

Witchcraft and Sorcery

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

Introduction: “Good evening.” Its Halloween and I decided to present a lesson that relates well to the occasion. We are going to talk about witchcraft and sorcery. Two terms that pretty much relate to the same type of activity.

I. Witchcraft

A. It is the practice of the dark arts and black magic. All such practices are condemned as “an abomination to the Lord” (Deut. 18:9-12). The prescribed list includes human sacrifices, divination, witchcraft, interpretation of omens, sorcery, spell casting, Mediums, Spiritualists and calling the dead (Lev. 19:26, 31, 20:6, 27; Isa. 8:19-20; Jer. 27:9-10).

1. Most of these practices would involve some miraculous ability that is just not possible without the Lord’s permission (Ezek. 13:6-9, 23).

2. In the absence of miraculous abilities, many con artists are more than glad to deceive the gullible (Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 21:23).

3. The reason for the condemnation of these practices is because they involve some form of sin (lies, murder, deceit, taking advantage or manipulating people, destroying faith in God, etc.).

4. Even in the rare occasion when miraculous witchcraft did occur, it was still condemned.

B. Three occasions where witchcraft involved the miraculous.

1. A slave girl in Acts 16 had the ability to divine and soothsay (Acts 16:16-19).

a. Her ability was credited to an evil spirit that Paul removed from the girl.

b. She was not a con artist as her owners would not have been concerned with the loss of revenue if she were easily replaced.

2. God gave Saul an evil or distressing spirit (1 Sam. 16:14-15, 23).

a. This evil spirit had the ability to prophecy not to mention it had the desire to kill David. (1 Sam. 18:10-11).

b. This evil spirit tried to kill David on two occasions (1 Sam. 19:9-10).

3. The medium at Endor brought Samuel back from the dead (1 Sam. 28:7-20).

a. King Saul sought out a medium to bring Samuel back from the grave for advice as God would not respond to Saul's inquiries.

b. The medium brought Samuel back from the grave. It wasn't a hoax. Samuel responds to Saul in character relating knowledge the medium would not have known.

c. The medium was surprised suggesting it never actually occurred previous. This time it did.

d. Saul died for his disobedience and for calling the medium in the first place (1 Chron. 10:13).

C. There are many more references to people who practiced various forms of witchcraft in scriptures (Gen. 41:1-16; 2 Kings 9:22; Dan. 2:1-11; Isa. 47:12-14, etc.). None of which had miraculous abilities.

II. Sorcery

A. Sorcery is another term closely associated with witchcraft. In fact, the term is often interchanged with the word witchcraft. It is the practice of magic, spell casting and potions.

B. The Greek word for sorcery is pharmakia from which we get our English word pharmacy. It means to mix potions or poisons. The practice of using drugs was closely associated with witchcraft during this time. Paul's condemnation is as much a prohibition against illicit drugs as it is against the practices of the occult.

C. Sorcery is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).

1. The mixing of potions produced hallucinogens, addictive drugs and poisons.

2. Illicit drugs are sought if not craved by the flesh.

3. The miraculous is not needed with sorcery (making it dangerous).

4. Why would anyone get involved in sorcery unless it was for some evil desire.

D. Sorcerers are listed among those who will lose their souls in hell (Rev. 21:8).

Conclusion: Even in our society, witchcraft and sorcery are associated with evil as evident by the costumes worn on Halloween. As long as such practices stay in the fantasy world of make believe, it will have no effect on our lives. However, they are nothing that anyone should practice in reality.

