

# The BIBLE and the OCCULT

## Why is the occult such a horrible evil?

God made us, and we belong to him. More than that, he made us unique among all his creatures, in that he has given us the ability to reflect his very character. We bear his image in our very being (Genesis 1:26-27).

Because of these things, we owe him our allegiance, our loyalty and our faithfulness. He alone deserves our worship, our trust and our devotion. Nothing is to have a greater place in our lives; for to give him second place is to give him less than what he rightfully deserves. It is to insult, to offend and to reject him. In fact, it is a denial of everything he is.

The occult and its practices are viewed by some as being somewhere between foolish superstition and innocent child play. Others take it with varying degrees of seriousness. God, however, takes extreme offense at it; for not only it is a denial of all that he is, but it exalts a substitute or counterfeit above him, and gives to it the trust, devotion and place in life that God alone deserves. In addition, the greater a person's participation in the occult, the greater its effect on him, distorting his perspective and influencing his conduct, to the point that everything about him becomes the opposite of the purpose for which God created him.

God made us with a glorious calling: to reflect the very nature of the Creator, in all that we do. He made us for living in a way that is morally upright - the way that Jesus would live, if he were in our circumstances. The occult, like any other sinful practice, tears this glorious calling right out of our grasp. It lowers us, sometimes to the point that we cannot even function like a decent animal.

The occult is, by its very nature, a rejection of all that God is. Because of that, we cannot go after both God and the occult. Many have tried, but we must choose one or the other. To try to follow both is, by definition, a rejection of God. We cannot serve two masters.

## Most of the Bible Verses Used in This Study

Note: The following verses are quoted from the World English Translation (public domain). Feel free to look at other translations. [A few additional comments are given in brackets.]

This translation uses the name of God, "Yahweh," where it occurs in the original Hebrew Old Testament. Most translations use the term "the LORD" (spelled with all capital letters) to indicate God's name. (The capital letters are used to distinguish it from the normal word "lord," which means "sir" or "master.") This follows the tradition of the Septuagint, an ancient translation of the Old Testament into Greek. When the name of God occurs alongside the word "lord" ("sir" or "master"), these translations tend to use "GOD" (all capital letters), instead.

Genesis 41:8, 15-16, 24-25

It happened in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men of it. Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh. ...

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It isn't in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." ...

"The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads of grain. I told it to the magicians; but there was no one who could explain it to me."

Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh is one. What God is about to do he has declared to Pharaoh."

Genesis 44:5

Isn't this that from which my lord drinks, and by which he indeed divines? You have done evil in so doing.

Genesis 44:15

Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Don't you know that such a man as I can indeed divine?"

Exodus 7:10-13

Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, as Yahweh had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers.

They also, the magicians of Egypt, did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as Yahweh had spoken.

Exodus 7:20-22

Moses and Aaron did so, as Yahweh commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. The fish that were in the river died; and the river became foul, and the Egyptians couldn't drink water from the river; and the blood was throughout all the land of Egypt.

The magicians of Egypt did in like manner with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as Yahweh had spoken.

## Some of the Different Types of Occult Activity that Exist Today.

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Students of the occult frequently divide occult phenomena into three areas: (1) forms of divination, (2) types of mystical experience, and (3) magical manipulation.

FORMS OF DIVINATION (also known as fortune-telling, soothsaying, or augury). A diviner predicts future events, finds lost articles or people, locates underground water, or reveals hidden knowledge. Perhaps the most common example of divination in America today is astrology. Other common types are: palmistry, waterwitching, ouija boards, numerology, biorhythms, pyramidology, the reading of crystal balls, auras, tarot cards, or tea leaves, use of pendulums, interpretation of dreams, and many others. Forms of divination are strictly forbidden in the Scriptures (see Deuteronomy 18:10-14,20). The sinfulness of divination lies in the fact that it demonstrates a lack of trust in the One who holds the future (see Hosea 4:12). Isaiah 47:13-14 predicts an end of the astrologers, while Proverbs 3:5-6 gives the proper response for the believer (trust in the Lord).

TYPES OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES. These are experiences that transcend the bounds of the ordinary physical world or the five senses. Seeing events as they are occurring hundreds of miles away or an event still in the future, communicating with the dead, and soul travel (out-of-body experiences) are examples of paranormal experiences. Other examples of mystical experiences are: seances, necromancy, telekinesis, some forms of glossolalia, levitation, automatic writing, clairvoyance, trances, materializations, visions, psychic healing (including acupuncture), remembrance of past lives (reincarnation), Eastern forms of meditation such as T. M. (transcendental meditation) or yoga, altered consciousness, and mental telepathy. We are not implying that all mysticism is evil. Christianity has its mystical elements. Our relationship to Christ is a mystical one. However, the mystical experiences in Christianity are always tied to the objective word of God. We are always to try the spirits. (See I John 4:1.) A valid mystical experience is always parallel to the propositional revelation of scripture. A red flag of caution should always be raised when one purports to have received new or additional revelation that is contradictory to scripture.

MAGICAL MANIPULATION (not to be confused with the art of illusion). By employing hidden or outside forces in the spiritual realm, occultists say they can manipulate people or nature to conform to their will or the will of the gods. Various rites and ceremonies are often used. Sometimes they are public, but mostly they are accomplished in private. Often they involve very complicated formulas and specific materials. Then the rites are carried out according to astrological calculations.

Exodus 8:6-7

Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. The magicians did in like manner with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

Exodus 8:16-19

Yahweh said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become lice [OR "gnats"] throughout all the land of Egypt.'" They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were lice on man, and on animal; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

The magicians tried with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they couldn't. There were lice on man, and on animal. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God:" and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as Yahweh had spoken.

Exodus 9:10-12

They took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward the sky; and it became a boil breaking forth with boils on man and on animal. The magicians couldn't stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boils were on the magicians, and on all the Egyptians. Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken to Moses.

Exodus 22:18

"You shall not allow a sorceress to live."

Leviticus 19:26

"You shall not eat any meat with the blood still in it; neither shall you use enchantments, nor practice sorcery."

Leviticus 19:31

"Don't turn to those who are mediums, nor to the wizards. Don't seek them out, to be defiled by them. I am Yahweh your God."

Leviticus 20:6

"The person that turns to those who are mediums, and to the wizards, to play the prostitute after them, I will even set my face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people."

Leviticus 20:27

"A man or a woman that is a medium, or is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them."

Numbers 22:7

The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam, and spoke to him the words of Balak.

Numbers 23:23

Surely there is no enchantment with [OR against] Jacob; Neither is there any divination with [OR against] Israel: Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What has God done!

Numbers 24:1

When Balaam saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, he didn't go, as at the other times, to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

Deut. 13:1-5

If there arise in the midst of you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams: for Yahweh your God proves you, to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after Yahweh your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his

One who practices magic is known by many terms, some of the most common being sorcerer, witch, wizard, or witch doctor. Several notorious practitioners of magic are mentioned in Scripture: the magicians of Egypt (Exodus 8); King Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-9); Jezebel (2 Kings 9:22); Simon (Acts 8:9-24); and Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:4-12). Involvement in magical practices was forbidden and punishable by death under the Mosaic Law (see Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:10-11; Isaiah 47:9-15), and also in the New Testament (see Galatians 5:20; Revelations 18:23-24). The city of Nineveh was destroyed for such abominable practices (Nahum 3:4). When the Messiah comes again, the occult practitioners and their works will be destroyed (Malachi 3:5; Micah 5:12; Revelations 21:8; 22:15). Occult involvement involves giving recognition and allegiance to a power or force other than God. For that reason Scripture defines it as evil and condemns it thoroughly.

### *Some of the Words Related to Occult Activity, That Are Mentioned in the Bible.*

[NOTE: This specific list is based on the NIV. These words will vary somewhat, in different translations.]

1. Sorcerer, sorceress, sorcery
2. Fortune telling
3. Prophecy; (false) prophets; making predictions
4. Diviner, divination
5. Seeking or consulting spirits; consulting (the spirits of) the dead; conjuring
6. Dreams; interpreters of dreams; visions; foreseeing
7. Interpreting omens; seeking omens
8. Medium
9. Spiritist
10. Enchanters
11. Astrologers, astrology, worshipping stars
12. Chaldeans (in some contexts - mainly in the book of Daniel - a synonym for "astrologer"; elsewhere simply a reference to people living in the area of Babylon)
13. Secret arts
14. Witchcraft
15. Magicians, magic, magic arts; magic charms
16. The casting of spells; potent spells; magic spells
17. Magi, "wise men" (in some contexts) [The term "wise men" is also used as a general term for advisers, or for people who have (or appear to have) wisdom.]

voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave to him. That prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to draw you aside out of the way which Yahweh your God commanded you to walk in. So shall you put away the evil from the midst of you.

Deut. 18:9-14

When you are come into the land which Yahweh your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found with you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices sorcery, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh: and because of these abominations Yahweh your God does drive them out from before you. You shall be perfect with Yahweh your God.

For these nations, that you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice sorcery, and to diviners; but as for you, Yahweh your God has not allowed you so to do.

Joshua 13:22

Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel kill with the sword among the rest of their slain.

1 Samuel 5:10-6:3

So they sent the ark of God to Ekron.

It happened, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people. They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it not kill us and our people. For there was a deadly confusion throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. The men who didn't die were struck with the tumors; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

The ark of Yahweh was in the country of the Philistines seven months. The Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of Yahweh? Show us with which we shall send it to its place."

They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, don't send it empty; but by all means return him a trespass-offering: then you shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you."

1 Samuel 15:22-23

Samuel said,

Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim.

Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has also rejected you from being king.

1 Samuel 28:3-10

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. Saul had put away those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. The Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and encamped in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa. When Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. When Saul inquired of Yahweh, Yahweh didn't answer him, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul to his servants, Seek me a woman who has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.

His servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman who has a familiar spirit at En-dor.

Saul disguised himself, and put on other clothing, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, Please divine to me by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whoever I shall name to you.

## What does the Bible say about the Occult? (an outline)

### **I. It's Incompatibility with God and His Ways.** [See also Section 3, which focuses specifically on false prophets.]

#### **A. Its nature: pretentious, foolish, not from God.**

1. Deceptive, lying, false (applied to dreams, visions, divinations, prophecies, etc.). Examples - Jeremiah 14:14-15; 27:9-10; 29:8-9; Ezekiel 22:28; Zechariah 10:2.
2. Influenced by what the people want to hear - Jeremiah 29:8.
3. An example of how foolish the occult can be: Why consult the dead in behalf of the living? - Isaiah 8:19.
4. Filled with foolish and superstitious practices - Ezekiel 21:21; whispering and muttering - Isaiah 8:19.
5. Not sent by God. Example - Jeremiah 29:9.
6. [See also Section 2f (instances in which occult practitioners may sometimes have accurate results) and Section 3 (false prophets).]

#### **B. Its negative effects and end results**

1. It leaves the people like sheep without a shepherd (no genuine guidance) - Zechariah 10:2-3. [In this passage, God said he would punish the false leaders and restore his flock.]
2. It is a worthless, detestable practice that only results in God's deserved anger. Many verses; two examples - Deuteronomy 18:9, 12 (it even causes the person to become detestable); 2 Kings 17:15, 17 (vs. 13-20). [The reason for this is further explained in the article, "Why Is the Occult Such a Horrible Evil?"]
3. It enslaves people and earns God's judgment. Example: the destruction of Nineveh - Nahum 3:4 (vs. 1-7).
4. Widespread practice of the occult may result in judgment of an entire nation. Occult practices were among the reasons why God had to destroy certain nations and drive others out of their lands - Deuteronomy 18:12; 2 Kings 17:17-20 (context begins at v. 13); 21:2 (see also v. 8); 2 Chronicles 33:2 (see also v. 8).
5. [See also the destructive effects of false prophets, Section 3d.]

The woman said to him, Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: why then lay you a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

Saul swore to her by Yahweh, saying, As Yahweh lives, there shall no punishment happen to you for this thing.

2 Kings 9:22

It happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? He answered, What peace, so long as the prostitution of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft abound?

2 Kings 17:13-20

Yet Yahweh testified to Israel, and to Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn you from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like the neck of their fathers, who didn't believe in Yahweh their God. They rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified to them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom Yahweh had charged those who they should not do like them.

They forsook all the commandments of Yahweh their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshiped all the host of the sky, and served Baal. They caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger.

Therefore Yahweh was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah didn't keep the commandments of Yahweh their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. Yahweh rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

2 Kings 21:1-9

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Hephzibah. He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, after the abominations of the nations whom Yahweh cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made an Asherah, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshiped all the host of the sky, and served them. He built altars in the house of Yahweh, whereof Yahweh said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. He built altars for all the host of the sky in the two courts of the house of Yahweh. He made his son to pass through the fire, and practiced sorcery, and used enchantments, and dealt with those who had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he worked much evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger.

He set the engraved image of Asherah, that he had made, in the house of which Yahweh said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name forever; neither will I cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they didn't listen: and Manasseh seduced them to do that which is evil more than did the nations whom Yahweh destroyed before the children of Israel.

2 Kings 23:24-26

Moreover those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the teraphim, and the idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away [OR get rid of], that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of Yahweh. Like him was there no king before him, who turned to Yahweh with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

## II. God's Surpassing Power Contrasted to the Occultists Weak "Results." (Examples)

### A. God can do what they can't.

1. Joseph could interpret the dreams that Pharaoh's occult leaders could not interpret - Genesis 41:8, 15-16, 24-25. [God revealed the interpretation to him.]
2. God's servants were 10 times better than the occult practitioners - Daniel 1:19-20.
3. Daniel could reveal the dream; the occult practitioners couldn't - Daniel 2. [The occultists claimed that they couldn't, because only the "gods" could do it - Daniel 2:1-13; Daniel claimed that he could, because only "God" could do it (and God had done so, and had revealed it to Daniel) - Daniel 2:25-28.]
4. The occult practitioners could not interpret the dream, but Daniel could - Daniel 4:6-9.
5. The occult practitioners could not interpret the writing on the wall, but Daniel could - Daniel 5:5-17 (+).

### B. God can take control when a person resorts to occult practices, and can use what they are doing to accomplish his purposes.

1. God took control when the King of Moab tried to use the occult to destroy Israel - Numbers 22-24. [Balak, king of Moab, was hoping that he could get Israel cursed, and he offered Balaam a huge reward, if he would do so. Balaam wanted the reward, but God overruled and would not let him curse Israel. See also Joshua 24:9-10 and Nehemiah 13:1-3.]
2. God used the Philistine diviners' advice, to get the ark back to Israel - 1 Samuel 6:2 (+ context). [When the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, God sent plagues and death to them. So they asked their diviners (etc.) what to do with the ark. God used their advice to get it returned to Israel. (See also Section 5d.)]
3. Saul and the medium at Endor - 1 Samuel 28:3-14. [Saul wanted her to bring Samuel back from the dead. When the medium began to "call up" Samuel (probably a demonic counterfeit who would pretend to be Samuel), God surprised the medium, by sending Samuel himself.]
4. God was going to direct the king of Babylon toward Jerusalem, in order to bring judgment upon the city - Ezekiel 21:18-23. [God would use the king's occult practices to influence his decision.]
5. The Magi ("Wise men") brought gifts to Jesus - Matthew 2:1-2, 7, 16. [There is some debate as to the exact identity of the Magi or "Wise Men." God probably used their gifts to help finance the journey, when Joseph, Mary and Jesus had to flee to Egypt - Matthew 2:13-15.]

### C. God can nullify what they try to do.

1. The example of Balaam - nothing he did could stop God from blessing Israel - Numbers 24:1 (also 23:23 + context). [This event is recorded in Numbers 22-24, but

Notwithstanding, Yahweh didn't turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, with which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocation with which Manasseh had provoked him.

1 Chron. 10:13-14

So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against Yahweh, because of the word of Yahweh, which he didn't keep; and also because he asked counsel of one who had a familiar spirit, to inquire thereby, and didn't inquire of Yahweh: therefore he killed him, and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.

2 Chron. 33:1-13

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, after the abominations of the nations whom Yahweh cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; and he reared up altars for the Baals, and made Asheroth, and worshiped all the host of the sky, and served them. He built altars in the house of Yahweh, whereof Yahweh said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. He built altars for all the host of the sky in the two courts of the house of Yahweh. He also made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; and he practiced sorcery [OR witchcraft or soothsaying], and used enchantments, and practiced sorcery, and dealt with those who had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he worked much evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger.

He set the engraved image of the idol, which he had made, in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name forever: neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from off the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them, even all the law and the statutes and the ordinances given by Moses. Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did evil more than did the nations whom Yahweh destroyed before the children of Israel.

Yahweh spoke to Manasseh, and to his people; but they gave no heed. Therefore Yahweh brought on them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. When he was in distress, he begged Yahweh his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that Yahweh he was God.

Isaiah 2:5-11

House of Jacob, come,  
and let us walk in the light of Yahweh.  
For you have forsaken your people,  
the house of Jacob,  
Because they are filled from the east,  
With those who practice divination like the Philistines,  
And they clasp hands with the children of foreigners.  
Their land is full of silver and gold,  
Neither is there any end of their treasures.  
Their land also is full of horses,  
Neither is there any end of their chariots.  
Their land also is full of idols.  
They worship the work of their own hands,  
That which their own fingers have made.  
Man is brought low,  
And mankind is humbled;  
Therefore don't forgive them.  
Enter into the rock,  
And hide in the dust,  
From before the terror of Yahweh,  
And from the glory of his majesty.  
The lofty looks of man will be brought low,  
The haughtiness of men will be bowed down,  
And Yahweh alone will be exalted in that day.

additional information is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. For instance, Joshua 24:9-10 and Nehemiah 13:1-3 show us that, even though Balaam claimed (in Numbers 22-24) to be willing to do whatever God wanted, in his heart he wanted the money.]

2. God brings their plans to nothing, while at the same time accomplishing what his own servants have spoken (on his behalf) - Isaiah 19:3; 44:24-26.

**D. They can't change what God purposes to do (even when it involves his intention to judge them for their occult sins).**

1. No sorcery or divination can overrule what God has planned to do - admitted by Balaam, when he tried to curse Israel - Numbers 23:23. (See also 24:1.)
2. An example of a nation that God would punish in spite of their attempts to prevent it through occult practices - Ezekiel 21:28-29.
3. The occultists would be unable to prevent God's judgment from coming upon the people; and the occultists themselves would be destroyed - Isaiah 47:7-15. [Verse 12 (+) - God mocks them for their foolish attempts at preventing God's judgment.]

**E. They can sometimes imitate what God can do, but only to a degree. Example: The occult practitioners in Egypt, when Moses confronted Pharaoh:**

1. Their rods also turned into snakes, but Aaron's rod/snake ate their rods/snakes - Exodus 7:10-13.
2. They could also turn the water into blood - Exodus 7:20-22.
3. They could also get frogs to come up onto the land - Exodus 8:6-7.
4. They could not create gnats... and they recognized that God was doing it - Exodus 8:16-19. [Pharaoh wouldn't admit it.]
5. They couldn't even try to create the boils, because they themselves were covered with them - Exodus 9:10-12.

**F. God may sometimes allow them to have accurate results, but only for a purpose.**

1. The occult is filled with falsehood and lies (see Section 1, about its incompatibility with God and his ways). But we must realize that those who practice it do not always give wrong results. God may allow their predictions to prove right (etc.) in order to prove whether or not our loyalty to God is genuine - Deuteronomy 13:1-5.
2. God may allow accurate results in order to accomplish some other purpose. (See the examples in Section 2b, above.)

**G. New Testament examples of the occult and God's power over it.**

1. The false prophet Bar-Jesus: He opposed the proclamation of the good news (about Jesus), but was strongly rebuked and made temporarily blind - Acts 13:6-12.

Isaiah 8:19-9:7

When they shall tell you, "Consult with those who have familiar spirits and with the wizards, who chirp and who mutter:" shouldn't a people consult with their God? on behalf of the living should they consult with the dead? To the law and to the testimony! if they don't speak according to this word, surely there is no morning for them. They shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry; and it shall happen that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward: and they shall look to the earth, and see, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away.

But there shall be no gloom to her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time has he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light:  
those who lived in the land of the shadow of death,  
on them has the light shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased their joy:  
they joy before you  
according to the joy in harvest,  
as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.  
For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff of his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as in the day of Midian.  
For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult,  
and the garments rolled in blood,  
shall be for burning,  
for fuel of fire.  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be on his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government  
and of peace there shall be no end,  
on the throne of David,  
and on his kingdom,  
to establish it,  
and to uphold it with justice  
and with righteousness from henceforth even forever.  
The zeal of Yahweh of Hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 19:3

The spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it;  
and I will destroy the counsel of it:  
and they shall seek to the idols,  
and to the charmers,  
and to those who have familiar spirits,  
and to the wizards.

Isaiah 44:24-26

Thus says Yahweh,  
your Redeemer, and he who formed you from the womb:

I am Yahweh,  
who makes all things;  
who stretches forth the heavens alone;  
who spreads abroad the earth (who is with me?);

who frustrates the signs of the liars,  
and makes diviners mad;  
who turns wise men backward,  
and makes their knowledge foolish;  
who confirms the word of his servant,  
and performs the counsel of his messengers;

2. Paul rebuked an evil spirit that controlled a slave girl, and it left her - Acts 16:16-18.
3. God used Paul to drive out demons at Ephesus; in contrast, some Jewish exorcists tried to drive out a demon (imitating Paul), and the demon overpowered and attacked them - Acts 19:11-16.

### III. The Specific Case of False Prophets. [Many of the Verses in Section 1 Also Apply to Them.]

- A. **NOTE:** Only a limited number of verses are included in this section of the outline. The Bible says much more about false prophets.
- B. **God opposes them, because he did not send them (even though they may claim that he did).**
  1. God did not send them - Jeremiah 14:14-15; 23:30-32; Ezekiel 13:6.
  2. God is against them - Jeremiah 23:30-32; Ezekiel 13:8-9.
- C. **What they say is often influenced by their hearers.**
  1. Often based on pleasant things that the people like to hear, such as promises of peace and blessings. Example - Jeremiah 14:13-14.
  2. Often based on what the people are willing to pay. Example: A sizeable reward may mean favorable prophecies; the absence of reward may mean unfavorable prophecies against the people - Micah 3:5, 11. [In contrast, God's prophet has authority to speak judgment against such false prophets (vs. 8-12) and the false prophets' response (whether agreeable or not) will have no influence what God's prophet says.]
- D. **What they say is false, pretentious and deceptive - especially when they claim that their words come from God.**
  1. Lies and falsehood; self-made delusions; "tongue wagging," etc. - various verses, including Jeremiah 14:14; 23:26, 30-32; Ezekiel 13:6-8. [Their message often sounds very positive and affirming, whereas the truth would actually speak about judgment - Jeremiah 14:13.]
  2. An expression of their own imagination; they follow their own spirit and have actually received nothing from God - Ezekiel 13:2-3, 7.
  3. They claim that God has spoken, when he hasn't - Jeremiah 23:31; Ezekiel 13:6; 22:28.
  4. Though they speak lies and falsehood, they may even deceive themselves into thinking that their words will be fulfilled! - Ezekiel 13:6.
  5. They often "justify" (excuse) sinful conduct - Ezekiel 22:28.

who says of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited;  
and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built,  
and I will raise up the waste places of it;

Isaiah 47:7-15

You said,  
I shall be mistress forever;  
so that you did not lay these things to your heart,  
neither did remember the latter end of it.

Now therefore hear this, you who are given to pleasures,  
who sit securely,  
who say in your heart,  
I am, and there is none else besides me;  
I shall not sit as a widow,  
neither shall I know the loss of children:  
but these two things shall come to you  
in a moment in one day,  
the loss of children, and widowhood;  
in their full measure shall they come on you,  
in the multitude of your sorceries,  
and the great abundance of your enchantments.  
For you have trusted in your wickedness;  
you have said, None sees me;  
your wisdom and your knowledge, it has perverted you,  
and you have said in your heart,  
I am, and there is none else besides me.  
Therefore shall evil come on you;  
you shall not know the dawning of it:  
and mischief shall fall on you;  
you shall not be able to put it away;  
and desolation shall come on you suddenly,  
which you don't know.

Stand now with your enchantments,  
and with the multitude of your sorceries,  
in which you have labored from your youth;  
if so be you shall be able to profit,  
if so be you may prevail.  
You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels:  
let now the astrologers, the star-gazers,  
the monthly prognosticators, stand up,  
and save you from the things that shall come on you.  
Behold, they shall be as stubble;  
the fire shall burn them;  
they shall not deliver themselves  
from the power of the flame:  
it shall not be a coal to warm at,  
nor a fire to sit before.  
Thus shall the things be to you  
in which you have labored:  
those who have trafficked with you from your youth  
shall wander everyone to his quarter;  
there shall be none to save you.

Jeremiah 14:13-16

Then said I, Ah, Lord Yahweh! behold, the prophets tell them, You shall not see the sword, neither shall you have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then Yahweh said to me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name; I didn't send them, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke I to them: they prophesy to you a lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nothing, and the deceit of their own heart.

Therefore thus says Yahweh concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name, and I didn't send them, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land: By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. The people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them-them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness on them.

6. A typical illustration of the conflict between false prophets and God's prophets can be seen in the conflict between Micaiah (a prophet from God) and King Ahab's false prophets - 2 Kings 22:1-40.

**E. What they say has a destructive effect on the people (and even on themselves).**

1. They do not benefit the people, but lead them astray - Jeremiah 23:32; Micah 3:5-12 (the end result: God would send darkness and the nation would be destroyed).
2. They ensnare people, like birds are snared in a trap - Ezekiel 13:20. [In the context of this specific verse, God was going to set free the people they were trying to ensnare.]
3. They discourage the righteous, but encourage the wicked to remain wicked - Ezekiel 13:22.
4. They (and their listeners) will be judged and destroyed - Jeremiah 14:15-16; Ezekiel 13:9; 22:23-31 (they and all the others who do evil - v. 31); Micah 3:5-12 (God would remain silent - vs. 6-7).
5. Sometimes the very things they say cause the judgments that will fall on them. Example - Jeremiah 27:10.
6. [See also Section 4.]

**F. The contrast between God's Word and the false prophets' word - Jeremiah 23:28-29.**

1. God contrasts the false prophet's word to his own Word, by contrasting straw and grain - Jeremiah 23:28. [The grain (representing God's word) has nutritional value; the straw (representing the false prophet's word) may take up space in your stomach, but it is worthless for nutritional value.]
2. The false prophet's worthless dreams are contrasted with God's Word, which is like a fire that can burn things to ashes, or like a hammer that can smash rock to powder - Jeremiah 23:29. [The false prophets' dreams are powerless. In contrast, nothing can keep God's Word from accomplishing its purpose.]

**G. Those who claim to be prophets must be tested, in order to determine whether they are genuine or false.**

1. Any miraculous signs they give (or predict) must occur and they must direct the people's attention toward the God of the Bible - Deuteronomy 13:1-3.
2. It's not enough that their predictions prove true. God may allow their predictions to take place, in order to test (or prove) the genuineness of our loyalty to him - Deuteronomy 13:3-4.
3. Those who claim to be prophets, and are not, are preaching rebellion against the true God, and are worthy of death - Deuteronomy 13:5.

Jeremiah 23:25-32

I have heard what the prophets have said, who prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, even the prophets of the deceit of their own heart? who think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers forgot my name for Baal. The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he who has my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? says Yahweh. Isn't my word like fire? says Yahweh; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, says Yahweh, who steal my words everyone from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, says Yahweh, who use their tongues, and say, He says. Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, says Yahweh, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting: yet I didn't send them, nor commanded them; neither do they profit this people at all, says Yahweh.

Jeremiah 27:9-10

But as for you, don't you listen to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreams, nor to your soothsayers, nor to your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, You shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie to you, to remove you far from your land, and that I should drive you out, and you should perish.

Jeremiah 29:8-9

For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: Don't let your prophets who are in the midst of you, and your diviners, deceive you; neither listen you to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in my name: I have not sent them, says Yahweh.

Ezekiel 13:1-9

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say you to those who prophesy out of their own heart, Hear you the word of Yahweh: Thus says the Lord Yahweh, Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! Israel, your prophets have been like foxes in the waste places. You have not gone up into the gaps, neither built up the wall for the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of Yahweh. They have seen falsehood and lying divination, who say, Yahweh says; but Yahweh has not sent them: and they have made men to hope that the word would be confirmed. Haven't you seen a false vision, and haven't you spoken a lying divination, in that you say, Yahweh says; but I have not spoken?

Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh: Because you have spoken falsehood, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, says the Lord Yahweh. My hand shall be against the prophets who see false visions, and who divine lies: they shall not be in the council of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord Yahweh.

Ezekiel 13:20-23

Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh: Behold, I am against your pillows [OR magic charms], with which you there hunt the souls to make them fly [better translation: you hunt (entrap) the souls (of people) like "them that fly" (birds)], and I will tear them from your arms; and I will let the souls go, even the souls who you hunt to make them fly. Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and you shall know that I am Yahweh.

Because with lies you have grieved the heart of the righteous, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, and be saved alive: Therefore you shall no more see false visions, nor practice divination. I will deliver my people out of your hand; and you shall know that I am Yahweh.

## IV. The Sinfulness of Participation in the Occult; the Attitude We Should Have Toward It.

### A. God forbids involvement in occult practices and he promises severe consequences for those who do.

1. Don't do it - Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:10-11. [God has driven nations from their lands, because of such detestable practices. (Don't forget... God is the ultimate owner of those lands. If the people refuse to obey him, they have no inherent right to live there!)]
2. Those who do it deserve to be put to death - Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:27; Deuteronomy 13:5.
3. An example in which God said he would come in judgment against them - Malachi 3:5.
4. An example in which God would come in judgment against them, and would deliver his people from the snare of their influence - Ezekiel 13:20-23.
5. An example of God being against a nation that enslaved others by means of the occult - Nahum 3:1-7.
6. Those who participate in the occult will have their place in the fiery lake of burning sulfur - Revelation 21:6-8; they will not be allowed inside God's eternal city - Revelation 22:14-15.
7. [See also the examples in Section 5.]

### B. God forbids people to seek counsel or advice from those who are involved in the occult (and he also promises severe consequences for those who do - consequences which such people bring upon themselves).

1. Don't do it, or you will be defiled - Leviticus 19:31.
2. If you do it, God will be against you - Leviticus 20:6.
3. Don't listen to them - Deuteronomy 18:14.
4. Don't listen to them or you will perish - Jeremiah 27:9-10.
5. Look to God, instead - Isaiah 8:19.

### C. Anyone who claims to have a revelation must be tested (and, if necessary, rejected).

1. Everything the person says must be in accordance with the Word of God; otherwise he does not have the "light" of truth in him - Isaiah 8:19 (+).
2. [See also the need to test those who claim to be prophets, Section 3f.]

### D. Can we tolerate compromise with the occult?

1. Back then, the people often saw no problem with attempting to hold onto both the occult and the God of the Bible. Examples - Balaam (Numbers 22-24) and Saul (1 Samuel 28:10). [Today, many people who call themselves "Christian" still have this attitude.]
2. God says that it is impossible for a person who practices such sins to enter the kingdom of God - Galatians 5:19-21.

Ezekiel 21:18-23

The word of Yahweh came to me again, saying, Also, you son of man, appoint two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come; they both shall come forth out of one land: and mark out a place, mark it out at the head of the way to the city. You shall appoint a way for the sword to come to Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and to Judah in Jerusalem the fortified. For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he shook the arrows back and forth, he consulted the teraphim, he looked in the liver. In his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to set battering rams, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build forts. [The king used divination to decide which path to follow.] It shall be to them as a false divination in their sight, who have sworn oaths to them; but he brings iniquity to memory, that they may be taken.

Ezekiel 21:28-29

You, son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord Yahweh concerning the children of Ammon, and concerning their reproach; and say you,

A sword, a sword is drawn,  
for the slaughter it is furbished,  
to cause it to devour,  
that it may be as lightning;  
while they see for you false visions,  
while they divine lies to you,  
to lay you on the necks  
of the wicked who are deadly wounded,  
whose day is come  
in the time of the iniquity of the end.

Ezekiel 22:23-31

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, Son of man, tell her, You are a land that is not cleansed, nor rained on in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst of it, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst of it. Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst of it are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain. Her prophets have daubed for them with whitewash, seeing false visions, and divining lies to them, saying, Thus says the Lord Yahweh, when Yahweh has not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery; yes, they have vexed the poor and needy, and have oppressed the foreigner wrongfully.

I sought for a man among them, who should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out my indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I brought on their heads, says the Lord Yahweh.

Daniel 1:19-20

The king talked with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. In every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters who were in all his realm.

Daniel 2:1-13

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams; and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep went from him. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the enchanters, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. The king said to them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.

3. Turning away from any such sins (if they are present in one's life) is an integral part of salvation - Acts 19:17-20. [This passage focuses on ways that the people of Ephesus showed honor to the Lord Jesus. One of the ways they did this was by destroying the things they once used in their practice of the occult. They not only stopped practicing this sin, but they also burned their books (rather than selling them to others), so that they would not become guilty of enabling others to sin. Compare to Luke 17:1. (See also Section 6b-iv.)]
4. Ultimately, God will destroy the occultists, along with everyone else who does evil and disobeys him. Examples - Micah 5:10-15; Malachi 3:5. Also a future example - Revelation 21:6-8; 22:14-15.

**E. The distorted perspective of an occult practitioner (examples). Sin - including occult sin - has a destructive effect on one's view of reality:**

1. The example of a nation that practiced the occult: They viewed themselves as an "eternal queen"; God viewed them as a wanton (sexually promiscuous) creature - Isaiah 47:7-8. [Often in the Bible, the act of turning away from God and toward idolatry (and the occult), is compared to adultery or prostitution. (Compare to James 4:4.) Figuratively, we are to be "married" to God, and are to not go after substitutes and counterfeits. See also Nahum 3:4.]
2. A description of the end times, when people will be so corrupt in their thinking, that even when they know God is judging them, they will refuse to repent of their occult practices (and other sins) - Revelation 9:20-21. [God wants them to repent; instead, they want to continue in their sinful ways, even though doing so will result in their deaths!]

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## V. BIBLE EXAMPLES of Those Who Participated in the Occult & Those Who Opposed It.

- A. **NOTE 1:** This includes people directly involved in those practices, as well as those who sought counsel or advice from such people. Examples of those who opposed it are marked out by the word "AGAINST."
- B. **NOTE 2:** Joseph pretended to have occult powers, when he (as ruler over Egypt) was questioning his brothers (who didn't know who he was) - Genesis 44:5, 15.
- C. **Balak and Balaam:** Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel. God overruled Balaam's attempts to do so; later Balaam was killed in one of God's judgments - Numbers 22:7; 24:1 (+ the context of chapters 22-24); Joshua 13:22.
- D. **The Philistines** - 1 Samuel 6:2 (+ context). [God had already shown his superiority over their "gods," yet they blindly continued in their ways. God used the diviners' recommendations to bring the ark of the testimony back to

Then spoke the Chaldeans to the king in the Syrian language, O king, live forever: tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.

The king answered the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if you don't make known to me the dream and the interpretation of it, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if you show the dream and the interpretation of it, you shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream and the interpretation of it.

They answered the second time and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.

The king answered, I know of a certainty that you would gain time, because you see the thing is gone from me. But if you don't make known to me the dream, there is but one law for you; for you have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, until the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me the interpretation of it.

The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man on the earth who can show the king's matter, because no king, lord, or ruler, has asked such a thing of any magician, or enchanter, or Chaldean. It is a rare thing that the king requires, and there is no other who can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went forth, and the wise men were to be slain; and they sought Daniel and his companions to be slain.

Daniel 2:25-28

Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus to him, I have found a man of the children of the captivity of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.

The king answered Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation of it?

Daniel answered before the king, and said, The secret which the king has demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers, show to the king; but there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head on your bed, are these: ...

Daniel 4:6-9

Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known to me the interpretation of it. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and I told the dream before him, saying, Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret troubles you, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation of it.

Daniel 5:5-17

In the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's face was changed in him, and his thoughts troubled him; and the joints of his loins were loosened, and his knees struck one against another.

The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation of it, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then came in all the king's wise men; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his face was changed in him, and his lords were perplexed.

Israel. (This gold-covered chest was also called the "ark of the covenant." It contained various sacred items - see Hebrews 9:4b.)

**E. King Saul and the medium at Endor:**

1. King Saul wanted her to bring Samuel up from the dead. God actually allowed Samuel to return - which terrified the medium and made her realize that her "guest" was Saul. 1 Samuel 28:3-14 (+). [Mediums have no genuine power over the dead, and can only "conjure up" demonic counterfeits. The fact that Samuel was truly present made her realize that something beyond her control was happening.]
2. God judged Saul for this - 1 Chronicles 33:6.
3. Note that Saul had originally opposed the practice of the occult - see 1 Samuel 28:3. [His unwillingness to deal with the sins in his life led him on a downward path.]

**F. Jezebel - 2 Kings 9:22.** [Because of her sins, she would be killed and her body eaten by dogs.]

**G. [AGAINST] Jehu - 2 Kings 9:22.** [He arranged to get Jezebel killed. See v. 30 (+).]

**H. King Manasseh**

1. He sinned worse than the nations God had previously destroyed - 2 Kings 21:1-9; 2 Chronicles 33:1-9.
2. The people followed his example - 2 Kings 21:9; 2 Chronicles 33:8.
3. God allowed him to be taken captive to Babylon. This humbled Manasseh, and he turned from his evil ways - 2 Chronicles 33:10-13.
4. His sin was so horrible, that God's anger was not removed from the nation, even after Manasseh reformed his ways - 2 Kings 23:26. [The events of this verse come years after the events of 2 Kings 21:9 and 2 Chronicles 33:8. When Josiah began to reign, the people were still following Manasseh's example of participating in these practices. (His sin involved not only his own practice of the occult, but also the resulting encouragement he gave to others, to do the same. After all, he was their leader.)]

**I. [AGAINST] King Josiah - he got rid of the occultists, along with the idols and other detestable things that were in the land - 2 Kings 23:24.** [However, his valiant efforts could not take away God's wrath: the sins of the nation had become too great. See vs. 25-26, and the comments about Manasseh's sins, Section 5g.]

**J. Israel and Judah**

1. They provoked God to anger and he judged them by removing them from his presence - 2 Kings 17:13-20. [Only Judah was left, and they, too, were punished.]

Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: the queen spoke and said, O king, live forever; don't let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your face be changed. There is a man in your kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and the king Nebuchadnezzar your father, the king, I say, your father, made him master of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; because an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of dark sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.

Then was Daniel brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, Are you that Daniel, who are of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Judah? I have heard of you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known to me the interpretation of it; but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. But I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations, and dissolve doubts; now if you can read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation of it, you shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then Daniel answered before the king, Let your gifts be to yourself, and give your rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

Micah 3:5-12

Thus says Yahweh  
concerning the prophets  
who lead my people astray;

for those who feed their teeth,  
they proclaim, "Peace!"  
and whoever doesn't provide for their mouths,  
they prepare war against him:

"Therefore night is over you,  
with no vision,  
And it is dark to you,  
that you may not divine;  
And the sun will go down on the prophets,  
And the day will be black over them.  
The seers shall be disappointed,  
And the diviners confounded.  
Yes, they shall all cover their lips;  
For there is no answer from God."

But as for me, I am full of power  
by the Spirit of Yahweh,  
And of judgment, and of might,  
To declare to Jacob his disobedience,  
And to Israel his sin.

Please listen to this, you heads of the house of Jacob,  
And rulers of the house of Israel,  
Who abhor justice,  
And pervert all equity.

They build up Zion with blood,  
And Jerusalem with iniquity.  
Her leaders judge for bribes,  
And her priests teach for a price,  
And her prophets of it tell fortunes for money:

Yet they lean on Yahweh,  
and say, Isn't Yahweh in the midst of us?  
No disaster will come on us.

Therefore Zion for your sake will be plowed like a field,  
And Jerusalem will become heaps of rubble,  
And the mountain of the temple  
like the high places of a forest.

2. They (Judah) would be humbled and not forgiven, because they continued to reject God's ways - Isaiah 2:5-11. [If they had been willing to repent, they would have been forgiven. But they weren't willing to do so.]
3. Their practices would leave them "famished" for truth; they would experience the "utter darkness" of judgment. Yet because of God's undeserved kindness, the light of God's graciousness would eventually shine forth in the darkness - Isaiah 8:19-9:7. [Chapter 9 is a prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ. Its fulfillment was going to begin in the northern kingdom of Israel.]
4. They would experience disaster - Isaiah 47:7-15.
5. A day would come, in which God would destroy the occult practices of Israel - Micah 5:10-15.
6. God would come against them in judgment - Malachi 3:5.

**K. Israel's leaders**

1. God would "consume" them in his anger, because they used the occult to "justify" (excuse) their sinful practices - Ezekiel 22:23-31 (especially verses 28, 31).
2. They would be punished, because they resorted to the darkness of the occult, thus leaving the people like sheep without a shepherd - Zechariah 10:2-3.

**L. Babylon** - they would experience a type of judgment that their occult practices would be unable to prevent - Isaiah 47:7-15 (especially vs. 11-15).

**M. Nineveh** - they would be destroyed because of their occult practices, and because of the way they enslaved others with it - Nahum 3:1-7 (especially v. 4).

**N. The Magi** - Matthew 2:1-2, 7, 16. [They brought gifts to Jesus. Without realizing it, they were preparing Jesus' family for their trip to Egypt (2:13-15)!]

**O. Simon** - Acts 8:9-11, 18-24. [He liked to amaze people with his powers, so he wanted to purchase the Holy Spirit's power. Peter rebuked him and warned him that his heart was not right before God. (Church history suggests that he refused to repent and later invented a false religion that attempted to compete with Christianity.)]

**P. Bar-Jesus** - Acts 13:6-12. [He tried to hinder the preaching of the good news about Jesus. He was rebuked and made temporarily blind.]

**Q. A slave girl** - Acts 16:16-18. [She was controlled by an evil spirit, until Paul cast the spirit out of her.]

**R. [AGAINST] Those at Ephesus, who became saved** - Acts 19:18-20. [They burned their occult books.]

Micah 5:10-15

"It will happen in that day," says Yahweh,

"That I will cut off your horses out of the midst of you,  
And will destroy your chariots.  
I will cut off the cities of your land,  
And will tear down all your strongholds.  
I will destroy witchcraft from your hand;  
And you shall have no soothsayers.  
I will cut off your engraved images  
and your pillars out of your midst;  
And you shall no more worship  
the work of your hands.  
I will uproot your Asherim out of your midst;  
And I will destroy your cities.  
I will execute vengeance in anger,  
And wrath on the nations that didn't listen."

Nahum 3:1-7

Woe to the bloody city!  
It is all full of lies and robbery.  
The prey doesn't depart.  
The noise of the whip,  
the noise of the rattling of wheels,  
prancing horses,  
and bounding chariots,  
the horseman mounting,  
and the flashing sword,  
the glittering spear,  
and a multitude of slain,  
and a great heap of corpses,  
and there is no end of the bodies.  
They stumble on their bodies,  
because of the multitude of the prostitution of the alluring  
prostitute,  
the mistress of witchcraft,  
who sells nations through her prostitution,  
and families through her witchcraft.

"Behold, I am against you," says Yahweh of Hosts,  
"and I will lift your skirts over your face.

I will show the nations your nakedness,  
and the kingdoms your shame.

I will throw abominable filth on you,  
and make you vile,  
and will set you a spectacle.

It will happen that all those who look at you will flee from you,  
and say, 'Nineveh is laid waste Who will mourn for her?'  
Where will I seek comforters for you?"

Zech. 10:2-3

For the teraphim have spoken vanity,  
and the diviners have seen a lie;  
And they have told false dreams.  
They comfort in vain.  
Therefore they go their way like sheep.  
They are oppressed, because there is no shepherd.

My anger is kindled against the shepherds,  
And I will punish the male goats;  
For Yahweh of Hosts has visited his flock,  
the house of Judah,  
And will make them as his horse  
in the battle that he is proud of.

Malachi 3:5

I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness  
against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the  
perjurers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the  
widow, and the fatherless, and who deprive the foreigner of justice, and  
don't fear me," says Yahweh of Hosts.

- S. **People at the end of the age** - Revelation 9:21. [They will refuse to repent.]
- T. **Prophetic "Babylon,"** which used the occult to deceive the nations - Revelation 18:23. [It will be permanently destroyed.]

## VI. Other Sins Found in the Context of Occult Practices.

- A. **NOTE:** The following list includes sins that are either directly or indirectly connected with occult practices, or which are mentioned with them in lists of sins. (The occult practice itself may be mentioned in a different verse nearby.)
- B. **A focus on money, fees for services**
  1. Example: Balaam - Numbers 22:7. [Also, his greed for money is mentioned in other passages - example - 2 Peter 2:15-16.]
  2. Their "prophecies" are often influenced by what the people are willing to pay them - Micah 3:5, 11.
  3. Money can influence their entire perspective - even on how they obtain their abilities. Example - Simon the sorcerer: He wanted to buy the ability to give people the Holy Spirit. He was rebuked for this sin - Acts 8:18-24.
  4. Contrasted with the attitude of the righteous. An example of people who, when they turned to God, were willing to destroy their occult materials, even though they could have earned a lot of money by selling them - Acts 19:20. [It was not a small amount. The 50 thousand drachmas, mentioned in verse 20, is equivalent to 50 thousand days wages! Today, based on a typical 5-day work week and working for about 45 years (from 20 years old until retirement), this would amount to nearly four and a half lifetimes of money!]
  5. Contrasted with God's prophets, who aren't focused on gaining wealth. Example - Daniel 5:17. [Also compare to Elisha's attitude, when Naaman came to him and offered to pay for being healed - 2 Kings 5:15-16.]
- C. **Human sacrifices** - Deuteronomy 18:10; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6; 2 Chronicles 33:6. [Back then, people sacrificed children after they were born; today, people sacrifice them before they are born. The biggest differences are the time of the sacrifice, and the fact that most people today close their minds to the seriousness of what they are doing.]
- D. **Rebellion, idolatry, the rejection of God's Word, etc.** - 1 Samuel 15:22-23 and 1 Chronicles 10:13-14. [Note that, in God's eyes, rebellion against him is just as evil as the occult. In Saul's case, he ended-up doing both.]

Matthew 2:1-2

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who is born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2:7

Then Herod secretly called the wise men, and learned from them exactly what time the star appeared.

Matthew 2:16

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked [OR tricked] by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent out, and killed all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under, according to the exact time which he had learned from the wise men.

Acts 8:9-11

But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who used to practice sorcery in the city, and amazed the people of Samaria, making himself out to be some great one, to whom they all listened, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is that great power of God." They listened to him, because for a long time he had amazed them with his sorceries.

Acts 8:18-24

Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that whoever I lay my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit."

But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart isn't right before God. Repent therefore of this, your wickedness, and ask God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity."

Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that none of the things which you have spoken happen to me."

Acts 13:6-12

When they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, and said, "Full of all deceit and all cunning, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is on you, and you will be blind, not seeing the sun for a season!" Immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness. He went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Acts 16:16-18

It happened, as we were going to prayer, that a certain girl having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by fortune telling. Following Paul and us, she cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation!" She was doing this for many days. But Paul, becoming greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" It came out that very hour.

Acts 19:11-20

God worked special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and the evil spirits went out.

But some of the itinerant Jews, exorcists, took on themselves to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." There were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this. The evil

- E. Idolatry; the worship of various "gods"** - 2 Kings 9:22; 17:15-16 (people who follow worthless idols become worthless people); 21:3-4; 23:24; 2 Chronicles 33:3-4; Isaiah 2:8; 19:3; Jeremiah 14:14; Micah 5:10-15; Zechariah 10:2-3.
- F. Self-sufficient security (living as though the God of the Bible was not needed)**
1. A focus on their attitude of self reliance - Isaiah 2:5-11 (especially v. 8). [Financial security and military security are mentioned in this passage, in connection with idolatry and occult practices. God said he was going to "lower" them in humility: he was going to destroy their security.]
  2. Self-made "wisdom" - Isaiah 44:25.
  3. Lounging (or dwelling) in security - though their lives were filled with wickedness - Isaiah 47:8-9 (+).
- G. Detestable things; detestable practices** - Deut. 18:9, 12; 2 Kings 21:2; 23:24; 2 Chron. 33:2.
- H. Evil deeds and wickedness (in general)** - 2 Kings 17:17; 21:2, 6; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Isaiah 47:10; Acts 19:18-20.
- I. Leaders being encouraged (by the occultists) to sin; their sins even being excused (or reinforced) by supposed "revelations," given by the occultists** - Ezekiel 22:23-29 (especially v. 28).
- J. The people being encouraged to follow the example of their occult-practicing leader, and themselves becoming involved in the same kinds of practices** - 2 Kings 21:9; 2 Chronicles 33:9. [The example of people who followed Manasseh's example.]
- K. Strong associations and alliances with pagans (and their practices)** - Isaiah 2:6 (clasping hands with them - NIV, or striking bargains with them - NAS).
- L. Going after the pagan ways of the surrounding nations** - 2 Kings 17:15; 21:2.
- M. Absence of the "fear of God"** - Malachi 3:5.
- N. Stubbornness, rejecting God (his word and his ways)** - 2 Kings 17:13-15.
- O. Lists of many kinds of sins** - Malachi 3:5; Galatians 5:19-21 (all are acts of the sinful nature); Revelation 9:20-21; 21:6-8; 22:14-15.

spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" The man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived at Ephesus. Fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many also of those who had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. They counted the price of them, and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord was growing and becoming mighty.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are obvious, which are: adultery, sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I also forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

2 Tim. 3:12-13

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Rev. 9:20-21

The rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, didn't repent of the works of their hands, that they wouldn't worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. They didn't repent of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their sexual immorality, nor of their thefts.

Rev. 21:6-8

He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give freely to him who is thirsty from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes, I will give him these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son. But for the cowardly, unbelieving, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Rev. 22:14-15

Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.