



Deuteronomy 18:9-14

There's Nothing New About the New Age

9 "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.

10 "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,

11 "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

12 "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.

13 "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

14 "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.

In order for God's people to know anything about Him and His will, it is necessary that He reveal Himself to them. After all, despite what wives might think from time to time, we have no means of penetrating the mind of another being, and discerning their thoughts. I can't even do that with you, much less God. So if I am going to know *anything* about Him, He is going to have to tell me, and the wonderful thing is that He has done so. He has done so through two means first His General revelation in creation which tells me that He exists and that he is loving and powerful. But while that is wonderful It doesn't tell me "***what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man***" I cannot learn how to be saved or how to serve Him from creation. For that I have turn to His special revelation, which we Have now in a complete summary in the Bible. As Paul tells us, when we have the scriptures in our hands that which is able "***which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.***"

But of course the problem is that men have seldom been satisfied with God's revelation of Himself. In their rebellion they say, nah we'll find out ourselves and so they come up with all sorts of ways of trying to grope their way into heaven and find out the mysteries of the universe themselves. Most of them involve absurd ways of taking natural revelation and attempting to treat it like special revelation. Let me give you a quick example. This is my hand, it was created by God. It is marvelously unique, of the billions of other hands on earth none are identical in their patterns of lines and swirls. I can learn some things about the nature of God as creator from this hand. However, my future is not printed on it. That should be fairly obvious. And yet for years as I child I placed my hand in the hands of palm readers who pretended to be able to so.

That is but one example, there are countless others by which men have tried to answer important questions like "What should I do, what does the future hold for me?" with things like the pattern of tea leaves in a cup, the shape of clouds, the arrangement and condition of animal entrails, the course of the stars in the heavens, where birds land, the order of cards coming out of a deck, and so on. The Canaanites

for instance did not rely on God's word at all but utilized the means in verses 10-11 of means of divining the will of their false gods and their plans for the future.

Now it would be good if these practices had long since faded away, but sadly they have continued on to the present age. As Christopher Wright points out: **“*The list of practices here is comprehensive and not at all out-of-date, since all these forms of occult, magic, and spiritism are still widespread today. And we must assume that given the consistency of God, they are all just as detestable to the Lord now as they were then.*”** – Christopher Wright

I know that all too well because throughout my childhood, my teen years, and then on into my early twenties, I was involved in most of these occult practices. First as youth attending the Jersey parapsychology society with my mother, who at the time called herself a spiritist (I'm happy to report that she has long since abandoned these practices as well, and now attends an evangelical church) and then as a practicing occultist myself. These practices are unfortunately alive and well today as part of what is sometimes called the “New Age” movement. The so called “NEW AGE” takes its name from the astrological “age” we live in, the so called *age of Aquarius* (remember that awful song from “Hair?”) which astrologers say began in 1844. New Agers describe themselves in this way on Wikipedia: **“*New Age (New Age Movement and New Age Spirituality) is a decentralized Western social and spiritual movement that seeks Universal Truth and the attainment of the highest individual human potential. It combines aspects of cosmology, astrology, esotericism, complementary and alternative medicine, various religious practices, collectivism, nature, and environmentalism. New Age Spirituality is characterized by an individual approach to spirituality, while rejecting religious doctrine and dogma.*”**

Note what they reject, Religious doctrine and dogma, now doctrine means literally *teaching*. In other words we will accept anything, no matter how kooky it is if it appeals to us and call it truth, but we reject anything to do with God's Special Revelation.

But here's the secret, there's nothing really new about this. Rejecting God's special revelation and coming up with our own invention goes all the way back to the fall. God however in these verses, says he rejects these practices utterly, calling them an abomination. In fact because of these very things, the Lord is using Israel as His rod of judgment and driving the Canaanite nations out of the land. And as Matthew Henry points out **“*It would be the most inexcusable folly, as well as the most unpardonable impiety, for them to practice themselves those very things for which they had been employed so severely to chastise others. Did the land spue out the abominations of the Canaanites, and shall Israel lick up the vomit?*”**

While we and indeed the Israelites might say well surely a little fortune telling isn't that bad, we should note the way the Lord regarded them. God calls these practices “abominations” or literally in the Hebrew “things of horror” a list which included homosexuality, idolatry, ritual prostitution, and human sacrifice.

The problem before the Israelites was one of syncretism, adopting the practices of other peoples and cultures.

Calvin points out: “It is too well known from experience how eagerly the human race lays hold of bad examples, and how prone it is to imitate them. Especially those who come into a foreign land, accustom themselves readily to its manners and customs.” We see that today as people come to the U.S. from cultures that are traditionally opposed to abortion such as Hispanic cultures.

“But there is a dividing line. Second- or third-generation Latinas like Angel, who come from intact families with solid bank accounts, who are college-bound and career-oriented, are more likely to choose abortion.

Nearly two decades ago, Hispanic pro-life activists predicted this change: As Hispanic women and girls became more "Americanized," the activists said, some would shed the traditional values of their immigrant families and embrace abortion. It's the opposite of a commonly heard concern about some immigrants not sharing American values; here, some American values are the problem."

We teach them the acceptability and utility of the very child sacrifice practices that their own culture rightly shunned. That too, sadly is nothing new, Archaeological digs in Carthage, which was Phoenecian or sea-going culture like that of the Philistines have revealed the charred remains of hundreds of child sacrifices. They were sacrificed precisely to gain the favor of these false gods. Well we don't know The Canaanites had their false God Molech (explain about Molech)

Israel has no need of this, she does not need to grope blindly regarding the future as she has God's word to Guide her.

Why did they not need it: Because they were better taught, v. 13, 14. It is an argument like that of the apostle against Christians walking as the Gentiles walked (Eph. 4:17, 18, 20): You have not so learned Christ. "It is true these nations, whom God gave up to their own hearts' lusts, and suffered to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16), did thus corrupt themselves; but thou art not thus abandoned by the grace of God: the Lord thy God had not suffered thee to do so; thou art instructed in divine things, and hast fair warning given thee of the evil of those practices; and therefore, whatever others do, it is expected that thou shouldest be perfect with the Lord thy God," that is, "that thou shouldest give divine honours to him, to him only, and to no other, and not mix any of the superstitious customs of the heathen with his institutions." - MH

Sadly the Israelites did not heed this instruction but fell into it:

Witch of Endor 1 Samuel 28

Trust in God's Word Seek for Biblical Simplicity – Sola Scriptura in our faith and practice – "This perfectness, then, is opposed to all those mixtures or corruptions which withdraw us from the sincere worship of the one true God; because the simplicity which retains us in obedience to heavenly teaching, is that spiritual chastity which God requires in His Church."

There Calvin is playing off 2 Cor. 11:2 "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Avoid Syncretism – You'd be surprised how common this is: Horoscope/Zodiac/Christian at work

We cannot go stumbling along between two positions. As we read these verses we are in fact reading almost a preamble to one of the most important statements in Deuteronomy. In verse 15 He will announce a prophecy of Jesus Christ saying, "**The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear**"

Understand we cannot go along stumbling between two positions. As we shall see, either we shall listen to Christ, or rebel against Him.