effectiveness of it.
 2. Contagion. This magick relies upon actual contact w/objects deemed powerful. (Taboos were established, forbidding certain objects from being touched.) It is the same principle as voodoo.
 3. Esoteric. Magick of this sort depends upon the comprehension of the secrets of the universe. Even some mystic Jews believed in a god so inaccessible that not even the Bible spoke of him.

4. Ceremonial. This involves two experiences; the invocation and evocation of spirits. Invocation raises spirits from the depths of universe, while evocation claims to raise up spirits from the recesses of one's subconscious. The invoking of supernatural forces or powers is one of the principle purposes of ritual magick.
- G. **A Xian response to magick.**
1. Magick profanes the name of God. Magicians invoke the name of God to appropriate power from the spirits; this is irreverence toward God (Lev. 20:26; 19:12; Lk. 1:49).
(Lev 20:26) 'Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.
(Lev 19:12) 'And you shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.
(Lk 1:49) "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.
 2. Magick is idolatry. Magick recognizes power from many difference spirits (Ex. 23:13; Isa. 45:9; Ac. 17:16).
(Ex 23:13) "Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let them be heard from your mouth.
 3. Magick seeks divine knowledge and power apart from the Bible (Mt. 10:39; Jas. 4:6; Phil. 2:5-7).
(Mt 10:39) "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.
 4. Magick abuses prayer. Some magicians misuse Mt. 21:22 and make a mockery out of prayer (Jn. 15:7; Jas. 4:3; 1Cor. 14:15).
 5. Magick distorts the moral concepts of good and evil. People can be no better than the gods they worship. Magick has little to offer when it comes to spirituality.

III. DEMON POSSESSION.

- A. In 1970, *The Exorcist*, by William Blatty was published. This was an adapted story based on an incident that happened to a Mt. Rainer, MD family in 1949. The practice of exorcism is quite old, but this novel and subsequent movie revitalized interest in demon possession.
- B. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes four primary symptoms of demon possession:
 1. Speaking in a language previously unknown to the individual.
 2. Examples of physical behavior beyond the person's capability.
 3. Knowledge of future events.
 4. Extreme behavior in the form of fits, spasms, and tantrums.
- C. Psychotherapists disagree on the question of demon possession. Several London psychiatrists observe that these people (who think they are demon possessed) suffer from psychological obsessions, rather than demonic influences. A European psychiatrist has shown a high correlation between occult involvement and schizophrenia.
- D. The English word, enthusiasm, comes from the Greek, meaning inspired or possessed by a god. The archaic form means religious fanaticism.
- E. In the Middle Ages people divided demon possession into two categories:
 1. Involuntary. The god(s) inhabit a person w/o that person's consent. In this case the demon has total control of the victim.
 2. Voluntary. A ceremony to invite possession for whatever "good" it might accomplish.
- F. Symptoms of demon possession are blasphemy, immoral behavior, disregard for social rules, pacts with the devil, troubled thinking, frightening appearance, and convulsive behavior.
- G. The NT does bear witness to the reality of demon possession during the time of the Roman Empire, but it is not from the NT that many of our present day concepts of the devil and demon possession have derived.
- H. Demon obsession. Today, the problem is not demon possession, but demon obsession. From a psychiatric view, an obsession is a persistent and haunting thought or feeling that cannot be dispelled.

I. **A Xian response to demon possession.**

1. Jesus never performed an exorcism like some profess to do today (Mt. 8:16; Lk. 11:20; Mk. 1:25; 1:34; 5:13; 9:25).
2. The binding of Satan was promised and fulfilled (Zech. 13:1-2- Lk. 11:21-23; 10:18; Rev. 20:1-2; Heb. 2:14).
(Heb 2:14) Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;
3. Demonic possession ceased in the apostolic era. When the power to cast out demons passed away, so did possession; otherwise Satan would have the upper hand.
See Ac. 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:11-12; 19:13-16; Mk. 16:17,18; 1Cor. 12-14; 10:13.
(Ac 16:17-18) "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."
4. Demon possession can be easily explained as demon obsession. Most conditions thought to be demonic are explained through known, observable neurotic or psychological behaviors.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As one can clearly see there is no mixing the beliefs of witchcraft, magick, and demon possession 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.