

Place Lurgan Baptist 18:11:2008

THE CHAOS OF THE CULTS

Reading: Deuteronomy 18:9-22

4. SPIRITISM

In the Daily Post of 13th May 1982 and on BBC Welsh news programmes, the Presbyterian Church Youth Chaplain at Bala, Dafydd Owen, reported that “ *Devil worship by occult groups whose young members burn Bibles, cut their wrists and suck each other’s blood is now happening on an increasing scale in rural Wales.*”

The word “ *occult,*” means “ *hidden,*” and it is used to describe pagan practices in which magic, witchcraft and other means are used to explore and exploit the supernatural realm. One aspect of the occult is spiritism.

Spiritists believe that it is possible to contact the dead, or the spirit-world, through the mind and especially through clairvoyants or mediums, who, often, while in a trance allow their bodies to be used by spirits. Now there is no question about it that Spiritism has a certain appeal. With some the appeal is curiosity. There are many who just love to dabble in the mysterious and occult. To such people anything that is sensational and “ *spooky,*” has a big appeal. For others this delving into the unknown has come about because of bereavement.

For those who are broken hearted because of the loss of a loved one, have sought comfort from the teaching of this

cult. Is their loved one happy ? Is he conscious of happenings on earth ? Has he a message for the one he has left behind ? Our heart goes out to all in such cases, indeed most of us have known bereavement in the loss of a close relative, but the tragedy is when the bereaved one resorts to that which is absolutely forbidden by the Word of God. Now we might ask the question, *is it not all sham ?* Certainly much that passes for supernatural in the séance, a séance is group communication with the dead, is nothing more than deception. Houdini the greatest master of deception in the world, says in his book,

I have not found one incident that savoured of the genuine. If there had been any real unalloyed demonstrations to work on, one that did not reek of fraud, one that could not be reproduced by earthly powers, then there would be something of a foundation. But up to the present time everything I have investigated has been the result of deluded brains, or those who were too actively willing to believe.

So in answer to the question, is it sham ? Is it fantasy ? Is it all a hoax ? We need to be cautious. You see, we need to be careful that we do not throw out the baby with the bathwater. For while acknowledging there is much that is false about Spiritism, we would go beyond Scripture to say that Spiritism is all fraudulent. We completely reject that the spirits of the dead can communicate with the living. (Lk 16:26) Those who seek to establish such communication only succeed in making themselves the prey of evil spirits who pretend to be the spirit of the departed dead. Paul says “ *that in the latter times some*

shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing (or deceiving spirits) and doctrines of devils.” (1 Tim 4:1)
Would you agree with me this when I say that there are three powers in the world today.

1. There is **Human Power:** that is possessed by Men
2. There is **Divine Power:** that is possessed by God alone
3. There is **Supernatural Power:** that is possessed by Satan and his angels

So while we acknowledge the fact that some of what passes as Spiritism is false and shame, we must underestimate the reality of Satan’s power and his angels. Now what we want to do this is look at (Deut Ch 18) and notice five things in relation to Spiritism...

(1) WHAT IS PROHIBITED

Spiritism is forbidden by the Lord. Now remember the context of these words was Israel entering the land of Canaan. God’s gift to the nation of Israel of the land of Palestine carried with it the clear command that they should expel the seven Canaanite nations dwelling there. Look at (7:1-5) If you turn to (20:16-18) this command is reiterated. Does that seem harsh ? (20:10) Why did God demand this ? Well, the reason behind this extermination was not military or territorial, it was moral and spiritual. They were demon worshippers and their moral depravity had reached unparalleled depths. Had God ignored their abominations would He not have been abdicating His responsibilities as the moral Governor of the universe ? So it was in the context of Israel entering

the land and dealing with the sin of these nations that this prohibition was given. You see, this prohibition is,

(a) AFFIRMED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Let me give you one or two Scriptures. Look at (Lev 20:27 Is 8:19-20) Of course here in (Deut Ch 18) God specifies what is forbidden.

1. Sacrificing Children in the Fire:

One of the detestable practices of Canaanite worship was the burning of their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to Molech, the god of the Ammonites. (Lev 18:21 20:2-5 1Kings 11:7 2 Kings 23:10 Jer 32:35)

2. Divination:

The art of obtaining secret knowledge, especially that which is related to the future. Fortune tellers, the Ouija board, reading a crystal ball, reading tealeaves.

3. An Observer of Times:

One who tells the future based on signs. Reading the horoscope would fall into this category.

4. An Enchanter:

A magician or sorcerer who casts spells and bewitches people. Parents need to be careful what they feed their children in terms of books and films.

5. A Witch:

That is, “*one who knows.*” The Hebrew word means, “*a woman that hath a familiar spirit.*” We are now dealing with demonic spirits.

6. A Charmer:

A person who casts a spell on another person in order to change circumstances.

7. A Consulter with Familiar Spirits:

A medium, one who supposedly communicates with the dead, but actually communicates with demons.

8. A Wizard:

A wizard is the male version of the witch.

9. A Necromancer:

Another translation puts it “*one who calls up the dead.*” One who claims to speak to the dead for the purpose of fortune telling.

Now lest we conclude that these warnings about the “*occult,*” don’t apply to believers in this “*enlightened age,*” let me remind you that idolatry and witchcraft are listed among the sins of the flesh in the Galatian letter. (519:21) Moreover, one of the traits of the last days will be an increase in occult practices (Rev 9:20-21 18:2) in

fact those who engage in such things will be among those who will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Rev 21:8 22:14-15) But perhaps some of you are asking. Didn’t King Saul ask the witch of Endor to contact the dead prophet Samuel on his behalf ? Yes, and it’s a tragic story and a tragic end to a man who made such a promising start. Look at (1 Sam 28:4) Now there are several things we need to keep in mind here.

1. Saul was living in a state of disobedience to God.
(28:6)

2. God in His own sovereign way permitted Samuel to return but not in response to the witch. (28:11-12) In other words, God forestalled the séance by allowing the real Samuel to appear and six times we are told (28:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20) specifically that it was Samuel who spoke and not an imposter. It would seem that God, as He had ever right to do, had permitted Samuel to appear to Saul in order to deliver to him God’s last terrible message of judgment.

3. Now this is strictly an isolated incident of Divine Judgment, and that God’s revealed will forbids any contact with the dead. Indeed in (1 Chron 10:13) we have God’s punishment on Saul for doing this for we read, “*So Saul died for his transgression, which he committed against the Lord, even against the Word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it.*” (a)

(b) CONFIRMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Do you realise that the “ *spirits of devils work miracles ?* ” (Rev 16:14) On the eve of the battle of Armageddon, spirit powers will be working unceasingly. Working miracles (Rev 13:12-15) deluding men, inflaming passions, stirring up the world, summoning together the countless armies of the world, east against west, west against east, all against God. Did Paul encounter demonic forces as he got about the job of evangelizing the lost ? Look at (Acts 13:4-12) Here was a magician who purposely obstructed the preaching of the gospel, and on whom the judgment of God fell. (13:11) But is it not interesting to notice that before God’s judgment fell, Paul “ *filled with the Holy Ghost,* ” (Acts 13:9) denounced Elymas as “ *a child of the devil.* ” You see, Scripture reminds us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) The Spirit of God dwells within each believer and “ *greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.* ” (1 Jn 4:4) My we can never be possessed by demonic forces for we are shielded and protected by the power of God’s indwelling Spirit. (1)

(2) THAT WHICH IS PRACTISED

Look if you will at (18:12) In other words, these occult practices are abomination in God’s sight. An abomination is something that God detests. You see, these awful practices lead us to consider,

(a) THE COURSE OF SPIRITISM:

The onward movement of Spiritism in our world. Do you recall that the priests of Egypt were able to duplicate the miracles of Moses when he appeared before Pharaoh ? (Ex 7:11) What about Daniel ? Does his book not often talk about magicians, sorcerers, soothsayers and astrologers ? (1:20 2:2, 27 4:7 5:7) That was ancient Spiritism. Modern Spiritism was born in 1848 in Hydesville, New York in the home of the Fox family. Margaret and Kate Fox were twelve and nine years of age, when they claimed to have heard unusual and mysterious rapping noises in their home. When eventually the furniture in their room began to move without anyone touching it, when a strange cold hand touched Kate’s face she decided to investigate the incidents further and contacted the spirits. The girls believed that these noises were communications from the unseen world and they sought to devise a way to converse with the dead. News of these events traveled rapidly and séances were subsequently held across the USA and Europe.

Eryl Davies tells us that in 1987 the British Spiritualists Union had 52,000 members and some 560 churches in Britain. Many people have attended their séances, including those without any religious affiliation, as well as some Protestants and Catholics. (a) But what about,

(b) THE SOURCE OF SPIRITISM:

Can we doubt for one moment that this is of the Devil ? Do you remember the three powers that I mentioned ?

Natural power: possessed by men. **Divine power** possessed by God alone. **Supernatural power** possessed by the Devil and his angels. You know, some Christians are materialists who fail to understand that the Christian life is a real battle. (Eph 6:11-12) Charles B. Williams translates it like this, “ *for our contest is not with human foes alone, but with the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark world, that is, with the spirit forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest.*” You see, Satan is not a solitary enemy, he has a force of demon beings who are highly organized and brought together into a kingdom like God’s system. (Eph 6:12 Col 1:16) These angels chose to follow Satan (Rev 12:4) and they are known as demons or fallen angels, and it’s through these demons that Satan gets the job done. My Satan is not omnipresent he cannot be at your house and my house at the same time personally, but that’s little comfort to me, because one of his demons can. You see, he works through those ranks of demons who rebelled with him, and have been assigned responsibilities under him.

My is it not time that we all woke up ? Do you realise that this entire universe is a battle ground and we are in the middle of it ? Do you see that those under the influence of Satan dog your steps and incite you to disobey God ? (Matt 25:41 Jn 17:14) This is why we need the armour of God to protect us from the fiery darts of the Devil. My do your children not need to be protected ? Are ghosts, witches, goblins, Halloween, are these things only clean fun ? Well, listen to these facts. Halloween can be traced back to the pagan Celtic New Year festival of Samhain. People wanted to honour

Samhain the “ **god of death.**” Halloween marked the end of summer and was a kind of new years eve for the Celts and Anglo-Saxons. At the pagan festival of Samhain on the 31st October it was believed that the dead returned to the earth for a short period and food was left for them. Fires also were lit for the purpose of frightening away evil spirits and people made loud weird noises in order to make the evil spirits and witches move away and not molest them. ***Some individuals tried to contact the dead for help and protection.*** According to Eryl Davies after A.D. 43, when the Romans conquered Britain their pagan holidays were joined to the Samhain celebrations, so that a variety of gods were honoured on the 31st October. People today think it’s all a game, its just clean fun. Well, what do you teach your child about Satan, demons, witches and the occult when you allow them to take part in the unholy day of Halloween Satan’s night ? It may be fun but its pagan. It celebrates a pagan holiday. But it just shows us how much fun paganism can be to a lost world and even to believers who are not prepared to spiritually alert. (1) (2)

(3) THAT WHICH IS PERILOUS

Look if you will at (Deut 18:12 -14) Here is why God commanded Israel to drive them out, they were demon worshippers. The Lord Jesus spoke an eternal truth when He said, “ *By their fruits ye shall know them.*” (Matt 7:20) Judged by its fruits, Spiritism has little to offer the world. Indeed as J. Oswald Sanders informs us the effects on its people have been disastrous. For this cult has affected people,

(a) PHYSICALLY:

Mediums are frequently overpowered by the controlling spirit and as in Christ's day fall down and foam at the mouth. (Mk 1:26) Someone has said, " *their work renders them more and more nervous, more and more excitable, and its only logical sequence is insanity.*" Sir William Brookes acknowledged that the painful nervous and bodily prostration accompanying the work of the medium, involved a great drain on the vital forces. Is that the effect of Biblical Christianity on its people ?

(b) MENTALLY:

Indeed it's interesting to discover that the Fox sisters did not rich but poor. We're told they experienced great suffering and pain in their lives. One commentator says,

In time they became victims of the drink menace, nothing could satisfy their craving for alcohol, and they lost all sense of moral responsibility.

Dr. Forbes Winslow says, " *Tens of thousands of persons are confined in lunatic asylums on account of having tampered with the supernatural.*" My Is not the mark of true spirituality the possession of " *a sound mind ?*"

(c) SPIRITUALLY:

Listen to what Dr. Child says, " *What is virtue ? Virtue is good and sin is good. The woman at Sychar was just as pure in spirit before she met Christ, even though she was*

a harlot, as she was afterwards when she went to live a different life. There is no difference between Herod murderer of babies and Christ the Saviour of men." Can anything but evil come to the spiritual life of the medium or sinner from such awful blasphemy ?

(d) ETERNALLY:

Is this not the most serious of all ? For you see, the consequences in dabbling with this cult extend to the word to come. Do you recall what John says ? " *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.*" (Rev 21:8) My heaven is closed and hell is open to those who traffic with evil spirits. Those entangled with mystical spiritism through pagan magic, demonic séances, satanic witchcraft, and evil incantations will never enter heaven. (1) (2) (3) But notice,

(4) THAT WHICH IS PROCLAIMED

Look if you will at (18:14) In other words, these nations which inhabited the land of Canaan listened to soothsayers and diviners. Now do you want to listen for a moment to what the Spiritists say about the Bible, Christ, sin, and salvation. Listen to what they proclaim,

(a) In relation to the BIBLE:

To assert that it is a holy and divine book, that God inspired the writers to make known His divine will, is a gross outrage and misleading to the public.

(Outlines of Spiritualism p. 13) But what does the Word of God say ? “ *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” (2 Pet 1:21) Thomas A. Thomas says,

They were carried along, borne along under the control and direction of the Holy Spirit of God. They wrote as the Spirit directed them to write. They were borne along by Him, so that what they wrote was exactly that which the Holy Spirit intended should be there. What they wrote was in a very real sense, not their words, it was the very Word of God.

Do you recall Paul’s classic statement on inspiration ?

“ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*”

(2 Tim 3:16) The word “ *inspiration,*” here means

“ *God breathed.*” Literally, the verse says, “ *All Scripture is God breathed.* That is, Scripture is not the words of men into which God puffed Divine life. It is the very breath of God. Scripture is God Himself speaking. Inspiration does not mean men wrote God’s truth in their own words. It does not mean that God merely assisted the writers. It means that the words of the Bible are the words of God Himself. **Every Scripture was breathed out by God.** Let me affirm where I stand this ! When I speak of the Bible as the Word of God I do not mean that it

contains the Word of God but that it is the Word of God. No better testimony to the extent of inspiration could be borne than that by Dean Burgon.

The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth on the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. (a)

(b) In relation to CHRIST:

What is the meaning of the word Christ ? *It is not, as is generally supposed, the Son of the Creator of all things. Any just and perfect being is Christ. The miraculous conception of Christ is merely a fabulous tale.*

(Spiritual Telegraph, No, 37)

It is an absurd idea that Jesus was more divine than any other man. Christ was a medium and reformer in Judea. He is now an advanced spirit in the sixth sphere. Tom Paine is in the seventh sphere, one above our Lord.

(Demonology or Spiritualism, p. 147)

According to Pastor Hugh Orr Tom Paine was a leading atheist. But what does the Word of God say about Christ ? John testifies, “ *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*” (Jn 1:1)

Paul says, “ *In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” (Col 2:9) In that marvelous Christological passage in (Heb Ch 1) it says “ *But unto the Son, He saith Thy throne O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.*”

Jesus Christ was, is and ever shall be God. Concerning the death of Christ they say,

Your atonement is the very climax of a deranged imagination and one that is of the most unrighteous and immoral tendency. (A. J. Davis) But what does the Word of God say ? “ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” (Eph 1:7) “ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” (Heb 9:28) He came at one period, for one purpose with one payment.

(c) In relation to SALVATION:

They say,

Man is his own saviour (Rev. W. Stainton Moses)

In the Spiritualistic hymn book and prayers the name of Jesus is omitted, and the motto of many is ‘ Every man is his own saviour. (Light July 12, 1919)

But what does the Word of God say about salvation ? Christ says, “ *I am the door by me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.*” (Jn 10:9) Peter says, “ *Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*” (Acts 4:12)

(d) In relation to ETERNITY:

They say,

There is no devil and no evil spirits. All spirit people of wisdom know that there is no burning hell, no fearful devil. (Outlines of Spiritualism)

All spirits in the other world are nothing else but the souls of those who have lived here. (Lanslots, Spiritualism Unveiled, p. 36)

Do you see what the inference is here ? Since there are no angels or evil spirits, communications can be carried on between departed spirits of men and women. Do you recall what the Saviour said ? “ *I go my way and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins, whither I go ye cannot come.*” (Jn 8:21) That means that the wicked dead cannot enter heaven. But turn to (Lk 16:23-29) Now here’s a soul in hell and he wants a message sent back to his five brothers who are on the road to hell. But notice Abraham’s response. (Lk 16:29) In other words they have the Word of God. ***Now we have noted that the wicked dead cannot enter heaven, but notice here the wicked dead cannot return to earth, nor can they send a message back to earth.*** The Spiritists say they get messages from the departed. No, they don’t. They only succeed in making themselves the prey of evil spirits who pretend to be the spirit of the departed dead. But let’s not finish on a negative note. Lets go back to (Deut Ch 18) and notice not only that which is Prohibited, that which is

Practiced, that which is Perilous, that which is Proclaimed, but,

(5) THAT WHICH IS PROVIDED

Look at (18:15) Israel didn't need to experiment with new religions because the Lord had revealed Himself and His Word to them through Moses His chosen prophet, but Moses was going beyond Himself here and announcing the coming of the Prophet, the Lord Jesus. At least the way Peter explained in (Acts 3:22-26) You see,

(a) CHRIST IS THE TRUTH: WE MUST HEAR HIM

Look at (18:15) “ *Unto Him ye shall hearken.*” Jesus Christ is the True Prophet and there is a cost in not listening to Him. Look at (18:19) When God says, “ *Don't do,*” something He means it. When God says, Don't touch hidden things, occultic things, He means it. When we do it anyway it is disobedience and God says, “ *I will require it of him.*” (18:19) My don't touch that which is hidden, rather trust Him who is revealed. For Christ will show you all that you need to know for He is “ *the power of God and the wisdom of God.*” (1 Cor 1:24)

(b) CHRIST IS THE TEST: WE MUST TRY THEM

For John says, “ *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*” (1 Jn 4:1) How can we test them ?

1. *Do they speak according to and in harmony with the Word of God ?* (Is 8:19-20) With the above quotations before us to ask this question is to answer it.

2. *Do they confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh ?*

For that's what John is saying. He is saying that any teacher who does not confess the full deity and the full humanity of Jesus Christ is to be identified among the antichrists. (1 Jn 2:18) The crucial question as always is this, “ ***what think ye of Christ, whose son is He ?***”

(Matt 22:42) Thank God, this for the victory of Calvary. Paul says, “ *having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*” (Col 15) Do you know what Satan's purpose was ? To halt God's redemptive plan. The demons were working over time to sabotage the cross and to keep it from happening. (1 Pet 3:19) But on the cross Christ defeated the powers of darkness and cried, “ *It is finished.*” (Jn 19:30)

**Lifted up was He to die
It is finished was His cry
Now in heaven exalted high
Hallelujah what a Saviour**

I wonder am speaking to some dabbling in Spiritism ? Then God's Word to you is, “ *Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing.*” (2 Cor 6:17)