

Article Summary

Today, many dabble in the mystical, occultic arts. Is there anything wrong with being involved in these practices? Yes, the Bible takes a clear position on this subject, strongly denouncing these practices. God created us and therefore owns us. He has a right to set the rules for our lives. God's Word indicates that these practices are part of Satan's strategy of evil tricks and deception, designed to lead us astray. Satan and his demons are real beings set on our destruction. Christians are warned to "put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we 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" (Ephesians 6:11-12).

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 JEREMIAH 20:9
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The Occult

The occult? Occult means “hidden.” It includes practices that are not approved of by God, e.g., astrology (**Isa 47:13**), casting spells (**Deut 18:11**), consulting spirits (**Deut 18:11**), magic (**Gen 41:8**), sorcery (**Ex 22:18**), witchcraft (**Deut 18:10**), and spiritism (**Deut 18:11**). Occult practitioners open themselves up to demonic activity, possession, and oppression. Occult practices such as Ouija boards, tarot cards, Wicca, astrology charts, zodiac, contacting the dead, séances, etc., are to be avoided by the Christian. Regarding occult practices, Israel was told: “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. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire (an ancient occult practice), or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD...” **Deuteronomy 18:9-12a**

✚ Astrology, Horoscopes

The Bible does not go into detail about astrology, but the biblical position is clear. Christians should never trust in astrological beliefs or predictions. Astrology is an ancient, heathen system that invites ruin. Our lives are not determined by the stars. Scripture warns against the false predictions of astrology (**Jer 10:2; 27:9-10; Dan 2:1-4; 4:7; 5:7-9**) and continually condemns the ritual of worshipping the sun, moon and stars (“deities or demons linked with them”) (**Deut 4:19; 17:2-5; 2 Kgs 21:3, 5; Zeph 1:5; Job 31:26-28; Jer 8:1-2, Isa 47:10-14a**).

✚ Magic, Spells, Charming, Sorcery, Wizardry, Witchcraft

Magic is of different types. Magic tricks meant for entertainment is not occultic. Research has shown that occult magic is often counterfeit. Often occult magic or divination are a manifestation of demonic powers or the result of demon possession (**Acts 16:16**). Of course, the power of Satan and his demons is extremely limited compared to God’s power. Those who pursue the way of the magic arts are on a road that leads away from God, not toward Him. Tragedy will always be the end. The evil Jezebel practiced witchcraft (**2 Kgs 9:22**) causing calamity on herself and Israel. God consistently condemns those who “conjure spells” and those who practice witchcraft and sorcery. This is defined as detestable to the Lord (**Deut 18:10-12; 2 Kgs 21:6; Mic 5:12; Isa 47:12; Ez 13:18, 20; Acts 8:11-24; Lev 20:27; Ex 7:11; Rev 9:21; 22:15**). God warns of the ultimate punishment. **Revelation 21:8** says of “...sorcerers and idolaters ...their part will be in the lake that

burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Those who practice witchcraft (sorcery) will not inherit the kingdom of God (**Gal 5:20-21**). These practices are anti-God and are in rebellion against Him. Paul once dealt with one of these deceivers, a sorcerer and false prophet who led people astray. “But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, “You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time.” And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand” (**Acts 13:9-11**).

✚ Divination, Fortune-telling, Mediums, Spiritism, Necromancy, Familiar Spirits, Séance, Channeling, Clairvoyance

There are strong biblical warnings not to consult mediums and spiritists for the truth, but to inquire of God (**Isa 8:19**). Obviously, if those who performed these arts have any power (beyond deception), it is not a gift from God (as some falsely assert). Scripture condemns these practices several times (**Deut 18:9-14; Isa 44:25; Jer 27:9; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24**). These were despised pagan practices (**Ez 21:21; Isa 19:3; 1 Sam 28**). Scripture declares one of the reasons King Saul died “because he asked counsel of a medium” rather than God (**1 Chron 10:13-14**). If an Israelite lived as a medium, it was punishable by death (**Lev 20:27**). A medium serves as a conduit between the physical and spiritual world, where the person opens himself up to be indwelt by a spirit so the spirit can communicate in our world. This harsh treatment in the Old Testament was in place because mediums are ultimately in contact with demonic spirits and are being deceived. All these practices take people further from their Creator, the true and living God. A familiar spirit is a demon that is summoned by a medium with the intention that the spirit summoned will obey his or her commands. Often, familiar spirits are believed to be the spirits of people who have died (**Deut 18:11**). However, biblically this is not the case. Such appearances are in actuality demonic forces imitating people in order to deceive.

✚ Following omens or signs

Christians do not look to omens or “signs” for directions. It is an “abomination” and foolishness (**Deut 18:10-12**). Look to God and His instructions for life as provided in the Bible. To do otherwise is to foolishly deceive yourself, or allow Satan and others to deceive you.