

2009 Fall Newsletter
Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia
P.O. Box 51, Southfield, MI 48037-0051

“...I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
2 Corinthians 11:3



WITCHES, GHOSTS AND MEDIUMS

What do the Scriptures say about Spiritism?

In October the holiday called Halloween will be celebrated. As early as August, the stores begin to display the decorations and supplies, costumes and paraphernalia associated with this day. It has been reported that more money is spent on Halloween than on any other major holiday, including Christmas. How incredible that seems in view of the fact that Halloween celebrates all that is evil, demonic, and ugly while Christmas observes the birth of the Savior of mankind.

Perhaps this is not so surprising when one realizes how much the occult has proliferated in our society today. On television the public is

presented with prime time programs such as, “Crossing Over,” “Ghost Whisperer,” “Medium,” investigations of various “haunted” places, and “Twitches,” a children’s program. The movie industry has made a thriving profit on the paranormal since the movie “Poltergeist” started a groundswell of interest in serious spiritism.

Driving through the city one can find store-fronts advertising Psychic Readings, and horoscopes. Occult paraphernalia is readily available. A commonly marketed children’s toy is the Ouija Board, with which players ask questions of the board and “unseen” forces move an indicator to spell out an answer. The popularity of the Harry

Potter books and the Goosebumps series and others shows how steadily our children are being primed to accept the occult.

New Age religions advocate “channeling” to contact spirits, and Pentecostal miracle and healing services absorb the minds of honest Christians to the exclusion of investigation into the Holy Writ which warns “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

Divination has invaded the practice of natural medicine in the form of pendulum swinging to obtain diagnostic answers. Witchcraft has shed its dark and malevolent reputation and now parades as a harmless “nature” religion called Wicca.

But what do the Scriptures say about spiritism? Is any of this real, or is it all fakery?

That spiritism is very real, the Scriptures give abundant proof. That the spirits that people contact in séances, with Ouija boards, and through various other means are not the spirits of their dead loved ones is also demonstrated. We have in the Scriptures most abundant and positive testimony that no communication could come from the dead until after the resurrection. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 11; Psalm 6:5; 88:11,12; 1 Corinthians 15:16-18) Furthermore, we have positive Scripture testimony that all these spirits are “evil spirits,” “lying spirits,” and that all these are demons or “devils.”

In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, Moses set down clear guidance for the nation of Israel with respect to the occult. *“There shall not be found among you any one...that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the*

LORD...” In Exodus 22:18 it says that anyone practicing witchcraft was to be put to death.

Clearly, all these practices are contrary to the Law of God. In Galatians 5:19-21, the Apostle Paul reiterates this by saying all who practice such things “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

There are several examples in the Bible of spirit possession and witchcraft.

Jesus, on several occasions, cast demons out of people, most notably Mary Magdalene out of whom seven devils had been cast. (Luke 8:2 and Mark 16:9) On another occasion, a man of the Gadarenes was possessed by so many spirits that they called themselves “Legion,” because they were so numerous. (Luke 8:26-37 and Mark 5:1-16) The Apostle Paul also cast out the spirit of divination in a woman who followed them around in Phillipi. Even though the spirit proclaimed them servants of the most high God, Paul was grieved because of the impure source of this truth and cast the spirit from her. (Acts 16:16-18)

Pharoah’s magicians were able to make their staffs turn into serpents just as Aaron’s had done as a sign from the Lord. (Exodus 7:10-12, 2 Timothy 3:8)

When King Saul saw the armies of the Philistines amassing on Israel’s border, and knowing that his kingship was forsaken by God, Saul sought the aid of a witch at Endor, who was a necromancer—one who speaks to the dead. That the spirit summoned by the witch was Samuel, Saul only surmised by things stated by the medium. That this communication was expressly against the Law of God, shows how far Saul had fallen from faithful obedience to the law of God. (1 Samuel 28) This episode is cited as an example of what happens in séances today; as proof that the spirits who enter are the participants’ familiar dead ones.

If these spirits are not the ghosts of dead friends and relatives, who are they?

In Genesis 6:1-6 we learn about angels (sons of God) who saw the daughters of men and came down to take wives of them. They produced a hybrid race of “giants” which filled the earth with violence. As a result, God brought the flood to destroy this race and to begin again with the family of Noah who was “perfect [purely human] in his generations.”

The Apostle Peter mentions these saying, *“For if God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment.”* (2 Peter 2:4) In Jude 6 they are spoken of as the, *“Angels who kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, he (God) hath reserved in everlasting chains in darkness until the judgment of the last day.”*

The word translated “hell” in this context, is the only use in the Bible of the Greek word “Tartarus” which in Greek mythology meant the place of deep darkness in which the Titans were bound. The Apostles choice of this word is an allusion to the fact that while these “fallen angels” have some liberties in their imprisoned condition, they are not free to exercise their powers in the light. This is why spirit contacts are always made in darkness—in darkened rooms or at night. The other option they have is to “possess” a human being and use that person to work their wills.

Demon possession is never good, but leads instead to all forms of evil, ugliness, and insanity. Killers have sometimes spoken of voices telling them to kill. People in asylums often “hear voices” that drive them mad, just as the man of the Gadarenes was mad and tore at himself. At the very least, those who are possessed by a spirit experience detachment from normal life relationships.

These fallen angels, or demons, are not to be confused with Satan, the prince of demons, whose evil career began long before. Satan was originally created a beautiful angel whose heart became lifted up with pride because of his beauty. This led him to rebel against God and establish himself as a rival of the Almighty. (Ezekiel 28:16; Isaiah 14:12-14) But God, in His supreme wisdom, saw a way to use Satan’s rebellion to test the human creation. Satan has therefore been permitted to have his way with the world for a time. (2 Corinthians 4:4) His end will come when God has completed his work. (Revelation 20:1-3,10)

The fallen spirits are not only well informed in respect to all the affairs of earth we see from the account in Luke 4:41. They are also adept in deceit and well able to convince the gullible that they are their family members. It is not surprising that Satan and the fallen angels should know considerably more than do men. They are of a higher, more intelligent order than man. Psalm 8:5 tells us that man was created *“a little lower than the angels.”* Man’s only protection from the cunning of these wicked spirits is avoidance. The Word of the Lord is *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7)

The snare of the occult works on both those who disbelieve and those who believe in its powers. For the skeptic and those who consider it harmless children’s fantasies, there is an innocent openness that can be used by evil spirits to gain admittance. For those who believe in spirit phenomena and are curious, there is an invitation to the spirits to enter and work their will. Either way there is danger.

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart:
try me, and know my thoughts:
see if there be any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Psalm 139:23,24

