



The  
**PROPHETIC  
CONDITIONS**  
Series



# **WITCHES, WIZARDS** *and SPIRITS*

**GRAVE AND GROWING DANGER**

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#### **ABOUT THE COVER**

The tools of the occult arts, once considered dark and ominous, are gradually becoming viewed as tools of enlightenment. As each day goes by, a growing number of people from all walks of life are turning to these tools, searching for answers to life's many problems.

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#### **Why the PROPHETIC CONDITIONS Series?**

Knowledge and technology are exploding, yet the world is drowning in a sea of problems! *Alcohol abuse* is on the rise. Vast regions of farmland are “dying of thirst” due to droughts and erratic *weather* patterns. The allure of *drugs* is fast seducing a younger generation that no longer knows how to be kids. *Crime* is more violent, more entrenched, more widespread than ever. *Immorality* is robbing families and youth of their innocence by “entertaining” sick, perverted, carnal desires. And the earth is choking in the *polluted* filth produced by humanity.

#### **WHY?**

The *Prophetic Trends and Conditions Series* will report global trends and problems. It explains why humanity is deluged with such overwhelming—and insoluble—problems.

And points to mankind's *only solution!*

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*The ALCOHOL EPIDEMIC*

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*The Tragedy of DRUG ABUSE*

*What's Wrong With THE WEATHER?*

*The Worldwide CRIME WAVE*

*This POLLUTED EARTH*

*WITCHES, WIZARDS and SPIRITS: Grave and Growing Danger*

*The IMMORALITY EXPLOSION!*

*Out of the Ashes: THE RISE OF EUROPE*

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#### **Contact The Restored Church of God**

P.O. Box 23295  
Wadsworth, OH 44282  
(330) 334-2266

P.O. Box 4064  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3  
Canada

[www.TheRCG.org](http://www.TheRCG.org)  
[info@TheRCG.org](mailto:info@TheRCG.org)

# WITCHES, WIZARDS *and* SPIRITS

## GRAVE AND GROWING DANGER

**T**HROUGH A BARRAGE of media influences, the supernatural is spoon-fed to young minds virtually every night on television. Its presence can reach into every home that is plugged into the Internet.

Is society's fascination with the spirit world just innocent curiosity? Or is it dangerous? Is there a dark side to this trend?

In this report, we address the growing influence of spiritism around the world.

### The Modern Face of Paganism

Meet Sue. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, with her husband and two sons, ages 5 and 10. She is a computer programmer for a nationally-known bank. Like many people, Sue's life is filled with many roles—wife, mother, employee... Wiccan. Sue is an elder and high priestess in a Wiccan coven.

On Easter 2002, she joined about 200 marchers in the Bay Area's first-held Pagan Pride Parade. Since the parade's official theme was "Return of the Snakes," Sue brought along her pet, a 10 1/2-foot, 50-pound Colombian boa constrictor named Dora.

According to an estimate by the parade's leader, there may be as many as 50,000 pagans, witches and Wiccans living in the Bay Area alone. And their beliefs are as varying as denominations of mainstream Christianity. Some pagans view themselves as "ceremonial magicians" or "eclectic pagans." Some belong to the Covenant of the Goddess; others worship Oshun, a Yoruba goddess.

The Pagan Pride Parade is only

Today, spiritism is spreading like wildfire. Through books, magazines, television and movies, witchcraft and the occult reach into virtually every facet of life. Increasingly, people are turning to spiritism for answers to their problems. Do witchcraft and the occult reveal "ancient wisdom" to life's big questions? Does the spirit realm exist?—and should men communicate with it? Are astrology, Tarot cards, Ouija boards and crystals harmless fun—or is there something *more* to them? What are the implications of this growing trend? And where is it headed? Will it include *you*?

one of many attempts to normalize ancient, pagan religions and belief systems into the mainstream.

So far, the plan seems to be working.

### Harry Potter—Blessing or Curse?

Study the world around you. The tentacles of paganism, spiritism and the occult are touching almost everything you can imagine.

Take *Harry Potter*, for example. Every book in this series about a boy wizard has been in the top 20 of *Publisher's Weekly's* list of the all-time bestselling children's books. Thus far, hardcover and paperback sales for *Harry Potter* have skyrocketed to almost \$37 million. Add that to *Harry Potter* movie ticket sales and you can see why so many writers, publishers and filmmakers are scrambling to come up with their own kid wizards.

Yet, despite its success, the series has come under fire. Many concerned parents and religionists argue that letting children read *Harry Potter* is akin

to teaching them the inner workings of witchcraft and black magic. On the other side of the fence are those who say that *any* literature that gets children to read—even if it is about wizards, witches and sorcery—is a blessing.

Which side is right?

Some parents work hard to keep their children from being exposed to *any* form of spiritism and witchcraft—including Halloween and *Harry Potter*. Yet, many times, their efforts are undermined by others.

For example, in an attempt to replace Halloween, teachers at McNear Elementary in Petaluma City, California, exposed fourth-graders to the Mexican holiday "El Dia de los Muertos"—the Day of the Dead. The children were encouraged to observe the ancient pagan ritual of honoring the deceased with altars (or tables) surrounded with flowers, food and pictures.

The objections of parents fell on deaf ears.

## Other Media Outlets

Now consider the “Hollywood-ization” of the occult: *The Exorcist*, *Carrie*, *Devil’s Advocate*, *The Craft*, *The Sixth Sense*, *The Blair Witch Project*, *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street*. These and countless other films tantalize, please and ultimately desensitize the senses to demonism, witchcraft and magic, many times with blood and gore.

Now consider television. The minds of young and old alike have been entertained by the exploits of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Dark Angel*, *Charmed*, *The X-files*, *The Dead Zone*, *Millennium* and *Witchblade*. Such shows, featuring witches, vampires, voodoo and black magic, have spawned millions of dedicated viewers.

For those who wanted reality-based shows dealing with spiritism, there was the highly popular TV talk show *Crossing Over with John Edward*. Its host was a self-ascribed psychic medium who claims to predict future events and communicate with the dead—those who have supposedly crossed over to the “other side.”

As you can see, filmmakers and television producers have learned to market the occult into a highly profitable franchise.

And then there are computer and video games. Virtually every role-playing game sold requires players to get involved with witchcraft, sorcery, casting spells and conjuring up spirits. Many argue that this is nothing more than harmless fun.

But is it?

## Spiritism 101

Picture this: Johnny spends his entire childhood weaned on the occult, via children’s books, television and movies. Should it be a surprise that, upon going away to college, Johnny seeks out even more of the same?

It would help to explain why paganism is alive and well on college campuses across the U.S. An ever-growing number of teens and twentysomethings are studying more than just English Lit—they are wholeheartedly delving into ancient pagan rituals.

Many parents are unaware that they have sent their teens off to colleges (such as Syracuse University) that offer courses in witchcraft.

Wicca, which has been described as a “contemporary neo-pagan religion,” is becoming popular among U.S. college students, especially among young women. Wicca’s goddess-oriented belief system is popular among feminist mindsets. For example, Swarthmore College—an Ivy League school—offers the following course, entitled *Women and Religion*:

“This course will examine the variety of women’s religious experiences in the United States. Topics will include the construction of gender and religion, religious experiences of women of color, spiritual autobiographies and narratives by women, Wicca and witchcraft in the United States, and feminist and womanist theology.”

Student chapters for Wicca and other practices of paganism have spread nationwide: The University of Arizona, Auburn University, Clemson, Georgia Tech, Penn State, Purdue...the list goes on.

Not to be outdone, universities and schools *wholly* devoted to the study of mysticism and witchcraft are being established in Europe.

## Sanitized, Normalized and Accepted

Curiosity in the occult is increasing even in places as remote as northwestern Arkansas. Recently, *The Morning News/NWAonline.net* published a news report (“Library Board Plans for Future”) about a library announcing plans for future expansion.

According to the article, the Rogers Library Board, in order to meet the growing demands of new readers in the region, planned to spend thousands of dollars on purchasing audio books and electronic books (or e-books). In the middle of the article was a passing, matter-of-fact quote from the library director: “Car-repair manuals and books on witchcraft are books that constantly walk out of the library, and we have to keep buying new copies.”

Spiritism is now as common as giving your car an oil change.

But what is spiritism? How did Wicca originate?

Trickery and fraud among so-called psychics, spiritualists and fortunetellers are nothing new. The renowned magician Houdini regularly exposed such people for what they truly were—scam artists.

The book *Psychic Mafia*, by M. Lamar Keene, a former “psychic,” revealed the extensive tricks and scams that so-called psychics used to defraud the gullible.

But is there anything genuine to spiritism, witchcraft and the occult? Or is it all “smoke and mirrors”?

## The Modern-day Origin of Spiritism and Wicca

Founded in 1954 by Gerald Gardner, Wicca is a modern version of pagan beliefs, practices and rituals handed down from pre-Christian times. Over the centuries, much information was lost, so it has been recreated and restructured. Wicca is a nature-worshipping, goddess-oriented, polytheistic religion.

But not all Wiccans are the same. Just as there are different forms of professing Christianity (Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, etc.), there are different “branches” within the Wiccan religion. These branches are called “traditions.” Within each tradition, there can be variations from coven to coven.

When a coven gathers together at night, its members form a circle and hold hands as they chant and walk around an altar. They welcome the north, south, east and west. They welcome forces with mythological names. Sometimes they cast spells to cast away any “bad energy.”

Wiccan is largely based on symbols, and seasonal days to celebrate and worship ancient deities. Wiccans claim to be in tune with the earth; they use many herbs and roots to concoct spells and potions. Their biggest holiday of the year is Halloween, which they call Samhain (pronounced so-wane).

Modern spiritism began in early 1848, in Hydesville, New York. A farmer, John Fox, along with his wife Margaret and their two daughters, Kate and Margaretta, moved into a house that was said to be haunted.

(The prior tenant had moved out due to several unexplainable instances of raps, taps, footsteps and other noises.)

The Fox family soon began to be disturbed by strange sounds and activities, such as spontaneous movement of furniture by “unseen hands.” Believing their home was haunted by some “restless spirit,” Kate Fox cried out to the mysterious unseen power and challenged it to copy her in snapping her fingers. Her sister Margaretta did the same, challenging the spirit to copy her in clapping her hands.

Then Mrs. Fox made a challenge: “I then thought I could put a test that no one in the place could answer. I asked the noise to rap my different children’s ages, successively. Instantly, each one of my children’s ages was given correctly, pausing between them sufficiently long to individualize them until the seventh, at which a longer pause was made, and then three more emphatic raps were given, corresponding to the age of the little one that died, which was my youngest child” (*The Ayer Institute*).

After asking the spirit several more questions, the Fox family soon invited all their neighbors to come and communicate with the unseen spirit:

“All heard the same questions and answers. Many remained in the house all night. I and my children left the house...On the next Saturday the house was filled to overflowing. There were no sounds heard during the day, but they commenced again in the evening. It was said that there were over three hundred persons present at the time. On Sunday morning the noises were heard throughout the day by all who came to the house.”

The spirit claimed to be Charles B. Rosna, a peddler who had stayed at the house five years previously. Many years later, *The Boston Journal* reported that the skeletal remains of a man had been discovered at the Fox house, “clear[ing] them [the Fox family] from the only shadow of doubt held concerning their sincerity in the discovery of spirit communication.”

As adults, the Fox sisters, acting as mediums for the spirit world, entertained hundreds of people. This was the beginning of modern-day séances.

As their fame grew, the sisters eventually charged fees for their services. Even famous personalities from history sought them out: Horace Greeley, P.T. Barnum, James Fenimore Cooper and many others.

Yet, despite their fame, the lives of Kate and Margaretta Fox were filled with betrayal, accusations, poverty and heavy drinking. Both sisters died prematurely from complications due to alcoholism. They were buried in paupers’ graves.

### Why the Appeal?

Why are people turning their backs on professing Christianity and seeking spiritual answers through the occult?

Many have felt let down—in some cases, betrayed—by mainstream Christianity. They point to widespread church scandals, such as the recent revelation of child abuse cases among the Catholic priesthood, and then ask, “If so-called Christian leaders can preach from the pulpit one minute and sexually abuse helpless little children the next, then what’s so bad about paganism?”

Man has always been curious to know if there is more to this life than just the physical, material world. Desperately wanting to believe that life is more than simply birth-existence-death, a growing number of people are willing to be open-minded to *any* religion that appears to fill the spiritual void in their lives.

For many, mainstream Christianity no longer does this. The fruits of Christian religionists, leaders and groups—child abuse and sex scandals, inappropriate use of funds, questionable stances on hot-button political and social issues, active involvement in civil governments—are turning off and driving away believers and non-believers alike.

The voice of a new generation says, “The truth is out there...somewhere.” Spiritism, paganism and the occult are becoming a popular alternative.

In addition, some say that they are tired of rules that restrict their moral behavior. They want to set their own rules, their own standards of right and wrong. This is another reason why

paganism is so appealing to so many.

Most witches, Wiccans and pagans embrace the Witches’ Creed: “Do as ye will and ye harm none.” Wrapping themselves around this moral code, they proudly proclaim that not *all* witches are bad. They claim that, just as there are good and bad Christians, there are good and bad witches.

### How Does this Compare to the Bible?

On the surface, the Witches’ Creed does appear to advocate a simple form of morality (“Harm none”). But when compared to the spiritual excellence found in the laws and teachings in the Bible, the Witches’ Creed falls short.

“Do as ye will and ye harm none” is solely based on individual opinions of what seems to harm others.

In the Bible, the book of Judges records that, after God had delivered the Israelites into the Promised Land, the people soon rebelled. Time after time, they turned their backs on God and His Law—the Ten Commandments, and numerous statutes, precepts and judgments. Collectively, God’s Law taught the Israelites how to live. This Law was founded on two overarching principles:

(1) “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5).

(2) “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18).

The first four of the Ten Commandments show *how* to love and serve God. The remaining six show *how* to properly love and serve other people. When obeyed, they produce peace and harmony. But when disobeyed, strife and chaos reign. Just one read of any reputable newspaper or news magazine will prove this.

Though God had personally given them the only real way to produce peace and happiness, the Israelites repeatedly relied upon themselves and “did their own thing.” They fell into a miserable and deadly cycle: (1) They rejected God and broke His laws. (2) No longer under God’s rule and protection, the Israelites were invaded and oppressed by enemy nations. (3) They cried out to God for deliverance.

(4) Hearing their cries, God intervened and delivered them from oppression. (5) The Israelites obeyed God for a generation or two. But soon they would reject Him and break His laws. So went the cycle.

Throughout Judges, even to its final verse, God summed up this cycle: “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” This attitude has always yielded bloody results.

The Bible plainly shows that the Witches’ Creed of “Do as ye will and ye harm none” is an oxymoron. It is the same misguided idea of “Do what feels good, as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone”—the problem is that one man’s pleasure is another man’s pain. People cannot agree as to what “hurt none” means.

This is because “The way of man is *not in himself*: It is not in man that walks to direct his steps,” and “There is a way which *seems* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of *death*” (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12).

Ironically, the vast majority who *profess* to be Christian—who *claim* to love “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”—ignore the above verses and follow their *own* rules and ideas. For example, many professing Christians preach against homosexuality, while quietly giving a nod and a wink to adultery and fornication. Yet the Bible, which they claim to love, condemns *all* sex outside the holy institution of marriage.

Witches, Wiccans and pagans are not fooled by the hypocrisy. They embrace the Witches’ Creed, which gives them the green light for virtually any sexual relationship, under the guise of moral freedom.

But are they *really* free? Or has such thinking actually enslaved them to an “unseen power” darker and more dangerous than they can imagine?

### **More Common Than You Think**

Remember Sue, the Wiccan high priestess from the Bay Area? She is not alone in choosing witchcraft as a way of life. There are many more like her. In fact, it would not be a stretch to say that paganism and the occult is firmly entrenched in mainstream modern society.

Take the daily newspaper. At least three-quarters of U. S. newspapers carry daily horoscope columns. According to one report, perhaps about 25% of people worldwide believe in astrology to some extent. About 48% of Americans believe that astrology is valid, and up to 30% believe it to the point of using their astrological sign to mold their self-image. And up to 90% of Americans say they are “open minded” to the authenticity and value of astrology. Every year, some 20 million books on astrology are sold in the U.S. alone.

This is not merely “harmless fun,” as some claim. Astrology has been used to guide the decisions of the most powerful government office on the planet: The Presidency of the United States of America. When he was in office, former President Ronald Reagan *regularly* consulted astrologers.

Consider the proliferation of advertisements for psychics and other fortunetellers. This marketing of such “services” has greatly increased since the 80s, when it made its debut.

Take the booming market of books offering readers the inside scoop on witchcraft, tarot cards, divination, communicating with the dead, casting spells. These books are not hidden in the back corners of musty used bookstores—they are displayed in plain view in the top bookstore chains nationwide. Even in the children’s section.

Now consider the Internet. Like a contemporary “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” the World Wide Web offers anything and everything to titillate the senses. There are easy to find websites featuring documents such as the “History of Spiritualism.” One such site displays a network of student chapters of paganism at college campuses nationwide. Just one popular search engine lists the following:

“**The Art of Casting Spells:** To cast a spell is to project energy through a symbol. The most powerful spells are often improvised from materials that feel right or that simply happen to come to hand.

“**Candle Magick:** How to perform candle magick, including preparation,

choosing your candle, colors and properties, and creating candle magick.

“**Chants, Prayers and Invocation:** A selection of incantations you can use daily to invoke spiritual deities.

“**Curses:** Here’s [an] article on the history of curses throughout the world, and the current uses of curses and hexes...

“**How to Cast a Spell:** A simple, easy guide to creating magic for beginners. Magic should not be performed for fun or to fulfill wishes, this article says. It should be performed to improve your life and the lives of those you love by solving needs.

“**An Introduction to Voodoo:** [This] provides a brief history of voodoo, its beliefs, its rituals and more.

“**Love Spells:** Five love spells are provided here. You might want to read the lengthy introduction first, however, so you know what you’re getting into.

“**Pagan/Wiccan Religion:** [This site] features everything you need or want to know about the subject, including insightful articles.

“**How to Find the Right Psychic:** Expert tips, articles and advice on how to find the best psychics and clairvoyants on the net. Excellent list of recommended psychics, clairvoyants and mediums for advice, love and destiny.”

Children today can learn every minute detail about the occult without ever leaving their bedrooms. No wonder so many are “coming out of the broom closet” upon reaching adulthood. They have been secretly weaned on the milk of paganism—and they want *more*.

The booming market for paganism and the occult is not limited to just the United States. Citizens in Canada, Britain, Australia and other modern, westernized nations are leaving the “broom closet” too, openly embracing pagan rituals and traditions.

And here is something you may not know: When professing Christians preach against the dark beliefs and rituals of Wiccans and pagans, witches knowingly smile. Why? Because they understand that the holidays embraced

by mainstream Christianity—Easter, Christmas, New Year’s and others—originated from ancient pagan beliefs and traditions thousands of years before Jesus Christ was even born! Involving child sacrifices and temple prostitution, these were the same pagan rituals and customs that God had warned ancient Israel to avoid (Deut. 7:1-5, 16).

Amazing, but true! Not only is paganism alive and well, but it is also thriving.



**M**ASS MEDIA—books, magazines, television, movies—merchandizes paganism. And occultism also thrives on college campuses nationwide. And mainstream Christianity is learning to tolerate and even embrace it.

In San Francisco, California, no fewer than 105 psychics, 20 spiritual consultants, and 17 astrologers are listed in the local phonebook. Recently, the city has had to create a bill that, if made into law, would ban certain scam-artist techniques commonly used by fortuneteller and other diviners to part the gullible from their money.

In Australia, witchcraft is the fastest-growing religion, with nearly 9,000 believers, up from less than 2,000 in 1996. Pagans have more than doubled there, to 10,632. And druids, animists and pantheists have also increased. Yet, from 1996 to 2000, membership among Australian church denominations only grew by 1.4%.

While some churches condemn fortunetelling, witchcraft and paganism, others see little, or nothing, wrong with them. For example, the Church of England has given one of its priests permission to attend a witches’ coven in order to research a thesis on Wicca. Believing it was “something that God has called [him] to do,” the priest said that Christianity must

“interact with people who are interested in witchcraft, druidry and shamanism...and hear what they have to say about our faith.”

At a recent press conference, the Vatican gave its approval to the *Harry Potter* series. Justifying its new position, a spokesman reasoned, “I don’t think there’s anyone in this room who grew up without fairies, magic, and angels in their imaginary world.”

Part II will examine three reasons why so many are turning to the occult—and why it will continue to grow worse.

### Thirst for Knowledge

Humanity’s fascination with the stars is nothing new. Man has always had a thirst to know more, to understand the world around him. This thirst has led men to explore continents and oceans. It has sent people to walk on the moon numerous times. It has sent remote control vehicles to explore the surface of Mars. It inspired men to create the Hubble telescope and peer into the vastness of space to unlock its mysteries.

Men will do anything to quench their thirst for knowledge—even turn to the supernatural, such as divination, the occult art of looking into the future.

Astrology is an ancient tool of divination used to gather information, usually about either the future or a person’s personality, through examining the “heavenly bodies”—stars, planets, the moon, comets, etc.

The earliest records of astrology date back to the 19th century B.C. The Babylonian Empire attempted to link earthly events, such as famine and war, with other events observed in the heavenly bodies above. Astrology was an integral part of the polytheistic Babylonian religion. The people back then believed that earth was the center of the universe and that all the stars and planets revolved around it.

Babylonian priests were regularly called upon to use their “connections” with their gods to predict the future. Two principle means of doing this were (1) inspecting the liver of a sacrificed animal, and (2) reading omens in the sky.

The latter eventually developed into astrology, similar to what is practiced today. Between 612 and 539 B.C., Babylonian priests divided the sky into twelve sections of thirty degrees each, constituting the twelve signs of the zodiac. Once mathematical astronomy developed (under the Persians, 539-331 B.C.), it became possible to calculate some motion of the moon and various planets. This made way for the development of horoscopes, similar to what exists today.

Other tools of divination include Ouija boards and Tarot cards.

Though often used by both children and adults as a game, Ouija boards are used to contact the spirit realm. Human participants invite spirits to control their hands in order to answer questions involving the after-life, past human lives of these spirits, or future events.

Favored among Wiccans, Tarot cards are used to predict future events and cast spells, and meditation.

Whatever tool of divination used, people want to know the future. They want to know the past. They want to understand the world in which they live. Which is why throughout history, men have turned (in one degree or another) to witchcraft and the occult.

The term occult comes from the Latin word *occulere*, which means “to hide.” This word applies to anything based upon mysterious, secret, or hidden forces. Yearning for knowledge, power and personal fulfillment, men often turn to the mysterious “hidden powers” of the occult.

In Part I, we examined how people are being turned off and let down by mainstream Christianity. They are growing tired of religionists and theologians who preach smooth, comforting words, but secretly live lives in contrast to God’s Word. In desperation, many former believers often turn to “ancient wisdom” supposedly revealed through paganism and witchcraft.

All people want to know who they are, why they exist, what is their future. When professing Christianity cannot answer these questions, tools of divination—astrology, Tarot cards,

Ouija boards and others—are seen as an alternative.

A wise man often said that if we want to understand why the world exists as it does today, we must look at the beginning of civilization: The Garden of Eden. When God created the first man and woman, He placed them in a garden paradise (Gen. 2:8, 15).

God told Adam and Eve, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die” (vs. 16-17).

The two trees represented the knowledge of two opposite ways of life. The Tree of Life symbolized the way of give, love, peace, and outgoing concern for others. Eating of its fruit means to trust in God (Prov. 3:5). The tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolized the way of take, hate, strife, and selfishness. Eating of its fruits means to trust in self.

God allowed Eve to be deceived into eating the fruit of the forbidden tree: “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yes, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, *then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and *a tree to be desired to make one wise,* she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:1-6).

Adam and Eve wanted knowledge, but they wanted to acquire it *their* way. So they rejected God and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. In doing so, man decided to rely upon *himself* to judge right from wrong, good from evil. This is why mankind’s history

has been rampant with all kinds of evils, suffering and turmoil. Cut off from God’s revealed knowledge, people cannot agree. And walking in complete *agreement* is the path that produces peace.

Some people think certain wars are justified. Others think all war is wrong and inexcusable. Still others think that all war is acceptable, just as long as they are the ones pulling the strings.

In the same way, men have devised various means to gain knowledge. This includes witchcraft and the occult.

### Lust for Power

History is replete with power-hungry dictators—such as Hitler, Stalin, Nero. Since the First World War, the manufacture and accumulation of weapons of mass destruction have grown. And though the image of “one world order” frightens many, some long for it—especially if it means personal power on a global scale.

The lust for power is a common theme in mankind’s story. Casting spells, divining the future and communicating with spirits are tools many have picked up to satisfy this lust. Fed up with mainstream churches, many believe that witchcraft will empower them to bring personal control to their lives. They even turn to the powers of the occult in order to control the lives of others.

History records that men have often used religion (pagan and so-called “Christian”) to force their will upon others. In fact, much of man’s recorded wars involved, to some degree, religious beliefs—especially by organizations calling themselves Christian!

Concerning His Second Coming and the end of the age (Matt. 24:3), Jesus Christ warned, “Take heed that no man deceive you. *For many shall come in My name,* saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive *many*” (vs. 4-5). Many religious leaders will arise and claim that their authority comes from Christ—and they will fool *many*!

How can this be? In II Corinthians 11, the apostle Paul reveals the answer: “For such are *false* apostles, *deceitful* workers, *transforming themselves* into the apostles of Christ” (vs.

13). They *look* like righteous leaders. They *seem* like faithful workers. But they *transform* themselves into *appearing* to be chosen representatives of God.

Such deceivers do this because they lust for power. And they grab and maintain power through cunning deceit.

God’s Word says that we should not be surprised: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (vs. 14-15).

Lust for power is nothing new to religion. The Bible shows that practitioners of witchcraft often resorted to human sacrifices to instill fear—and power—over the lives of others.

Recall the Garden of Eden. The serpent told mother Eve that the forbidden fruit would give knowledge—secret, hidden knowledge—that would *empower* her to become “as *gods,* knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:1-6). Eve was seduced into lusting for power. Adam followed suit.

Ironically, God does want to give power to man. But people must first learn to qualify for it. This requires building holy, righteous character. Without godly character, men have always used power to destroy. Our history of war and strife proves this.

The apostle James wrote about the true origin of all war and strife: “From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of *your lusts* that war in your members? You *lust,* and have not: you kill, and *desire to have,* and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, *that you may consume it upon your lusts*” (Jms. 4:1-3).

Feeling that church denominations leave them powerless and directionless, some turn to crystals. Believing they can be used to transmit spiritual energy into light, crystals are used in an attempt to cleanse the “blocked aura” (a supposed invisible electromagnetic field) around a person’s body. People also rely on crystals to



## “Try the Spirits”

**P**SYCHICS, FORTUNETELLERS, channelers and others who practice the black art of divination do so by tapping into the demon world. But how can one tell if a person is practicing divination—especially when that person’s “prediction” comes to pass?

In Deuteronomy 13, God gives the criteria to judge with: “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; you shall *not* hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proves you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (vs. 1-3).

Uttering accurate predictions is not proof that God is working with a person. The real proof is whether that person teaches people to serve and worship God through keeping His commandments. Yet, God does allow spiritual charlatans to make accurate (or nearly accurate) predictions as a test for His people. He wants to know whether or not they will put His Way first. Demons have existed far longer than man. Their acute understanding of human nature, coupled with their limited knowledge of future events, allows them to make predictions. This is the source of false prophets’ predictions.

In Matthew 24, Christ warned that in the end time, many would come in His name—claim to speak by His authority—“and shall deceive many” (vs. 5). He also warned, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (vs. 11). People are deceived by false prophets, enchanters and psychics when they see their predictions come to pass. Such people then jump to the conclusion that “if he was right about this, certainly he must be right about that.” This is just one of the many ways Satan has kept the world deceived and spiritually blind.

Therefore, we must be careful to “believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits whether they are of God*: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

But how do we “try the spirits”? Isaiah 8:19-20 reveals the answer: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: *if they speak not according to this word*, it is because there is no light in them.”

heal diseases, trauma, and emotional problems; to create feelings of joy, peace and love; for insight into past life lessons; to be positive, responsible, brave; for advance “spiritual” practices; and to generally enhance one’s career and relationships.

Though they will deny it, those who rely upon crystals are putting their trust in the wrong rock. The Bible shows which Rock all people should turn to for help: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that *spiritual Rock* that followed them: and *that Rock was Christ*” (I Cor. 10:1-4).

Witchcraft, spiritism and the occult are *powerless* to reveal such amazing knowledge!

### Desire for Purpose

Knowledge is exploding. More people possess more power—government, financial, corporate—than ever before. Yet, few are ever truly *satisfied*.

Man is physical, limited to five senses and a temporary lifespan. Like animals, man was created “a living soul”—mortal (Gen. 2:7; 3:19). Yet, unlike animals, man is endowed with creative mind power. He does not just build a building. He plans, assembles and builds houses, barns, office buildings, military complexes, arenas, stadiums, and airports of every shape, size and color thinkable. He sculpts, paints, illustrates, writes, photographs, sings—does anything he can to express himself.

Yet, man wants—needs—something *more*.

Traditional Christianity cannot meet the desire. Neither can materialism. Money and career will only satis-

fy for a short time. The constant pursuit of physical pleasure quickly becomes meaningless. People will turn to almost anything that will bring purpose and meaning to their lives.

To some, casting spells, gathering in the dark around open fires with other pagans, and divining the future are an attempt to gain control and purpose in their lives.

Like King David of Israel, people throughout millennia have looked up into the night sky and wondered, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; *what is man*, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?” (Psa. 8:3-4).

Humanity began in the Garden of Eden. Man was created physical, of the ground. But he has spiritual needs. Since he has rejected the only true source that can fill those needs, man tries to feed spiritual desires with the physical—“the works of the flesh.” It cannot be done.

Paul wrote, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest [obvious], which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, *witchcraft...*” (Gal. 5:19-20). Witchcraft is a “work of the flesh”—part of carnal nature. Men cannot feed a spiritual need (such as the desire for purpose) with anything carnal.

Notice: “For the flesh lusts *against* the Spirit, and the Spirit *against* the flesh: and these are *contrary the one to the other*” (vs. 17).

Spiritual cravings are fed and satisfied by “the fruit of the Spirit...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (vs. 22-23).

This world’s brand of “Christianity” has failed to teach this. It has failed to give purpose and meaning to life. Also, nature abhors a void. If a person’s needs are not met, he will find another way to meet them; often with disastrous results.

### God of This World

Upon seeing the innocent suffer, people are quick to ask, “Where is God? Why has He allowed this to happen?” What most do not understand—and

religionists, theologians, priests and “Christian” leaders fail to recognize—is that God is *not* running the affairs of this world. All societies, governments, empires and kingdoms of this world are being run by “the god of this world”—Satan the devil.

It is unpopular to admit that the devil exists. Most people scoff at the idea. The very thought seems ridiculous to them—and yet their disbelief falls right into Satan’s scheme. The Bible plainly teaches that Satan is “the god of this world [age]” and “has blinded the minds of them which believe not” (II Cor. 4:4). He deceives people into believing he is a fairy tale because he does not want humanity to be alerted to his world-ruling presence. God describes Satan as “the great dragon...that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which *deceives the whole world*” (Rev. 12:9).

During a tremendous battle of wills, Satan took Christ to a high mountain and, in a vision, instantly showed Him all the kingdoms and powers of the world (Luke 4:5). Then Satan said to Him, “I will give You all their power and grandeur, for it has been made over to me and I can give it to anyone I choose” (vs. 6-7, Moffatt translation).

How did Christ respond? Did He dispute or deny the devil’s claim of possessing world-ruling authority? Did He say, “What are you talking about, Satan? You can’t give Me what doesn’t belong to you! God rules this world, not you”?

No. Christ simply said, “Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve” (Matt. 4:10).

Clearly, the Bible shows that the devil has the authority to grant world-ruling power—Christ did not dispute or deny this! In fact, several times Jesus described Satan as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

As such, the devil has humanity so thoroughly deceived, people who think they are seeking the light of truth are in reality finding darkness, misery, and even death. Throughout history, Satan has deceitfully disguised his dark

ways, confusing and misleading gullible minds into believing them to be the righteous ways of God: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (II Cor. 11:14-15).

Yes, the devil does use human instruments as tools of his deception. Recall verse 13: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”

Satan does rule the governments of this world—but he is not alone. The devil has plenty of help from others.

### **Satan’s Government**

The Bible reveals that there is a spirit realm. These spirits are:

(1) Obedient angels, who faithfully serve God. Part of their purpose is to help God’s people achieve their awesome human potential: “But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:13-14).

(2) Fallen angels, called demons. They serve their own selfish lusts, under the world-ruling authority of Satan, “the prince of the devils [demons]” (Mark 3:22). Demons are fallen angels who sinned as they followed Lucifer (now Satan) into rebellion against their Creator (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Isa. 14:12-14; Rev. 12:3-4, 9).

They are the “unfruitful works of darkness” that Paul warns about in Ephesians 5: “...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (vs. 11).

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul wrote that Christians “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against *principalities*, against *powers*, against the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, against *spiritual wickedness* in high places.”

Because a matter weighed heavily upon his mind, the prophet Daniel fasted so that he could draw closer to God, and perhaps receive an answer (Dan. 10:3-4). The fast stretched into “three full weeks” before an answer from heaven could arrive.

Finally, an angel appeared to Daniel (vs. 10-11) and said, “Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that you did set your heart to understand, and to chasten yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I am come for your words. But the *prince of the kingdom of Persia* withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the *kings of Persia*” (vs. 12-13).

Were Michael and the other angel “withstood” by mortal men 21 days? Of course not! The above verses are about a battle of wills between angels (servants of God) and demons (servants of Satan). Satan controls the kingdoms of this world. Christ said that Satan’s kingdom is not divided (Mark 3:23-26). Although it is based on competition, strife, hatred, selfishness—the “get” way of life, symbolized by the tree of the (self) knowledge of good and evil—it *is* organized and structured.

God’s servants always seek to teach, serve and build.

The devil’s agents (demons) always seek to confuse, blind and destroy. Among their tools are witchcraft, spiritism, paganism and the occult. They want us to believe that we can harness “earth energy” through crystals, or that we can predict the future, or speak with the dead (see “Witch of Endor” inset). Demons love to use mediums, making it seem like these “guides” are communicating with the “afterlife.”

Why? Because it helps to perpetuate the myth of the immortal soul. Recall Satan’s lie to Eve in the Garden of Eden: “You shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). The serpent who told *that* lie is the same serpent, or dragon, who “deceives the whole world” *today* (Rev. 12:9).

### **Misguided Values**

Men place great value on the writings of other men. They often quote the musings of dead human beings, yet ignore—and even make light of—the one true source of knowledge, the Holy Bible.

God’s written Word is truth (John 17:17)—revealed knowledge of who

# A King Seeks a Medium

**E**ARLY IN HIS MONARCHY, Saul, Israel's first king, rebelled against God, refusing to obey His commands (1 Sam. 15). The prophet Samuel told Saul, "...for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel" (vs. 26).

In chapter 28, the Philistines gathered into a massive army, positioning themselves to conquer Israel: "And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled" (vs. 5).

Saul was gripped by stark fear because he knew that his sins had cut him off from God's guidance and protection (Isa. 59:1-3). He had rebelled against God's will—and "rebellion is as the sin of *witchcraft*, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:23).

Verse 6 of 1 Samuel 28 states that "Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, *nor by prophets*."

With Samuel dead (vs. 3), and God remaining silent, Saul was desperate. He sent his servants to seek out a witch—"a woman that has a familiar spirit" (vs. 7). Yet, ironically, Saul spent the beginning of his rule putting away "those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land" (vs. 3).

Saul's servants found a woman from Endor who secretly practiced witchcraft.

Verse 8: "And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray you, divine unto

me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto you." Saul was in disguise for two reasons: (1) He did not want his subjects to know that he was seeking out a witch. And (2) so the witch would not be frightened off, thinking that Saul was trying to entrap her (see verse 9).

Amazingly, Saul made an oath to the witch *in God's name*, promising not to punish her for practicing witchcraft! Yet, this was clearly against God's will (vs. 10).

Now read verses 11-13: "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto you? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what saw you? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods [*elohim*—also means "judge"] ascending out of the earth." In other words, she claimed to have seen the prophet Samuel, who had also been a judge, come up from the grave.

But notice that *Saul* did not see "Samuel"—only the witch could: "And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul *perceived* that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself" (vs. 14).

Both Saul and the witch *assumed* that it was Samuel—but it was not! The Bible teaches that "the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing" (Ecc. 9:5).

and what man is, why he exists, what his purpose is. The Bible reveals who God is, why society is the way that it is, and what future events will soon come to pass.

God inspired Paul to write, "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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

True knowledge comes from God: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7).

The empty, vain writings and traditions of men cannot compare to the truth of God's Word.

Yet, men often highly value famous writings of literary "giants"—men who were often possessed by demons! Ancient Greek writers, such as Homer, commonly sought to speak for their "gods" (demons masquerading as god-like beings) by being directly under their control.

Ancient Delphi grew to international prominence for the famous oracle of the Greek god Apollo, who foretold the future through his priestess. Responding to questions from rulers,

military generals, legislators and other dignitaries while in a trance, the priestess' inarticulate cries were interpreted and recorded by an official interpreter, in verse, then later in prose.

Plato is recorded to have written, "All questions should be left to the decision of the oracle, as is the usual practice in Greece." The influence of spiritism and the occult is centuries old.

## Strong Words From God

Millennia ago, God delivered ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt. Just before they were about to inherit the Promised Land, God warned the Israelites: "When you are come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or 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: and because of these abominations the LORD your God does drive

them out from before you" (Deut. 18:9-12).

Leviticus 19:31: "Regard not them that have *familiar spirits*, neither seek after *wizards*, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God."

Notice what they were to do if they found such people among them: "A man also or woman that has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be *put to death*: they shall *stone them with stones*: their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:27).

Also notice: "Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves...lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD your God has divided unto all nations under the whole heaven" (Deut. 4:15, 19). Astrology was not to be tolerated in the Promised Land.

God commanded the Israelites to totally destroy all nations found in Canaan because the people dwelling there practiced witchcraft and the occult. Their perverted and twisted pagan religions even involved human sacrifice—including infants!

Yet, the biblical record shows that Israel failed miserably. The people tol-

erated—even encouraged—witchcraft and the occult throughout ancient Israel. The same is happening today among the modern-day descendants of Israel. Just as ancient Israel and Judah were severely punished for these and other national sins, the modern-day peoples and nations of Israel will also be severely corrected.

### Witchcraft in the “Last Days”

Christ warned that just before His Return to set up His kingdom, “...many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matt. 24:11). He also inspired the apostle John to warn of a great, end-time false prophet. Possessed by an “unclean spirit,” this false prophet will perform miracles, deceiving the masses into receiving the “mark of the beast” and worshipping the beast’s “image” (Rev. 16:13; 19:20). This future

deceiver will draw his powers from “spiritual wickedness in high places”—the same source of witchcraft and the occult. But those powers will *appear* to be Christian.

But in the end, the great false prophet will meet his end (20:10) at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

From then on, God’s government will be set up at Jerusalem, and will spread across the earth (Isa. 9:6-7). True knowledge will flow freely to quench the thirst of all who desire it. Power will be in the hands of those who have qualified to properly use it—Christ and His righteous kings, judges and priests (Rev. 5:10).

All who obey God will have access to the Tree of Life, and enter into the kingdom (22:14).

But the Bible says that there will be those who refuse to obey. They will not enter God’s kingdom: “For with-

out are dogs, and *sorcerers*, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie” (vs. 15).

Also, Satan and his demons, the authors of witchcraft and the occult, will be imprisoned in darkness, no longer the “god of this world.”

As you can see, witchcraft and the occult are not alternatives worth considering. They are paths leading to danger, and even death.

Those who choose to submit to God and resist Satan (Jms. 4:7) can receive the knowledge, power and purpose all men long for: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of *power*, and of *love* [which is man’s true purpose for life], and of a *sound mind* [deep knowledge, understanding and wisdom]” (II Tim. 1:7).

Witchcraft, spiritism and the occult can do none of these. □

