

**INTRODUCTION.**

- A. Scripture text: [Deuteronomy 18:9-14](#).
- B. During October, I have been preaching on different kinds of practices associated with the occult. These sermons are intended to be more informative than evangelistic.
- C. Lord willing, I will conclude this series next Sunday morning with a lesson about Halloween.
- D. Tonight, the occult practices and beliefs of spiritualism, parapsychology, and reincarnation.

**I. SPIRITISM.**

- A. A newspaper ad reads, "Speak with the spirit world, talk to the dead, and learn the secrets of the ages." This is a typical advertisement for a spiritist group.
- B. Numerous spiritist churches are located in this country. Some are; the People's Spiritualist Church of Los Angeles, the First Spiritual Church of New York, the Congregation of Cosmic Faith, the Church of Paradise, and the Glass Church.
- C. These people believe in a book called the *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ*. *The Aquarian Gospel* claims to give information that the Bible does not. There is a supposed account of the life of Jesus between age 12 and the beginning of His ministry. During this time, the *Aquarian Gospel* reports that Jesus met with the great sages of the world and synthesized their teachings into what we know as the gospel.
- D. **History of spiritism.** Modern spiritism began in Europe in 1744 by Emmanuel Swedenborg who believed he received a vision, perceiving the secrets of eternity.
- E. One episode in this country in 1948 made spiritism quite popular. Two sisters Katie and Margaret Fox claimed that certain knockings and rappings were communications from the spirit world. They even publicly displayed their psychic abilities in Rochester, NY and other places. Press coverage sensationalized the phenomenon even so much as to the development of a "spirit alphabet" in which to decode the messages.

But three professors of the University of Buffalo debunked this charade by revealing that the sounds heard did not come from the spirit world, but were created by the sisters by popping their knee and toe joints. But this announcement came too late to have any kind of effect on the growth of the movement.

- F. The most famous of all stories about people trying to communicate with the spirit world was by Arthur Ford (a well-known spiritist) and Harry Houdini. Houdini spent a great part of his life trying to show the worthlessness and fraud of those who claimed spiritist experiences. He debunked mediums and mentalists as fakes. Shortly before Houdini's death he arranged with his wife, Rosabelle, a secret message which he proposed to transmit to her from the spirit world, if such were possible. He told her, "Remember Rosabelle, believe, when you hear the words--know it is Houdini."

In the following months a \$10, 000 reward was promised to anyone who could reveal the secret marriage. Many messages were delivered to Rosabelle but none were correct. In Feb., 1928 Arthur Ford astonished the world by revealing Houdini's prearranged message: "Rosabelle, believe." Later, however, Ford was found out to have discovered the message by utilizing a secret code in Houdini's stage act. The code allows words to stand for numbers, which in turn stand for their corresponding letters in the alphabet. Houdini's message still generates debate today as to whether or not the incident was a hoax or actually a communication received from the spirit world.

- G. **The Beliefs of Spiritism.** On the surface many of the beliefs of spiritism are similar to that of Xianity. But a further examination shows this not to be true and that the beliefs of the spiritist movement are more closely aligned with the occult. Spiritists do not believe in the concepts of sin, atonement, resurrection, or salvation.

Spiritists often try to use Mt. 17:1-13 and the episode of the transfiguration to "prove?" that it is

possible for spirits to return to the earth and communicate with men. However, the point of the passage is not necromancy, but that Jesus is superior to the OT ministry and all other religions.

#### H. **Individual beliefs of spiritism:**

1. *Poltergeists* are legendary forces that haunt houses. This is a German word that means “noisy spirit” or “mischievous spirit.” Upon this belief the movie so named was made.
2. *Astral travel*. This is the belief that the astral body (or soul) journeys throughout the universe, while the physical body remains asleep or in a state of trance.
3. *Mediums*. A communication link between those living on the earth and the departed spirits. Mental mediums claim to communicate directly with spirits of the deceased while physical mediums specialize in the materialization of human forms.
4. *Automatic writing*. Some occultists believe that a spirit will guide the hand of a medium to write certain things or even paint pictures. This phenomenon is now understood by psychologists as things done under severe self-hypnosis.
5. *Necromancy*. Necromancy is the ancient belief that a person may communicate directly with the dead. See 1Sam. 28:8-14; God allows a medium to bring up Saul from the dead to speak directly with King Saul.

#### I. **A Xian response to Spiritism.**

1. God has forbidden all human attempts to communicate with the dead (Lev. 19:3 1; 20:27; Deut. 18:11; Gal. 5:19-21).
2. Spiritism minimizes the role of God. We are to consult Him, not departed humans.
3. Spiritism denies the sufficiency and finality of God revelation--the Bible (Isa. 8:19; Heb. 1:2; Gal. 1:8-9; 2Tim. 3:16-17).
4. Spiritism denies the divinity and lordship of JC (Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 6:14; Mt. 16:16-17; Ac. 2:36).

## II. **PARAPSYCHOLOGY.**

- A. Parapsychology encompasses the area broadly known as extra-sensory perception (ESP). ESP is a vast category for unusual human abilities to receive information through means other than the five senses presently known.
- B. The term ESP now refers to the practices of telepathy, clairvoyance, and premonition. Closely associated with ESP is the practice of psychokinesis (PK) which is the alleged ability to manipulate matter with mental power.
- C. Parapsychology is not fully accepted by the scientific community. Science has documented several different definitions of the ESP, but no one has conclusively established the scientific validity of people's experiences. ESP remains in limbo between science and the occult.
- D. **Beliefs of Parapsychology.**
  1. *Telepathy*. Telepathy describes a psi-ability to transfer mental concepts from one person's mind to another without use of the senses. In most tests for telepathy, one person thinks, in random order of the five ESP symbols (a star, a circle, a square, a plus sign, and three parallel wavy lines), while a person in another room attempts to determine the signs being transmitted. When tested the success rate is only about 40%, too low to be convincing.
  2. *Clairvoyance*. Clairvoyance is the practice of obtaining information which cannot be had through the five senses. It is a form of mind-reading. A typical test for clairvoyance is to shuffle a deck of Zener cards, those containing the five ESP symbols, and then allowing the subject to guess the card on top of the deck. The results are like that of telepathy--inconclusive.
  3. *Premonition*. This is the ESP of future events. The test for this phenomenon is simple and revealing. The subject lists the order of Zener symbols that he/she predicts they will be turned up from a freshly shuffled deck of cards. The cards are shuffled and then turned up to see if the premonition was the actual order of the cards. Some tests involve the throwing of dice.
  4. *Psychokinesis*. PK refers to the exerting of influence over material objects by mental processes only. PK is commonly called mind over matter. To test for psychokinesis, a pair of dice is

mechanically thrown (so that the value is the same) and the subject is to manipulate, by a mental process, the outcome of the dice. Many magicians and mentalists insist that all of PK is a stage trick.

- E. Tests over the years have indicated that those people who appear to possess ESP abilities are unable to perform when placed in a laboratory setting.
- F. **A Xian response to Parapsychology:**
  - 1. There is no scientific evidence that any of the mentioned practices are for real.
  - 2. Nowhere does the Bible teach that man is to have these characteristics in his life.
  - 3. The claimed values of parapsychology do not deal with the more important issues of value, morals, sin, etc.
  - 4. The secret things still belong to God (Deut. 29:29).

### III. REINCARNATION.

- A. Reincarnation theory permeates all aspects of occultism. The Hindu religion also believes that deceased persons pass into another world and eventually return through re-birth.
- B. *Wicca* believes that all life goes through four stages; birth, growth, decline, and death. These stages come from the four meteorological seasons. *Wicca* says that humans go through this process again and again.
- C. *Astrologers* believe that reincarnation explains why some people's personality traits do not match their horoscope pattern. Under hypnosis, a person, under the guidance of an astrologer, retrace their life back to birth. Then, the person is asked to think beyond that and see if they can come up with a name. Grave markers are then searched to find the past life of an individual.
- D. **A Xian response to Reincarnation.** One NT verse is all that is needed to show that the Bible does not teach reincarnation. See Heb. 9:27. Man is to die but once, and then comes the decision by God as to their eternal destiny. Another angle is that if I am the product of reincarnation then I am not responsible for my actions. I am but the life of another in this physical body.

### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As one can clearly see there is no mixing the beliefs of spiritism, parapsychology, and reincarnation 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.