

The Occult

New Age-Babylonian Occultism

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For the last few weeks I have been studying a subject that I detest, that I hate, and that has had me in and out of oppressive feelings. So it is a wonderful thing to be back here with you—especially at this time, after you see what subject I will be speaking on today. And now that I have your interest. . .

More money is spent on Halloween than any other holiday (other than Christmas, of course). We all breathe a big sigh of relief after the holiday is over each year. But the deception is still going on. Therefore, it is an unwarranted thing for us to breathe that sigh of relief, because the deception and re-education of our minds continue on a daily basis. We are bombarded by the New Age and ancient Babylonian religion without truly realizing the massiveness of its onslaught.

In 1998, *The Chicago Tribune* reported that, though difficult to quantify due to the lack of a formal organization, neo-paganism is the fastest growing religion in North America. It is now estimated that it will double in size every eighteen months.

Estimates in the U.S. of practicing witches are as follows (and it is possible that these figures could be as much as 50% higher than these): In 1972, there were 20,000 witches in the United States. In 1986, there were 50,000. In 1992, there were 200,000. In 1996, there were 360,000; and in 1999 there were 768,400 (that they know of).

Just to give you a breakdown on all of this, 11% are age 17 or under. 25 % are 18-25. Next is the highest percentage. 40% are 26-39 years of age—so the major portion of Generation X. 23% are 40-59, and 1% are 60 or over. Besides this, 71% are female and 29% are male; and 13% have military service records.

The next statistic is interesting, especially in light of what we have seen of the recent election—86% are registered to vote (compared to only 50% of the general adult public, who are registered). A 1997 study indicated that there are about 100,000 witches practicing in the United Kingdom. And it is estimated that there are 3-5 million witches worldwide. This is having a *huge* impact on this world, and it is multiplying. As I said, it is doubling every eighteen months.

If you or your children are familiar with and feel comfortable with witches, wizards, sorcerers, and magic—you are already being conditioned and affected by Satan's New Age deception. He has repackaged the same Babylonian beliefs that have deceived children and foolish adults down through history.

In the concluding part of a series entitled "Angels, Demons and Things that Go Bump in the Night," Kaye Corbett of WorldNetDaily examined the teenage witch phenomenon sweeping the world as part of the demonic New Age movement. This last part was entitled *Old 'New Age' hooks even our kids!* I am going to quote quite extensively from this article, because I am trying to build a case here (before we actually get into the Bible) to show you how decadent and abominable these practices are. Now, quoting from the article:

When I was a little girl, I wanted to be Samantha on 'Bewitched.' It didn't hurt me none. I am still a Baptist."

With these chilling words, Suzanne Sawyer claimed her daughter, 12-year-old Shanna, and two girlfriends were just having "innocent fun" by reading witchcraft books—according to *Charlotte Observer* reporter Gail Smith.

The books were taken away by North Carolina's Kannapolis Middle School officials on January 14, 1999 after other students became concerned—believing the three had put "death spells" on them.

One of the books, "Earth, Air, Fire & Water: More Techniques of Natural Magic," was written by the late Scott Cunningham. He also wrote books on Incense Oils; Crystal, Gem, and Metal Magic; Magical Herbs; Earth Power; Wicca; Magic in Food; Magical Aromatherapy; Magical Herbalism, and Witchcraft.

Cunningham explained: "Once we've learned the basics of Wiccan beliefs and practices, living our religion is, logically, the next step."

Although it's said that one shouldn't speak ill of the dead, Cunningham was one of the most dangerous Americans ever born, for he spurred the teenage witches' phenomenon now sweeping the world.

So why would the daughter of a Baptist mother read such demonic New Age literature, and then try to practice it? The blame lies with the parents and her church, for not condemning such practices.

Now, I am still reading from this article; and I apologize for the length of this, but I wanted to paint the picture for you.

But the major culprit has to be today's Christian church, for it hasn't been confrontational in condemning the New Age movement that has numerous tentacles—including drugs, abortions, homosexuality, pornography, premarital sex, and now teenage witchcraft.

Both young men and women have been disillusioned. They're not always those with spiked green hair, blackened fingernails, and AC/DC on their CD's. It's also been practiced by kids in Bible colleges and from fundamentalist backgrounds.

So this is hitting all areas of society.

Just listen to Suzanne Sawyer's words, as quoted by reporter Smith: "Anything considered helping people is good witchcraft." Both Shanna Sawyer and Meka Robinson, age 12, were ordered into the principal's office and told to turn over any books on witchcraft and casting spells. Courtney Howard said she had been warned to keep the books away from school.

That is, by other witchcraft worshippers.

The voice of Cunningham can still be heard: "It's the type of magic that lives within this book—gentle, loving, healing magic. No curses lurk within these pages; no rituals of hatred, or jealousy, or envy."

You can see the picture that is painted by these advocates of witchcraft—especially the teenage witchcraft.

The *Charlotte Observer* article brought little reaction; and one of the girls [Meka Robinson] pouted that her freedom of speech rights had been violated.

Is that not a common comment that we hear just about everything that we are told that we cannot do in this society?

Another youngster (identified only as Andrew) wrote in an article on how to worship the goddess and God while living under a Christian roof: "Living under Christians is hard enough, let alone living under Christians and practicing witchcraft."

A 16-year-old witch, Lisa, claims to have been practicing witchcraft a little more than a year and she explains: "I've learned so much about the craft. I've been reading books, going to web pages, etc. on a regular basis.

I would just like to add here that, when I got on the Internet to do research for this sermon, I was appalled, amazed, and flabbergasted at the number of sites there are which have to do with the occult, and witchcraft, and sorcery, etc. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of web sites. And there are thousands and thousands and thousands of witches trying to entice people (especially teenage girls) into this worship.

Now, going on with Lisa's quote:

I've learned that witchcraft is about attuning yourself with nature, the seasons, and the four elements. I've learned to fall in love with the earth, and I feel everything as a living creature—even the earth itself. It's like everything (the plants, animals, earth) has a soul of its own. Because of this, most witches help nature by not littering, or causing any unnecessary polluting.

On the surface, Satan paints a wonderful picture of this perversion. But they do litter minds—their own minds and the minds of others.

Witchcraft is also about honoring the goddess and God. If we just perform spells—and don't celebrate the earth, elements, goddess, and God—it's basically like we are using them and not giving anything back. The power to perform spells is a gift from them; and we must give something in return. So instead of performing a spell...just spend your time celebrating the craft.

Does that not sound wonderful? They make it look so innocent. Satan is a craftsman at deception.

Our craft is also about open-mindedness. We have incorporated many, many pagan deities into Wicca [old Scandinavian, Celtic, North American Indian, Egyptian, etc., etc., etc.]. Since we are also shunned by Christianity, it's our duty not to do the same to others.

I noticed in my research that, wherever they could, there was a dig made of Jesus Christ and Christianity (in an attempt to destroy it). It was amazing, because almost all other religions were acceptable and okay, but not Jesus Christ and Christianity. Now, one final aspect of the quote:

While we are bombarded by psychic hot-line phone numbers, there are other avenues into the occult world—from angel worship to the worship of Mary.

Is it not interesting that they lump the worship of Mary in with occultism?

Turn with me to Deuteronomy 18, and we will get out of this squalor, and get into some real good, genuine, truthful and helpful guidelines. At the very least, witchcraft advocates perverted worship. It, therefore, is a direct affront to God and is condemned (in I Samuel 15:23) along with rebellion. So let us take a look at what God says about the beliefs and practices of the occult.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

There is God's stance on the occult. It is significant that this warning about the occult is set between scriptures concerning appropriate and acceptable behavior for the way the Israelites were to discern the will of God. The command in verse 9 ("You shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.") is a strict ban **not** to copy, imitate, or do what the Canaanites did. In the original Hebrew, part of the meaning is that we are **not** to become accustomed to, or to be occupied with, these abominations.

If this were the only Bible passage dealing with this issue, it would be clear that **all forms** of the occult are denounced by God. But this is only one of many condemnatory references. Let me just give you a quick list of a few others: Leviticus 19:26-31; 20:6; II Kings 17:10-17; 21:1-6; 23:4-7, 24-25; II Chronicles 33:6; Acts 13:6-12; Acts 16:18; Galatians 5:20 and Revelation 9:21. I could go on and on and on. There is no doubt about how God feels about the occult and its practices, and anyone getting involved or learning about them.

Occult practices—such as witchcraft, sorcery, and magic—have always been common among the Gentile nations of this world. In the early 1980s, there were 75,000 licensed witches in Italy alone. And that is a nation whose national religion is Catholicism. It is amazing the number of witches that there are **worldwide**. We are just seeing it now, in the United States, as it increases.

God knows that it is a human weakness to inquire and imitate perverse things. Such attempts to inquire and learn about how to contact and control evil spirits—or to try to manipulate nature through magic—were specifically forbidden to the Israelites. And three times in these six verses (in Deuteronomy 18), this paganism is called **AN ABOMINATION**. So God wants us to understand just how *vile* and *detestable* these things are.

Let me briefly, and quickly, go through each one of these to give you an overview of what they mean—and what God is telling us to avoid, and what is an abomination. The words themselves do not always do justice to what each is. I do not want to get into their practices, but just to give an overview of what each is talking about.

The first one— *anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire* —is an interesting one, because it is one that we do not often think of as an occult practice. But occultism eventually reaches this point. In fact, in some cases it begins with this, as I will explain. This phrase refers to the practice of child sacrifice. It seems unbelievable to us today that God would have to tell the Israelites to *not* sacrifice their children. It is beyond our understanding how it could reach that point—until we relate it to this nation's practice of abortion. Children today are sacrificed to the gods of sexual pleasure, selfishness, and convenience.

There is a Protestant church here in South Carolina, which I passed the other day, which has 10,000 little white crosses on the front lawn. They represent the number of children aborted *every hour of every day* in this country. It is a very heart-wrenching sight to see all of those crosses, all in one place and at one time—representing babies who lose their lives every hour of each day through this despicable occult act of abortion. (I said "heart-wrenching," but heart-wrenching does not even do it justice.)

II Kings 16:3 records that King Ahaz, King of Judah, sacrificed his son in a sacrificial fire according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out. That is, the Gentile nations—the Canaanites—whom God told the Israelites to remove from the land that He was giving them. And God called the event **an abomination!** No doubt Ahaz thought that such a sacrifice would appease the pagan god. The pagan god, at that time, was probably either Molech or Baal, because both required sons and daughters to be thrown into the fire. Then, Ahaz's grandson, King Manasseh, sacrificed his sons two generations later.

II Chronicles 33:6 Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. He practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

It is very interesting that quite often, when it is mentioned that there were child sacrifices, also witchcraft, sorcery, and soothsaying and some other of the occult practices are mentioned along with it.

II Kings 23:10 reveals that it was mainly the pagan god Molech that required this awful sacrifice. Many scholars consider Molech to be a netherworld deity whose rituals had Canaanite origins and focused on dead ancestors. Thus, you see the aspect of the occult in with that sacrifice of children. Jeremiah 19:5 mentions that the pagan god Baal also demanded it. Both its connections with this list of pagan occult practices and its firm place in history show that murdering children is closely related to occult activity. It either precedes it, or follows it, or continues during it; but it is a perversion associated with it.

Now, the next occult practice that is mentioned in the *New King James* is **witchcraft**. In the *King James* it is called **divination** ; and actually divination is probably a more accurate translation, than

witchcraft. In ancient times, the practice of divination was a means of extracting information or guidance from a pagan god. All the major prophets condemned divination. (Isaiah 44:25; Jeremiah 27:9; Ezekiel 13:9)

Ezekiel 13:8-9 Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you," says the Lord God. My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord God.

You will notice quite often, as we read the Scriptures, that divination goes hand and hand with lying. That is an interesting thing to see. The "father of lies" is so involved in this.

The only places where information is given on the actual **means** that people use in divination is in Genesis 44:5 and Ezekiel 21:21-23. I was going to read those; but I am going to skip that, because I do not want to get into any more detail of these occult practices than I absolutely have to. I did a little of that earlier in this sermon, because I wanted to paint the picture for you; but I want to avoid, as much as possible, even speaking of the specific practices.

Witchcraft and divination both cover many kinds of occult practices; and the list that follows in Deuteronomy 18 may be meant to specify kinds of witchcraft, divination, and magic—adding different ways to get information (or results) from the supernatural, or from the earth and environment.

The third occult practice that is mentioned is *soothsayer* in the *New King James*, and it is translated *observer of times* in the *King James*. Soothsaying is a relatively rare Hebrew word, in the Bible, which describes some form of divination. Balaam, the son of Beor, is called "the soothsayer" in Joshua 13:22. And he is said to be using the divining skills in Numbers 22:7.

Soothsaying is thought to be the illusion of predicting the future by means of physical signs. Because it sounds like a Hebrew word for "cloud," some scholars believe it refers to cloud reading. This may have been similar to the more recent occult practice of tea leaf reading or of astrology (the reading of the stars).

The fourth occult practice that is mentioned in Deuteronomy 18 is *interprets omens* in the *New King James*, and *enchanter* in the *King James*. One of the priestly classes that is mentioned in the Mesopotamian texts is the "baru-diviners." It was their task to perform examination of the liver of lambs and to interpret its omen for the person who had asked for a reading of the future. It could be anyone in society. The baru might be consulted by a king who wished to go to war, a merchant about to send out a caravan with his goods (to make sure that it was going to go safely), or a person who had become ill. In Mesopotamia, anyone in society might call upon the enchanter or the one who interpreted omens. Government officials often included the report of omens in their letters.

In Ecclesiastes 10:11, interpreting omens is connected with snake charming. This was another point that I wanted to make. The sound of the snake's hiss and the snakes themselves were used in understanding an omen. And so you can see one thing after another that is part of the **perversion** of the occult. You can also see the connections, today, in India—with the snake charmers, who move

back and forth and the snake is being "charmed" (so to speak) according to their religion; and they read certain signs. I read in one place that said the belief is that, when they look into the eyes of the snake, they are actually looking down into the spirit world. So the perversion continues in every way.

To continue on, the fifth occult practice that is mentioned is ***the sorcerer*** in the *New King James*, and ***witch*** in the *King James*. This is those who—by means of drugs, herbs, perfumes, and such—pretend to bring certain celestial influences to their aid. The Hebrew word here indicates "one who practices magic." The Septuagint, which (as you know) is a Greek translation of the Bible, uses the word *pharmakos* in the Old Testament to translate this. It is the same Greek word as our English word "pharmacy." It is one who induces magical effects by drugs, or some sort of potion.

According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*: "In sorcery, the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the use of various charms, amulets, etc. professedly designed to impress the applicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer."

So, basically, it was a sham. They used drugs, or potions, or herbs—to make people get a buzz or a rise. Remember that LSD caused hallucinations. Well, LSD is commonly used in occult practices—as are other drugs.

The term "sorcerer," as commonly used, includes one who practices in the whole field of occultism. As such, it also includes a *necromancer*, who may be classified as a certain type of sorcerer. (We will get into what a necromancer is a little bit later.) Anciently, sorcery was the practice of the occult arts under the power of *evil spirits*, or *demons*. Today, however, sorcery is not always recognized as having a connection with evil spirits. But now it is associated with conjuring up methods to force **nature** to come to its aid. But God condemns to **death** people who practice sorcery!

Exodus 22:18 You shall not permit a sorceress [witch] to live.

The sixth occult practice is ***conjures spells*** in the *New King James*, and ***charmer*** in the *King James*. (I am giving you both versions, so that you can make the comparison.) In the Hebrew, it is literally "speller of spells," or "charmer of charms." Obviously, this is someone who uses spells in a particular combination. This involves the use of words, or things, or tying magic knots, and that type of thing for the purpose of witchcraft or divination. Isaiah 19:3 mentions *charmners* in Egypt.

The seventh occult practice is ***mediums*** in the *New King James*, or it is called ***consulter with familiar spirits*** in the *King James*. The medium is one who inquires by the means of one spirit to get verbal answers from another [spirit] of a superior order.

Leviticus 19:31 "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God."

In two different places, Isaiah hinted that mediums may use a kind of *ventriloquism*. In Isaiah 8, he asks a rhetorical question: "Should not people seek their God rather than mediums?"

Isaiah 8:19-22 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter [Those are key words.]," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light [or, truth] in

them. They will pass through it hard pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.

Now, the words "whisper and mutter" do not, in and of themselves, show that mediums may be ventriloquists; but turn with me to Isaiah 29. There may be an aspect of this using ventriloquism as a part of deception here.

Isaiah 29:4 You shall be brought down. You shall speak out of the ground. Your speech shall be low, out of the dust; your voice shall be like a medium's, out of the ground; and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

I am not saying that all ventriloquists are mediums; but I am saying that it is possible that part of the deception that mediums use is the art of ventriloquism. Ventriloquism, of and by itself, is not evil and it is not bad. I have heard ventriloquists throw their voice in a way that was not deceptive. For example: remember the dummy, Charlie McCarthy, which was entertainment on TV? Everyone knew that his [Edgar Bergen's] voice was being thrown into the dummy. And I do not recall, at least as a kid, seeing anything that was offensive.

However, those who are mediums by occupation, I would say, are very much so involved more in deception. So, what I am saying is that ventriloquism can be perverted and **used** by mediums, who profess to call up the departed from the realm of the dead.

The eighth occult practice, which is listed in Deuteronomy 18, is the ***spiritist*** in the *New King James*, and ***wizard*** in the *King James*. The word for "spiritist" always appears with "witch," indicating a type of wizard. In Hebrew, the root of the word is the verb "to know," or "a knowing one." Some of you may have already picked up the connection here; but the Greek word *gnostic* means "we know." The Gnostics of the apostles' time—and of today—are of the occultic religion of secret knowledge. So we see, when we are reading about the apostles' times, that the Gnostics (in what they were teaching and the following that they were giving to the church at that time) were a part of the occult.

I have seen a list of what different types of practices are parts of the occult. I did not bring it with me, but it listed eighty different practices that are considered occultic. All of these [that we are discussing] are listed—as well as Masonry and speaking in tongues. Not the type of "speaking in tongues" that the book of Acts talks about, but the perverted type that the Pentecostals use. That is a part of the occult practice.

In modern English, "wizard" describes someone very wise or inventive—a very clever or skillful person. There is a two-fold curse that comes with those whose wisdom and knowledge warp them.

Isaiah 47:9-13 But these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitudes of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments. For you have trusted in your wickedness. You have said, "No one sees me." Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; and you have said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one else besides me." Therefore evil shall come upon you. You shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you. You will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know. Stand now with

your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth—perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you.

In the Bible, it is always a forbidden thing—a kind of magic. This is why most modern versions translate the word as a spiritist, fortune-teller, or sorcerer. The spiritist probably calls up familiar *evil spirits*.

The ninth (and last) occult practice that is mentioned in Deuteronomy 18 is *one who calls up the dead* in the *New King James*, and it is a *necromancer* in the *King James* version. This person claims to consult the dead. That is, one who investigates, looks into, and seeks information from the dead. This phrase occurs only in Deuteronomy 18:11—where the list of the occult practices is.

Incidentally, as a side note, the woman of Endor, whom Saul engaged to conduct a séance and bring up the spirit of Samuel, is **not** called a witch in the text of the Bible (in I Samuel 28:3-9). The title is used only in the headings and the summaries in some versions. And it is as a result of these that the phrase "the witch of Endor" has become common in our literature and common phraseology. She is, in fact, a necromancer (one who specifically consults the spirits of the dead in order to predict the future) and not a witch in the broader sense of the term.

And this is part of the reason why I have used both the *New King James* and the *King James* lists of these occult practices—in order to give you an idea of how word etymology changes over the years. These last three designations of occult practices (the medium, spiritist, and necromancer) are different ways of expressing the same practice; and that is **consulting evil spirits**.

In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, God tells us that the nine occult practices are an **abomination!** These nine practices are all related to the Old Babylonian/New Age religion that we are seeing more and more today. Witchcraft and sorcery are certainly a major part of the up and coming neo-pagan one world religion. Neither we, nor our children, should learn or become accustomed to the detestable ways of the occult.

Deuteronomy 18:12-14 For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

One reason, mentioned here in Deuteronomy 18, is that we should avoid contact with these pagan practices because familiarity with it would make **us** *abominable* to God. Look at the secular meaning of the word "abomination." Webster's New World Dictionary defines it this way: (1) an abominating; great hatred and disgust; and loathing (2) anything hateful and disgusting. Synonyms for abominable are: loathing, abhorrence, anathema, evil, hatred, repugnant, disgusting. So, there is no doubt what "an abomination" means, even today.

Now let us take a look at the biblically based meaning of the word "abomination." The *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* defines it this way: "Something that excites disgust and hatred. The term is applied to heathen gods, idolatry, and various pagan practices." So, basically, the word "abomination" means the same today that it meant back at the time Deuteronomy was written; and it

means **detestable**. So an abomination is something that God hates and finds disgusting. That should be all we need to know to refrain from even getting close to an abominable or detestable thing.

The Hebrew word translated into the English word "abomination" in Deuteronomy 18:9-12, is *toebah*. It is used approximately 123 times; and it often means, "to do abominably, primarily in things connected with idolatry." So we see a definite connection between all occult activities with **idolatry**. Thus it also falls under the Ten Commandments, as far as being sin. **All occult practices are SIN!** Even *the proud* are mentioned, in Proverbs 16:12, as being *abominable* because they make an idol of themselves.

Proverbs 16:5 Everyone proud in heart is an abomination [*toebah*] to the LORD: though they join forces, none will go unpunished.

Since things referred to as **an abomination** are constantly associated with idolatry, it strongly indicates that *pride* constitutes *idolatry* in the human mind. Basically, if God tells us not to do something and we do it anyway, we have committed an abomination. All sin is an abomination to God. That is, it is detestable and filthy.

Anything that we place *before God* is an abomination—even how highly we think of ourselves. Things referred to as an abomination are constantly associated with **idolatry**. This indicates that what is highly esteemed among men constitutes idolatry in a person's mind.

Luke 16:15 [Christ said to the Pharisees] "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Any item that we hold as more important than God can be considered as an **idol**, and can be considered **abominable**. It can be our own selves, our house, our car, or anything else (basically) that we place before God. And that is a major part of the problem with occult practices. Every single occult practice places something before God, in a vile and detestable way.

God's Word shows that many of man's actions are abominable. For example: idolatry, uncleanness, unjust weights and measures, incest, adultery, homosexuality, sodomy, lying, stealing, offerings to other gods, sacrifice of children, sorcery, the hire of a prostitute, and eating of unclean meats.

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

So it is possible to deny God with our actions, and to become abominable. "In works they deny Him." The occultic practices deny that God exists, and they fight so hard to prove it. Here in Titus, the word means "loathsome, detestable, causing horror and disgust by their hypocrisy." A person becomes abominable when he or she commits abominations as a way of life. A person with a lifestyle of sin is an abominable person.

If we commit sin occasionally, or once, or accidentally (so to speak) or in weakness, then we are not necessarily an abominable person. One who sins as a way of life is an abominable person. But when we sin occasionally, we **are** committing an abominable act **at that time**. But we do not want to be abominable. We do not want to commit abominable acts. These occult practices are offensive to God. It cannot be right for any Christian to learn practices that God despises.

Another reason, (mentioned in Deuteronomy 18) for these occult practices being "abominable," is that we should avoid contact with these pagan practices because we have been taught the truth and are expected to be **blameless**. We have more than the world has. So we are held with more responsibility than the world as far as how we deal with these abominations and these practices. It is an argument similar to that of the apostle [Paul], against Christians walking as the Gentiles walked.

Ephesians 4:17-25 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts. Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus. That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

Lying is a key to the occult practices. Like a drunkard who continually returns to the bottle, so mankind's tendency toward self-deification and creation-worship has been irrepressible—as has been mankind's **willing blindness** towards its own deplorable predicament, due to the ravaging effects of sin. For example: sacrificing children in a fire—which we know of, today, as abortion.

Research has shown that occult magic is often a fraudulent and deceitful illusion. This illusion is Satan's counterfeit of miracles. In some instances, occult magic (or divination) is a manifestation of demonic powers or the result of demon possession. Of course, the power of Satan and his demons is extremely limited compared to God's power.

Acts 16:16-17 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

We see the **deception** here. The deception is *truth* coming out of this girl's spirit of divination.

Acts 16:18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed. . .

This diviner was speaking the truth, but Paul was greatly annoyed. He probably recognized right away that it was an evil spirit.

Acts 16:18 But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

You can see the deception that was used there. Occult practices commonly use the **lie** to paint the picture that it is so "good" and so "nice." Witches are deceived not only about the inherent falsity of their own sincerely held beliefs, but as well about the source of their misguided belief system.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

So there is a way that **seems right** to these teenagers who are enticed today by witchcraft, and sorcery, and things like that. But is black "black" and white "white," or neutral? What is witchcraft? Does it have different conditions where some witchcraft is bad and some is good—where some magic is good and some is bad? The critical question is "What is the actual *source*, or causal agent, of the occult?"

Some witches, or wizards, like to make a distinction between "black" and "white" magic (that is, sorcery and divination.) They claim that sorcery or divination performed for unselfish and/or benevolent purposes—to help others—is good. Thus, magic done with "good intentions" (and "desired results") is classified as "white" magic. Conversely, sorcery performed with selfish and/or malevolent means—to harm others—is classified as "black" magic.

Many Wiccans refer to have their craft called white witchcraft, for obvious deceitful reasons. This supposedly denotes that Wiccans only do "good" witchcraft—which is what all of the websites said, that I came across (since I did not go into them very deeply). They all believed that they were "good" and that they were performing "white" witchcraft. Of the ones that I looked into, **none** would admit that they practiced "black" witchcraft.

The book "Wicca: Satan's Little White Lie" was written by Bill Schnoebelen, a high priest in the Druidic Craft of the Wise. He presides over the oldest and largest network of covens in the Midwest. (A coven, I believe, is a witches den, or group or organization.) Other witches deny the validity of this distinction and find it useless. Since they regard magic as a natural force, they view it as morally *neutral* (that is, not intrinsically "good" or "evil"). "Like electricity," some say, "magic can be used for good or evil; but, just as one would not speak of 'black' or 'white' electricity, one should not do so with magic either." And, of course, a "black" or "white" *lie* does not matter—**it is still a lie**.

Christians too deny the validity of a distinction between "black" or "white" magic (or divination)—albeit for entirely different reasons. Whether called black, white (negative, or positive), any such distinction is illegitimate. Where the Christian and all witches disagreed is on **the ultimate source** (the actual identity, who or what) behind the scenes of the occult.

It is the Christian's conviction that, despite all their magical theories, witches (and all other occultists) have failed to grasp the true source of the occult—which is **Satan the Devil** (the father of lies, the deceiver). Despite what witches claim, *witchcraft originates from Satan*—the father of lies, the god of this world—and from corrupt human nature.

II Timothy 2:25-26 In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

The association with these occult practices is nothing less than having been **taken captive** by Satan! Witches who believe that magic is a natural "neutral" force of power will someday be forced to realize that it is empowered by "the prince of the power of the air that now works in the children of disobedience" (as Ephesians 2:2 tells us).

Earth worship brings people into contact with **demons**, because demons stand behind paganism in general. And witchcraft is very tightly connected to earth worship, because that is where witches believe that they get their power—from the elements. Paul warned the Corinthians of this in I Corinthians 10:20.

I Corinthians 10:20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

This is why occultism, in all its forms, is condemned in the Bible. Occultists, therefore, fall under the judgment of God for participating in such inexcusable and detestable activities. Romans 1 shows that proof of *the one true God* is clearly revealed to all, including the unrighteous—including those who are rebellious, including the occult participants. Those who are rebellious, and without excuse, God allows to find out for themselves that they have chosen a miserable road.

Romans 1:18-25 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie [That is a major part of the issue. The occultists base everything on lies; and we, as Christians, should be basing everything on truth.] and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

So, even though God clearly reveals His existence to everyone, most choose to believe the lie. God's truth is **a way of life**. Therefore, *the lie of Satan* is **a way of life** in contrast to God's.

Revelation 22:12-15 "And behold, I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

Everything about witchcraft, sorcery, and divination is *deceitful*—and, therefore, *a lie*. The reward they receive will be the one they deserve, but not the one they really want. In Revelation 21:8 we see the seriousness of being abominable and involved in sorcery. The apostle John writes:

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Obviously, God does not take abominations lightly. The abominable, sorcerers, and all liars will receive the ultimate punishment—the Lake of Fire—unless they repent, of course. (And we certainly hope that every last one of them do.)

Many citizens of ancient Ephesus practiced the magic arts. When Paul worked unusual miracles (including casting out demons), those who genuinely repented realized the foolish error of their former lives and burned their expensive books of magic as the trash they were.

Acts 19:11-12 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hand of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

You see here, in Acts 19, the example of the use of anointed cloths. Diseases left them (from God's forgiveness of sin in the healings) and the evil spirits were cast out of them.

Acts 19:17-20 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Books were hand-copied at that time. By some estimates, the total cost of these books equaled a day's pay for 50,000 people. I would have to say that city was a city of witchcraft. No doubt, among those books were children's books on witchcraft, magic, and sorcery. Satan has always tried to entice the children, while they are innocently learning and inquisitive so that, when they are adults, paganism will be familiar to them.

All of the New Age occult sciences are extremely complicated and numerous. So it is far easier to be deceived by them. In my research on this subject, the single point that struck me was that the old Babylonian/New Age religion (with its unholy alliance with Far East religions syncretized with witchcraft, sorcery, and magic) has *one common goal*. That is, worship whatever and however you want—just do not be involved with anything related to Jesus Christ.

You can see the motivation exactly behind the occult and behind these practices.

There are some practitioners of witchcraft that seem very innocent; but, in reality, all occultism—bar none—is cancerous. That is to say, in the end it has power to destroy us. Whether a person is a curious dabbler or a full-time practitioner of the occult, in the end **poison is poison**. If you play with it, you are going to pay—period. There is no argument.

To stay clean of the occult is difficult in this day and age. It is everywhere—TV, movies, video games, adult books, children's books, music, newspapers, and radio. All of our entertainment today, in this society, is riddled with it. If you went to an amusement park, during or after the Feast, most likely you saw the occult in its fine "evil glory" in the decorations of Halloween. It is such an evil thing that we, so many times, overlook and feel comfortable with. We have been programmed, in this society, to feel comfortable with it.

This New Age religion is a syncretization of pagan eastern religions and the occult. Let me give you one example of how these things thread through our entertainment. Irvin Kershner (the director of George Lucas's movie, "The Empire Strikes Back") is a Zen Buddhist. Kershner admitted of the film, "I want to introduce some Zen here, because I don't want the kids to walk away just feeling that everything is shoot-em-up; but there's also a little something to think about here in terms of yourself and your surroundings." In fact, Lucas' biographer, Dale Pollock, acknowledges that "Yoda's philosophy is Buddhist. He tells Luke that the Force requires him to be calm, at peace, and passive."

Whatever the source of "the Force" of Star Wars, it is clear that it is similar to the pantheistic polytheism of neo-pagan witches. Lucas himself called it a "religion" three times in the first movie of his Star Wars trilogy. And he admitted to *Time Magazine* that "the Force" was "God." Of course, the "god" that he said it was is not the one true God that we think of. He claimed that the simple message of the movie was that "There is a God, and there is both a good side and a bad side. You have a choice between them, but the world works better if you're on the good side."

Not only are both the religion of "the Force" and the religion of Wicca *pantheistic*, but central to both is a belief in sorcery. Luke Skywalker, the hero of "Star Wars," is a **sorcerer**. (Likewise, even more clearly so, is the hero of Lucas' later film, "Willow.") And we could go on and on, and mention television, movies, and shows that contain these things. "Charmed" (or some similar title) is one that comes to mind. And I heard recently that there is one coming on cable that is about a family whose daughter attends a witch school. It is promoted as a family comedy, for family entertainment "fun."

The good news in all of this is that all we need to know about ***battling the occult*** in our lives is contained in the Word of God. You do not have to do what I did, and agonizingly go to the Internet and get a feel for what is out there. If you do, it will affect you. There is an oppression that you will feel. Now I am not saying that I got in too deeply. In fact, I only went to one witch's site, and got out of it very quickly. I just wanted to see what quotes they would make. But it is a very serious thing. And our nation is being bombarded and overwhelmed with it. And there are children that attend Christian churches are also being involved in it, because it is painted as being so "innocent."

The apostle Paul referred to the neo-paganism type of religion in his letter to the Corinthians, when instructing them that "knowledge puffs up, but love edifies."

I Corinthians 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords). . .

Notice that he said "so-called" gods. Anything we put before the Eternal God—before the one true God—becomes, in a sense, *a god*. Anything placed before God is a god; but it has no power, and is useless.

I Corinthians 8:5-6 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things, and through whom we live.

The obvious conclusion is that there is **one true God**, and He is the ultimate power and authority in the universe. In stark contrast, the polytheistic religions of the ancient Near East did not consider their gods (even as a group) to represent the ultimate power in the universe. Instead, they believed in an impersonal elemental realm that was the source of knowledge and power. Even though they deny

that God exists, they know that their gods do not have anywhere near the power of the one true God. They cannot deny it—because God has revealed it to everyone.

The one true God requires **obedience** and **submission**, and that we **live in truth**—which is not very attractive to the rebellious human beings (who love the lie, who love the occult). Do we spend more time seeking God's truth than we do learning the ways of this world? What types of books are we reading? What types of movies are we watching? I know that it is a constant battle, every week, trying to resist the entertainment that is put out. Sometimes we fail, and sometimes we are successful in resisting these things.

Those times that we fail and watch something that we should not, we need to get up, pray to God and ask Him to give us the power and the might to resist these things—so that we do not get pulled down by them.

What is happening is that we are in a nation that is being manipulated and brainwashed to be ready for a New Age religion that will be worldwide. All of these practices, that we have talked about today, are part of that New Age **religion**.

Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The negative side of this statement infers that "living a lie" puts people in slavery to the father of lies. But let us end on a positive note:

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

This is where our focus should be—on these positive things of God, the truth of God, and God's way of life.