

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 11 – The Occult

Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School

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Review

The Scriptures teach that the whole world lies in the power of Satan (1 John 5:19). Therefore, the world's religious philosophies are Satan's doing. Satan's servants are false teachers that disguise themselves as teachers of the truth and doers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:13-15).

In order to understand the occult correctly, we need to have understand correct angelology. Otherwise, we may go beyond what the Scriptures teach about Satan and demons.

Angelology

Angelology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the holy angels, Satan, and fallen angels or demons.

Holy Angels (and Angel Characteristics)

Angels are mentioned some 275 times in 34 books of the Bible (17 in each Testament). In the OT, the word used for “angel” is “malek” meaning messenger. Additional OT names for angels include “cherubim”, “saraphim”, “men”, and sometimes “sons of God”. In the NT, the word “angel” comes from the Greek word “angelos” also meaning messenger. “Angel” can be used of men or heavenly beings that are charged by God with a commission.

Angels are spirit beings (Heb 1:14) created (Psa 148:2-5; Col 1:16) holy before the creation of the world (Job 38:6-7). The innumerable “myriads” of angels (Heb 12:22, Rev 5:11) were all created simultaneously (Col 1:16) by Jesus. Unlike Adam, there is no indication that angels were created from previously created matter (like Adam from dust in Gen 2:7). Their number does not change since they cannot reproduce (Matt 22:30) and are not subject to death (Luke 20:36). Angels had, and some still have, access to God (Job 1:6, 12; 2:1, 7; Matt 18:10).

Angels have intellect (Matt 28:5; Luke 1:13-16; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 10:5-6). They know more than man. They have lived much longer than man has and have learned much more than man has. Angels may perceive the intentions of man through observation, but there is no indication in Scripture that they can read the thoughts or hear the silent prayers of man. They know Jesus Christ and God's plan of redemption as it has been revealed to them. Angels know less than God, they are NOT omniscient. Angels show emotion (Job 38:7; Luke 2:13; Luke 15:10), have a will or self-determination (Jude 6), and have great power (2 Pet 2:11).

Angels are NOT omnipresent. They are always somewhere at a given moment (Dan 9:21-23; 10:11-12). Angels are always at some place in time, but they are not limited to the confines of material places. They are not limited in the amount of space they can inhabit (Luke 8:30). They are immaterial and incorporeal (Luke 2:9-15). Angels can move through walls, for example, but they cannot be in two houses at the same time. Angels exist and act in time; they are one-way immortal.

Angels live in heaven (Matt 22:30; Gal 1:8; Isa 6:1-2; Rev 4:6) and the “heavenly places” (Eph 3:8-10; 6:12). Angels have appeared to people in Scripture in different modes such as dreams (Matt 1), visions (2 Kings 6), men (Gen 18; 19), man-like beings (Dan 10; Matt 28), and living creatures (Rev 4:7; Ezek 1).

Angels are a higher order of creation than man (Heb 2:7; 1 Cor 6:2-3) and have greater wisdom and power (Matt 28:2; Acts 5:19; 2 Pet 2:11) than man, but both are limited (Matt 24:36; Dan 10:13). Angels can impact the natural world and the affairs of men so long as God allows it (Matt 28:2; Acts 12:6-11; Dan 10:10-21). They are great in might and power, but do not use that power to punish other angels – that is God's prerogative (2 Pet 2:10-11; Jude 9).

Angels are organized (Psa 89:5-7; Rev 12:7; Eph 3:10). Apparently, there is only one archangel (Jude 9; 1 Thess 4:16). There are high ranking angels (chief princes) (Dan 10:13), ruling angels (Eph 3:10), cherubim (Gen 3:24; Ex 25:17-22; 1 King 6:23-29; Ezek 1:1-4; 10:15-20; 41:18-20), and seraphim (Isa 6:2-7).

Cherubim (cherub) are angelic or supernatural beings created with powers and beauty beyond the capabilities of the human mind to describe or understand. The mention of cherubim is almost exclusively in the OT (Gen 3:24; Ex 25; 26:1, 31; Num 7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ezek 1; 10:4; 18-22), Heb 9:5 being their only mention in the NT. Though they are supernatural beings, cherubim are never referred to as angels in Scripture because they do not exercise the duties of a messenger in any of their appearances. The purpose of cherubim is to be “proclaimers and protectors of God’s glorious presence, His sovereignty, and His holiness” (Dickason in “Angels”), keeping away anything that is unholy. The presence of cherubim designates the presence of God, as God is enthroned above them (Psa 80:1; 99:1).

Seraphim (seraph) is from the Hebrew meaning, “burning one.” Seraphim are another special class of angels, and as with cherubim, seraphim are also associated with the glory of God (Isa 6:1-7). Some have speculated that their name (burning ones) addresses their consuming devotion to God and not their outward ministry. The distinct ministry of seraphim is to perform a priestly type of service to God. We see them declaring that man must be cleansed of sin’s moral defilement before they can stand in front of God and be of service to Him. Seraphim “praise and proclaim the perfect holiness of God” (Dickason in “Angels”).

Michael meaning, “who is like God?” is an angel called by name in Scripture (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7-8). Gabriel meaning “mighty one of God” is another holy angel called by name (Dan 8:16; 9:20-21; Luke 1:19; 26-27). Other angels with names and responsibilities are the “Fire” angel (Rev 14:18), the “Water” angel (Rev 16:5), the “Abyss” angel who binds Satan (Rev 20:1-3), a “star from heaven which had fallen” angel (Rev 9:1), and Apollyon meaning destroyer (Rev 9:11).

Holy angels worship and praise God (Heb 1:6; Rev 4:8; 5:11-12; Psa 148:1-2; Isa 6:3; Luke 2:9-14), render service to believers (Heb 1:14; Matt 4:11), announce and administer God’s judgment (Gen 19:10-14; Rev 14:6-7; 19:17-18; Acts 12:23; Rev 16:1), and influence world affairs (Dan 4:17; 10:21; 12:1).

Satan

Satan is the name given to the leader of the fallen angels (Matt 12:26). The name comes from the Hebrew word “*sātān*” which means “an adversary, one who resists.” It is clear from the Scriptures that Satan exists – it is taught in seven OT books (Gen 3:1; 1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-7; Zech 3:1-2, etc.) and by every NT writer and Jesus (Matt 13:39; Luke 10:18; 11:18). **Since Satan is a created being he does not possess the divine attributes like omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.**

Satan’s pre-fall state was that of perfection – full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, he had a privileged place with God, he is a cherub, he was blameless (Ezek 28:11-15). Then he sinned (Ezek 28:15-18; Isa 14:12-14), unrighteousness was found in him, and was cast from the mountain of God. The time of Satan’s fall is unspecified, but probably came after the creation and before Adam’s fall (Job 38:6-7). His pre-fall name is Lucifer (son of the morning in Isa 14:12), but is thereafter referred to as Satan (Matt 4:10), Devil (Matt 4:1), Evil one (John 17:15), Great red dragon (Rev 12:3, 7), Serpent of old (Rev 12:9), Adversary (1 Pet 5:8), Beelzebul (Lord of the fly in Matt 12:24), Belial (Worthless in 2 Cor 6:15), God of this world (2 Cor 4:4), Ruler of this world (John 12:31), Prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), Enemy (Matt 13:28), Tempter (Matt 4:3), Murderer (John 8:44), Liar (John 8:44), and Accuser (Rev 12:10).

Satan is a murderer and liar (John 8:44) and the accuser (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10) and adversary of the brethren (1 Pet 5:8). He attempted to thwart God's plan of redemption through Christ (Matt 4:1-11; Matt 2:16; John 8:44; Matt 16:23; John 13:27), he blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) snatching the word from their hearts (Luke 8:12), he tempts believers (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5) working to defeat them (1 Thess 2:18; Eph 6:11-12; Matt 13:38-39; Rev 2:10), and may masquerade as an angel of light to deceive people (2 Cor 11:14).

Satan was initially judged at his fall where he lost his fellowship with God, was corrupted so he lost the uncorrupted nature he had since his creation, and lost whatever authority over elect angels he might have had before he sinned. Satan was also judged at the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:14-15). The serpent was cursed and God established His plan for Christ to defeat Satan. Satan was also judged at the cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:14-15), where Christ openly triumphed over the principalities and powers. The result of this judgment is that Satan has lost and Christ is victorious.

Satan will be judged in the Tribulation (Rev 12:7-12) where he will be cast out of heaven with his angels by God's elect angels. Satan will lose all access to the throne of God at this point – he and his angels will be exiled from their natural sphere. Satan will also be judged at the Second Coming (Rev 20:1-3) when he will be cast down to the Abyss for one thousand years, during the Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ on earth. Satan's final judgment (Rev 20:10) will come after when he will be cast into the Lake of Fire, and there he will be tormented day and night for all eternity.

Demons

Demons are evil or fallen angels who followed Satan in his revolt against God (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:3-4) and who are ruled by Satan (Matt 12:24; 25:41; 12:17). The existence of demons is shown in the OT (e.g. Deut 32:17; Psa 106:37; Lev 17:7; Psa 96:5) and NT (e.g. Matt 8:31; John 8:48-49; Luke 10:17-20). There are two groups of demons. One group is free and is actively opposing God's plan (Eph 6:11-12). The other group is currently confined (Luke 8:31) – some temporarily (Rev 9:1-15) others permanently (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). Some are perhaps confined because of the sin of Gen 6:1-4.

Demons are Satan's tool for influencing creation. They extend satanic influence over men (Eph 2:1-2), nations (Dan 10), the world, and the heavenly places (Eph 6:11-12). Demons can cause disease (Luke 13:11; Matt 9:32-33; Matt 12:22; 17:15-18) with God's permission (Job 1:12; 2:6; cf. 2 Cor 12:7-10), influence the mind of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) and deceive people (1 Thess 3:5) and nations (Rev 16:14). They tempt believers by enticement through the Satan's world system of deception and wickedness that leaves God out and is opposed to Him (James 1:13-14; 2 Cor 11:3; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:4; John 16:11; 1 John 2:15-17; James 3:15). Satan's aim is to make the values of this godless system seem attractive; appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life to entice us to sin.

Demons can also possess unbelievers (Matt 4:24; Luke 8:27-29; Mark 9:22). Some of the characteristics of demonic possession include (Mark 5:3-13): great strength (5:3); fits of rage (5:4); split personality (5:6-7); resistance to spiritual things (5:7); yet spiritual insight (5:7); and altered voice (5:9).

Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession. Ryrie Study Bible NASB

Eventually all demons including Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (Matt 25:41).

The Occult

The occult is defined as:

Of, relating to, or dealing with supernatural influences, agencies, or phenomena. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition (<http://www.bartleby.com/61/>)

Matters regarded as involving the action or influence of supernatural or supernormal powers or some secret knowledge of them. Miriam-Webster Online Dictionary

The occult is an umbrella term that includes many practices and belief systems. These beliefs are usually based on the idea that everything is or contains energy (an unquantifiable energy), and one can access, change, channel and/or manipulate this energy (or force) for the purposes of gaining information, healing, or bringing a desired situation or thing into material reality. THE OCCULT: BRIEF EXPLANATIONS OF VARIOUS TERMS AND CONCEPTS by Marcia Montenegro (www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/Articles_OccultTerms1.html)

The word occult is generally associated with demonic/Satanic practices. It can be thought of as involving the action or influence of supernatural agencies or some secret knowledge of them, which transcend the natural senses, to seek their influence in our present or future lives, or the lives of others. Many occultic practices are associated with the New Age Movement. The activities of the occult are found everywhere today, and we see that these activities have been present for a long time as they are referred to in Scripture repeatedly.

Occult covers practices that are not approved of by God e.g., astrology (Isa 47:13), casting spells (Deut 18:11), consulting with spirits (Deut 18:11), magic (Gen 41:8), sorcery (Ex 22:18), witchcraft (Deut 18:10), and spiritism (Deut 18:11).

A central passage describing the occult is Deut 18:9-13. Here the Israelites are commanded to not learn to imitate the detestable occultic practices of the Canaanites. There are three general categories of occultic practice mentioned in this passage.

⁹"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. ¹⁰"There shall not be found among you anyone who **makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire**, one who **uses divination**, one who **practices witchcraft**, or one who **interprets omens**, or a **sorcerer**, ¹¹ or **one who casts a spell**, or a **medium**, or a **spiritist**, or **one who calls up the dead**. ¹²"For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. ¹³"You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. Deut 18:9-13

"Makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire" – refers to the Canaanite practice of sacrificing children to their god Molech. (e.g. Ahaz in 2 Kings 16:3; Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:6 and 2 Chron 33:6; practice to false gods in 2 Kings 3:26; 17:31; 23:10; and Jer 19:5)

1. Divination – The attempt to foretell the future in order to shape our lives according to it.
 - a. Divination (v10) – to seek to determine the will of the gods by examining and interpreting omens.
 - b. Interprets omens (v10) – to tell the future based on `signs' such as the movement of birds, fire, or rain. Some sort of aid is used to gain knowledge of the future.

Divination is the most widespread occultic practice. The occultic practice of divination is practiced by observing omens, casting lots, interpreting physical objects or shapes, or spontaneously by whatever the diviner sees. Divination practitioners use literally a myriad of techniques and paraphernalia such as: astrology, books, tarot cards, crystal balls, tea-leaves, palm reading, Ouija boards (this could be under the spiritism section also), water, fire, numbers, dreams, rods (especially for discovering underground water), entrails of animals, Feng Shui, the dead, etc. The Scriptures seem to say that true divination is brought about by demons.

¹²My 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. Hosea 4:12

¹⁶It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, **a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us**, who was bringing her masters much profit by **fortune-telling**. ¹⁷Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "**I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!**" **And it came out at that very moment.** Acts 16:16-18

Astrology

A significant means of divination in our society is astrology, which is the practice of using the position of the planets, sun, and moon at the time and place of birth as signposts to explain the person's character, life, and destiny. It teaches that the positions and movements of the stars and planets directly influence human events. One's personality and character weaknesses and strengths are also affected by these movements. Using a horoscope, astrologers claim to predict the future. The horoscope is derived from the location of the sun and planets when the individual was born.

¹⁹"**And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them**, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. Deut 4:19

²⁶If I have looked at the sun when it shone Or the moon going in splendor, ²⁷And my heart became secretly enticed, And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, ²⁸That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, **For I would have denied God above.** Job 31:26-28

Ouija Board

Another method of divination is the Ouija Board. William Fuld patented the Ouija Board in 1892, but it was made popular in the 1960s by Parker Brothers as a parlor board game. It is the most popular game rooted in divination in America today.

The December 1994 Consumer Reports published the results of a survey among 17,000 young people ages 10 to 14. They answered a query concerning what games they played with and which they enjoyed the most. Out of 83 games listed, Monopoly was no. 1 and the Ouija Board was no. 2! *Should Christians Use the Ouija Board?* at www.johnankerberg.org/ankerberg-articles/ouija.html

The players ask questions while their hands rest on the mobile pointer. The pointer's movement on the board produces the answer.

The Scriptures are clear that all aspects of divination are despicable to the Lord.

¹²"**For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD**; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. Deut 18:12

¹⁶They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. ¹⁷Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and **practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him.** ¹⁸**So the LORD was very angry** with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah. 2 Kings 17:16-18

²²Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

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." 1 Sam 15:22-23

2. Magic – The attempt to control the present, our lives, the lives of others, or events of nature by ceremonies, charms, or spells believed to have supernatural powers. This would include hypnotism.
 - a. Practices witchcraft (v10) – is the attempt to control people or circumstances through power given by evil spirits.
 - b. Sorcerer (v10) – involves practicing magic by incantations and drugs or potions.
 - c. One who casts a spell (v11) – is literally 'one who ties knots,' thus one who binds other people by magical mutterings.

⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, **those who practice magic arts**, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. Rev 21:8 (NIV)

¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, **sorcery**, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21

3. Spiritism – The attempt to communicate with the dead, to receive information and help from them.
 - a. Medium (v11) – one who supposedly communicates with the dead but who actually communicates with demons.
 - b. Spiritist (v11) – One who has an intimate knowledge of the demonic, spiritual world.
 - c. One who calls up the dead (v11) – investigating and seeking information from the dead.

The modern, new-age version of spiritism is channeling. In many cases, channeling may be used by practitioners to make a dishonest income. However, in other cases actual contact with a spirit being may be taking place.

CHANNEL—a person who allows his body and mind to be used as a mechanism for the etheric world intelligences to bring psychic information or healing energy to others; comes through in physical and mental psychic skills, while the person is in a deep or semi-trance state; used in inspirational speaking, writing, psychic surgery, etc.

CHANNELING—to allow an etheric world intelligence to enter one's mind and impress thoughts upon the consciousness to be spoken aloud, using one's own voice; medium's body is relaxed and mind is uncluttered and free of former concepts and opinions; awareness is heightened and medium senses another presence operating through him or her but does not sense the significance of the material until afterward; the knowledge brought through is beyond normal comprehension of the medium and must be studied to be understood; currently becoming very popular. *Donning International Encyclopedic Psychic Dictionary*, p. 105

There are three general groups of those involved in channeling:

1. Those that have complete control of their body and speak the message of the spirit guide.
2. Those that enter a deep trance as the message is given from the entity.
3. Those that remain conscious but will voluntarily yield control of their body to allow the entity to use their hands for writing messages (also known as automatic writing).

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 19:31

⁶As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. ... ²⁷Now 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." Lev 20:6, 27

What about ghosts?

Ghosts are talked about in the Bible.

⁷Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor." ... ¹¹Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." ¹²When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul." ¹³The king said to her, "Do not be afraid; but what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up out of the earth." ¹⁴He said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped with a robe " And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did homage. ¹⁵Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do." 1 Sam 28:7, 11-15

Most commentators believe that this was a unique case of actually being able to contact a dead person. More than likely this woman had contacted spirits in the past, but those spirits were actually demons. This is why she cried out with a loud voice when she realized it was Samuel, since she had not expected to actually contact Samuel. God used this instance to show both his power and presence to the medium revealing himself as the one true God. He also used it to send a message of condemnation to Saul.

³Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and **ghosts** of the dead And to mediums and spiritists. Isaiah 19:3

²⁶When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a **ghost!**" And they cried out in fear. Matt 14:26

³⁹"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a **spirit** does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Luke 24:39

¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 2 Cor 11:14

The Bible is clear that "...it is appointed for man to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27). Therefore, there are no disembodied souls left behind.

Conclusion

It is clear from these passages about the occult that overt involvement is against the will of God. The prohibition found in Deut 18:9 given to Israel, but the principle seems applicable to Christians as well, is to "not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations."

People who find themselves practicing these activities open themselves up for even greater demonic influence. Demons may further deceive people who begin down the path of these practices by causing events to come about that would increase people's faith in this sort of thing. From www.valleybible.net/Adults/ClassNotes/TheologySurvey/Demons/WorkOfDemons.pdf

What do you think of the Harry Potter movies? (from <http://www.valleybible.net/ask.php#harrypotter>)

Not all of us have viewed the Harry Potter movies, nor are we very interested in doing movie reviews. Colossians 3:2 tells us to set our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth and Philippians 4:8 teaches us to let our mind dwell on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, etc. This applies to far more than movies and each of us can improve in what we focus our mind upon.

We have heard that some Christian leaders have called people to not view these movies or read the books based on its subject matter of witchcraft. However, we need to recognize the difference between fantasy and reality. That which is real in life is worthy of serious and thoughtful consideration. These books are works of fiction and when we distinguish between what is fiction from what is non-fiction, we will be better able to serve God in reality without importing imagination and speculation into the Christian life.

More important is the troubling trend among Christian leaders to take a stand against some popular interest of the world. Somehow, the words of Jesus in Matthew 15:11 have been overlooked, "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." This principle suggests that our reading of a Harry Potter book is of little consequence to living a godly Christian life.

The More Important Issue

⁴But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to **deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons**, 1 Tim 4:11

Satan does overt work (deceitful, seducing spirits) and covert work (doctrines of demons).

Now let me add something here. Satan has some very effective lies. And I really feel that one thing Satan has done today with the preoccupation with witchcraft and the occult and all of that stuff, is he has directed peoples' attention away from the real issue. People, I know there's a lot of real fantastic and exciting things about Ouija boards. And even those of us who are Christians and reject all of that kind of like to fiddle around with it and read about it cause it's kind of funny...kind of weird. And we're all kind of hung up on finding out a little more about the next world. And what Satan, I'm sure, would like to do would be to get everybody diverted into his overt activity and forget his covert activity which is really where he works the hardest and that is at lying.

I think an interesting statement that I read recently by Dave Breis is this: "Witchcraft is certainly dangerous but it deceives only the simple minded. Toying with Ouija boards or holding a reference for fetishes can produce a dreadful spiritual infection. Their main appeal, however, will be to those limited intellects who feel more than they think. External phenomena may be interesting, even spectacular, but are limited in their appeal to reasonable people. With witchcraft, orgies and séances and demon possession, he has captured thousands; with false doctrine millions."

He's right. The real work of Satan is in false doctrine. If you want to know what I believe it is much more seriously Satanic in terms of its ultimate influence to have somebody standing in a pulpit and denying the Word of God than to have a séance going on. That is obvious. This is subtle. Satan's deadliest activity, beloved, is in the area of perverting the truth. That's where he spends his time. And I'm sure he'd like to get a whole lot of Christians diverted into thinking that all he's doing is running around with his demons and playing little games in people. "Satan: What is he like?--Part 2" by John MacArthur