

Dangers of Occultism: Speaking to the Dead

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In a previous study of Occultism the following observations were made:

Occultism is gaining knowledge & power thru the supernatural

Occultism is ancient pagan symbols and sayings

Occultism is all around us in common things

Occultism is utterly opposed to the ideas of God in Christ

In this lesson we are focusing in on the occult practice of obtaining knowledge or power by communing with the dead.

In ancient times speaking to the dead was a common practice. Many cultures practiced what is called ancestor worship. This practice is carried over by cultures that carry out excessive ceremonies at graves of those passed on, such as “Day of the Dead” holidays. It was in the 1800s that the rise of more generic “spiritualism” or “Spiritism” (communicating with the dead) became a common practice; the popularity of the séance in the late 1800s was enormous. From this movement a series of denominations arose called the “Spiritual churches”, which are still present today. They offer a “ministry” of power through the dead.

Let us speak frankly: The Bible condemns Spiritism. In the Old testament mediums were condemned as a form of witchcraft (Deuteronomy 18:10-12 - *There shall not be found among youone 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 Jehovah*). Perhaps the most famous of spiritists in the Bible is the witch of En-Dor. In I Samuel 28:7-19 King Saul used her to summon up Samuel the Prophet from the dead. It seems clear she was surprised to have successfully done so (indicating the fraudulent nature of these practices). We are also given a keen insight into the mindset of Saul in doing this; he wanted to receive from God a message other than the ones he had received. Perhaps here we see the root error of Spiritism: we want to hear something OTHER than what God has spoken.

We need to know that the dead can’t speak to us. In Ecclesiastes 9:5 we are told that the dead have no knowledge of our world; this would indicate that they cannot see into our existence, or communicate with us. This is reaffirmed in Job 14:21. More importantly, we need to be committed to the idea that God doesn’t speak through the dead. According to Hebrews 1:1-2 God no longer speaks through various means, but now He speaks only one way, and we know that this way is the word of God, the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:3, Jude 3).

But there is another point we need to make. EVEN IF the dead could speak to us, they would not want to talk about money, or our happiness, or some other worldly pursuit. They would have only one message to us: BE READY FOR JUDGMENT. The only view into death the Bible gives us is in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16: 19-31. There the rich man begged Abraham to send messengers to warn his brothers of the judgment (vs. 27-28). If the righteous dead could speak, they would want us to join them in judgment. Yet even the unrighteous dead

have the exact same message: that we avoid their judgment. The message of the dead is to be faithful to God with a mind to our eternal condition.

There is another important message in this parable. This is that the entirety of God's message is found in the scriptures. Abraham said *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them";* then when challenged he reaffirmed this point by saying *"if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead."* (vs 29 and 31). As we see with Saul, the message that God has ALREADY given is what we need to pay attention. *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."* John 5:39-40

Conclusions on Spiritualism: Christians need to know that communications with the dead is pagan and demonic at one time; it is sinful as well as faithless. Finally, it is impossible according to Scriptures. However, if we could speak to the dead, we already know EXACTLY what any of them would say (the same thing we are told by the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Apostles and Prophets, Angels, the church and the Christian alike): "Be Ready To Be Judged By God".