



Unit 1

What is the Occult?

Introduction

The word “occult” is derived from the Latin word *occultus* and means hidden, secret, dark, mysterious or concealed. It is usually used to describe the phenomena that appear to transcend the world of our natural senses.

In this unit we will study

In this unit we will study some of the major elements of occult history and practice:

- ▶ Introduction to the occult
 - ▶ The practices of the occult
 - ▶ What the Bible says about the occult
-

Objectives of the unit

When you finish this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain what the Bible says about occult practices.
- Describe some of the major occult practices and how they work.
- Explain why these practices are wrong and why they are not reliable.
- Explain why as Christians we must be very careful to distinguish between fact and fiction in the popular use of occult practices.
- Understand how our own families can be unconsciously affected by the occult in today’s world.

History of the Occult

Occultism has been around as long as the human race. The earliest records of the history of humanity show the degeneration of the human race from monotheism to the degrading forms of idolatry.

Paul's description of the influence of the occult in Romans 1:21-32 (NIV)

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

The influence of the occult

Archeological evidence from Sumeria, Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome shows an abundance of demonic phenomena. The deities worshiped were invisible demons represented by material idols and images. The great ethnic faiths of India, China and Japan majored

Wizard. One skilled in magic.

Soothsayer. A person who predicts the future by magical or intuitive means.

Oracle. A person (as a priestess of ancient Greece) through whom a deity is believed to speak.

What is Animism?

Animism is the idea that all objects in the world have an inner or psychological being, and the soul is the vital principle responsible for organic development. Animists picture souls as phantoms, resembling vapors or shadows, which can transmigrate from person to person, from the dead to the living, and from and into plants, animals, and lifeless objects.

in demonism, as did the animistic religions of Africa, South America and the Pacific islands.

The powers of the occult have influenced human history far more than we tend to appreciate. In ancient times, kings and emperors frequently consulted their wizards, soothsayers, or oracles before making important decisions.

The way the occult works at any particular time is usually determined by the culture of the land and the people who are being influenced. It can often be confusing to detect where human abilities end and the supernatural work of demons takes over.

Practices of the Occult

Fortune telling

It is generally recognized that there are three main areas of occult practices: 1. Fortune Telling, 2. Magic or Sorcery, and 3. Spiritism.

Astrology and horoscopes

It has been estimated that 90 percent of all fortune telling is fake. The industry abounds in frauds, swindlers, and charlatans. However, though often wrong, there are times when remarkable predictions do occur.

Astrology has existed for 5,000 years. The Sumerians, Acadians, the Chaldeans, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans all had astrologers. Astrology is not to be confused with astronomy. **Astronomy** is a reputable science that studies the galaxies, fixed stars, and planets. **Astrology** is the interpretation of human destiny by reference to the position

of the stars at the time of a person's birth. Astrology is fortune telling. A hexameter listing the signs of the zodiac has come down to us from Roman times.

Horoscope. Illustration of the position of the sun, moon, and planets from a given latitude and longitude on earth at a given moment, usually that of birth. Astrologers have divided the heavens into 12 sections, each ruled by a different sign of the zodiac. Once the particular sign has been established, the mythological characteristics of the heavenly bodies are used to foretell events in the life of the individual for whom the horoscope has been drawn.

Palmistry



Palmistry is related to astrology. Evidence for this is the fact that palmistry divides the palm into seven planet mountains. From the index finger to the little finger is the Mercury mountain, the Apollo mountain, the Saturn mountain, and the Jupiter mountain. Below the thumb is the Venus mountain and the Moon mountain. In the lines of the hand, four main lines are distinguished: the heart line, the head line, the life line, and the line of destiny.

Clairvoyance

Clairvoyance means “second sight” and has three types:

- *Retrospective.* This involves the doctrine of reincarnation. Under hypnosis, the subject supposedly returns to the world of the past where he or she once lived and reveals ideas and concepts that it would normally be impossible to know.
- *Remote vision.* The ability to see people and places from a distance.
- *Precognition.* The prediction of future events.

Magic or Sorcery

This involves the healing and inflicting of diseases, love and hate, magic, curses, fertility charms, persecution and defense magic, and death magic.

Spiritism

Spiritism is also called *necromancy* or *spirit communication*. Although it is impossible to cover all the forms here, the most well-known are: table lifting; speaking in a trance; automatic writing; excursion of the soul; materialization (the

What is Magic?

Magic (sorcery) is the art of attaining objectives, acquiring knowledge, or performing works of wonder through supernatural or nonrational means. Techniques used in magic typically include chants and spells, gestures or actions that often have a symbolic relation to the desired, and use of substances believed to have a special relationship with the powers needed to accomplish the intended purpose. Magic is used in many cultures for healing, keeping away evil, seeking the truth, and for vengeful purposes.

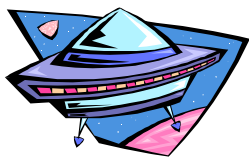


What spiritism supposedly does

production of phantom figures supposedly from the dead) and telekinesis (moving objects from a distance).

Also included in spiritism are: *apports* (the ability to make objects appear and disappear); *levitation* (making objects, and the human body, float in the air); visions and prophecy; the *ouija board* (seeking answers and conversations with the spirits who answer by pointing to letters and numbers on the board through a pendulum or glass), and *soothsaying* (conversing with spirits through a spirit medium). In addition there is astra traveling or *astro projection* (sending the soul to visit distant places); *detion* (the ability to make one's body disappear) and spiritist operations on the human body without using any surgical instruments.

The New Age Movement and UFO's



Much of the occult carries over to fascination with UFO's (unidentified flying objects). Although there is much that puzzles us in this area, there is no doubt much or most of what is reported is imaginary or can be accounted for by natural phenomena.

However, not all of it is so easily explained. UFO clubs exist in almost every country in the world. Their belief system appear to be in harmony with occult. Therefore, there are some reasons for suspecting there is a connection between the world of the occult and the world of UFO's. How many people believe in UFO's? There is no way of knowing this because occult practices are often difficult to detect.