

Now Concerning Spiritual Things
an historical account of one man's walk with God

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DELIVERANCE MINISTRY
A NEED IN THE CHURCH TODAY
PART FOUR

Dangers of the Occult

One entry point through which demons gain access to man's flesh is the occult. Within each of us is a desire to make contact with the unknown or with a higher power, wiser or more powerful than ourselves. This is God given, but often thwarted by Satan's devices through the occult. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines occult as: hidden from sight, to cover up, hide; of or pertaining to magic, astrology, etc. Dabbling in the occult may start very innocently with a Ouija board, tarot cards, a palm reader or fortune-teller at a carnival, listening to acid rock music with violent or suggestive lyrics, flipping through the pages of a pornographic magazine "just to see what's there," a teenager reading her horoscope or a witch doctor pronouncing his incantations over someone who is ill. But such curious dabbings are Satan's bait. The bible has stern warnings against immorality and adultery. Note *also* stern warnings in Deuteronomy, Chapter eighteen, against the occult, which is *spiritual adultery*: "10There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. 13You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. 14For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you."

Let's examine two examples of one becoming involved with the occult: **King Saul** in the Old Testament and **a slave girl** in the New Testament: **King Saul.**

When Samuel, the great judge and prophet of Israel, became old, he appointed his sons judges over

Israel.¹ The two sons, Joel and Abiah, "walked not in the ways of their father" and began to play politics. They took advantage of their positions and pronounced judgments and made decisions for money.² The elders of Israel then asked Samuel to appoint (and anoint) for them a king for both moral and political reasons.³ God allowed Samuel to acquiesce to the wishes of the elders and anoint Saul as king. Saul, however, was not ready for such responsibility. Disobedience caused his kingdom to be torn from him by Samuel. Here is the story in brief:

When Israel came up from Egypt, the nation of Amalek fought against Israel. This is the famous battle where Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses so that God's power prevailed in battle.⁴ The attack against Israel invoked a curse against the nation of Amalek.⁵ Years later Saul was made king and God's vengeance was enforced. He instructed Saul to utterly destroy the

¹See 1 Samuel 8:1. Doesn't this sound familiar as a sign of the times both then and now that a son (or sons) is appointed as successor to oversee or direct a ministry started by the father? You may have observed the same occurrence in very visible ministries today (I can think of three and possibly a fourth) where a son has assumed the role of leader, taking the mantle of leadership from his father in his old age. Other bible examples are Aaron and his sons (Nadab and Abihu [Leviticus 10:1-7] and Eleazar and Ithamar [Leviticus 10:6, 12], David and Solomon, and of course, Samuel and Joel and Abiah. As you may have observed, sonship is no sign of success in ministry.

²See 1 Samuel 8:3.

³The moral reasons were because of the corrupt practices of Samuel's sons. The political reasons were so that Israel could be "like all the [other] nations" and have a king who would "go out before us and fight our battles." (1 Samuel 8:20). Hidden in this request was the fact that Israel no longer wanted to walk by faith in God, but desired to trust in a visible king. Hence they rejected God.

⁴See Exodus 17:8-16.

⁵Here is a solemn warning to the world. When God called Abram, He said "I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:3). These words of blessings and curses are as true and powerful today as they were when God said them. Hence the reason God instructed Saul to completely annihilate the Amalikes and all of their possessions.

Amalekites, both man and woman, infant and suckling and all live stock. Instead of doing as instructed Saul disobeyed God's instruction. He saved Agag, the king, the best of the sheep and of the oxen (to sacrifice unto the Lord), and of the fatlings and the lambs and all that was good but destroyed the rest.⁶ When confronted by Samuel, Saul refused to take responsibility for his disobedience, blamed it on his men and lost his kingdom. In pointing out to Saul his disobedience, Samuel said to him, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to harken than the fat of rams, for **rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.**"⁷ After Saul's rejection, David was anointed as king, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him.⁸ As Saul continued unrepentantly, he turned to his own devices which apparently opened the door for the infiltration of demons. He became so rebellious and resentful, *Samuel* feared that Saul would kill *him!*⁹ In his rage, Saul acted as a madman. He became afraid of *David* because the Spirit of the Lord was with *him!* On three occasions Saul tried unsuccessfully to kill David by ramming a javelin through his body.¹⁰ He failed in a plot to have David killed by the Philistines as a supposed dowry for Saul's daughter, whom David married. Jonathan (Saul's son) intervened with his father on David's behalf and once again Saul relented momentarily in his quest to kill David. Not long thereafter, in another attack on David by Saul, Michal (David's wife) assisted David to safety.¹¹ On one occasion after Samuel's death, Saul went to a woman (a medium) who had a familiar spirit to conduct a seance and "divine" an answer for him that he couldn't get from the Lord, because the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him.

On another occasion, a very unusual thing occurred in Saul's life. David escaped another of Saul's efforts to kill him and went to join Samuel at

Naioth in Ramah. Three times Saul sent *a company of men* to Naioth to capture David. On each occasion as the men approached Naioth, *they began to prophesy* with such a profound effect that they returned without David. Saul then decided he would go to Naioth and handle this matter himself. When Saul arrived at Naioth, he stripped off his clothes *and prophesied* before Samuel, exactly as the *three companies of men had previously done*, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Whereupon David fled from Naioth in Ramah. When the three companies of men and Saul, all of whom sought David's life, came near Naioth, Samuel and the company of prophets under him prophesied. The power of God's anointing on these prophets then came upon those who had come to kill David, that by divine protection, no harm came to him. Hence the Spirit of God that departed from Saul because of disobedience, returned to him as *protection for David* who was God's anointed -- a most unusual occurrence.¹²

I believe Saul's persistent rebellion and stubbornness opened the door for demonic infiltration which was the cause of his conduct. He then became fearful, began to lie, became suspicious and jealous of David, went through periods of depression and gloom, sought advice from a necromancer (a fortune teller or a medium), tried repeatedly to murder David, and finally when wounded on the field of battle, fell on his own sword in an effort to take his own life. From my experience in the deliverance ministry, all of these are indications of demonic presence and influence in a person's life. Here is what was written by Ezra, the scribe, concerning the reason for Saul's death, "So Saul died for his transgressions which he committed against the Lord, even against *the word of the Lord*, which he kept not and also for *asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it*; and inquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse."¹³

Seeking spiritual guidance from **any source** other than the Lord (which is expressly forbidden in scripture) opens one up to demonic infiltration. When

⁶See 1 Samuel 15:1-9.

⁷See 1 Samuel 15:13-35, emphasis added.

⁸See 1 Samuel 16:13 & 14.

⁹1 Samuel 16:2.

¹⁰1 Samuel 18:11 & 19:10.

¹¹1 Samuel 19:16.

¹²For this story read 1 Samuel 19:18-24; 30:1. This explanation of the unusual work of God's Spirit in Saul, after his stubbornness and rebellion, excerpted from Adam Clarke's Commentary, seems to be the only plausible reason for this most unusual occurrence.

¹³1 Chronicles 10:13 & 14, KJV, italics added.

Saul went to a medium to “divine” for him an answer, notice that the “familiar spirit” who spoke through the vocal cords of the medium, prophesied the truth about the death of Saul and his sons the following day.¹⁴ *This is proof that Satan has counterfeits of God’s spiritual gifts.* **Warning:** When you serve the enemy, whether intentionally or unintentionally, you leave yourself open to a supernatural spiritual power in direct opposition to the Lord God. The reason Jesus came to earth was to destroy such works of Satan and his demonic hordes.

The Slave Girl.

Here is a similar example of Satan’s demonic work on the this side of the cross reflecting the authority of Christ over such demonic power as given to His followers today: “Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us [Silas and others], and cried out, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.’ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out that very hour.”¹⁵ This slave girl possessed a spirit of python (Greek, Strong’s #4436), fortune-telling or soothsaying. The spirit of python possesses the supernatural ability to foretell the future. Her masters (owners) sold her services for money the same as certain fortune-tellers today who charge for their ”readings” or seances. A more sophisticated term for mediums or fortune-tellers today is psychics who are now available on “900” telephone lines. Psychics who are able to “divine” or foretell or “forthtell” something about you of which they have no previous knowledge, do so by the spirit or demon of python. Even though this woman was possessed by the demon of python, note that the demon, speaking through the vocal cords of the woman, *prophesied the truth about Paul and Silas*, saying, “These men are servants of the most high God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” Everything she said was true, but her knowledge came from a demon. This is what makes psychics both deceptive and dangerous. The medium, usually a woman, can be the

source of supernatural knowledge concerning the past, present or future. **And that is Satan’s bait!** His way is one of enticement with something that either looks good, sounds good, feels good or tastes good, without revealing the consequences of taking his bait. Then once you let him (his demon or demons) in, and like what you *sense* initially, you may be “hooked.” That’s the bad news. But the good news is that Paul (in this case) through the gift of discernment¹⁶ recognized the demon and cast him out “in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Signs of The Occult Today.

The July 5, 1999 issue of Time magazine carried an article in the “Religion” section, entitled, “I Saluted a Witch, An Army Base in Texas becomes the hotbed for earth-goddess worshipers called Wiccans.” Here is a synopsis of the article written by S. C. Gwynne of Killeen, Texas:

The “moon ritual” ceremony was attended by twenty people on June 21, 1999 in a meadow in the middle of Texas. Admitted witches in the ceremony were casting spells with their incantations. These are card carrying U.S. Army witches: colonels, captains, sergeants and privates who belong to a group of fifty or more “kindred spirits” who assemble regularly at Fort Hood, the largest U.S. military base located in Killeen, Texas. They are, according this report, part of a boomlet of believers in the armed forces who call themselves Wiccans and follow a polytheistic, nature-based religion that centers on earth goddess. Since Fort Hood gave official recognition to the Wiccans more than two years ago, four more military bases have sanctioned the religion. Few people outside the base knew the Army had approved such a group until a couple of months ago, when a photo of a torchlight ritual appeared in a local paper. Christian groups and politicians promptly denounced the Wiccans as both satanic and inappropriate in the U.S. Army. The Army “shrugs” at complaints from both groups saying it has no plans to shut down “minority religions.” “This

¹⁶See 1 Corinthians 12:10. Notice in this incident that the spiritual gift of discernment (of the Holy Spirit) in Paul revealed the demon of python in the woman while the demon of python in the woman supernaturally revealed to her truthful information concerning Paul and Silas! Both the Holy Spirit and the demon spirit possess supernatural power but one is of God, the other of Satan. One without the spiritual gift of discernment today may be at the mercy of the enemy. This is very important in the deliverance ministry. When one has that discernment and knows his authority in Christ, he is able to cast out the demon as did the Apostle Paul.

¹⁴This story is found in 1 Samuel 28:3-25; 31:1-13.

¹⁵Acts 16:16, brackets inserted.

belief is protected under the First Amendment,” says Major General William Dendinger, chairman of the U.S. Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

Wiccans deny that they profess Satanism. A man and his wife, both retired Army colonels (names omitted) became Wiccans after trying the Episcopal Church and Seventh-Day Adventism. Both say they have had persistent threats of bodily harm through phone calls and e-mail.

Wiccans prefer to conduct their rituals *naked* (Fort Hood has forbidden them to do so, according to this report), use 9-inch daggers called athames in their ceremonies, cast magic spells, and worship, among others, “the horned god” found in pagan traditions. A high priestess (name omitted) who is a former policewoman is quoted as saying, “The Army has always been ahead of the civilian world on things like racial and sexual equality.”

Armed for Spiritual Warfare.

The first World Congress on Deliverance convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado on July 29, 1999. Classes were conducted by well qualified men and women experienced in most phases of the deliverance ministry. Classes such as, How the Deliverance Ministry Sustains Revival, Witchcraft and Generational Iniquity, Leading a Church in Corporate Deliverance and Healing, Preparing the Masses for Deliverance, Freemasonry, How to Minister Physical Healing Through Deliverance, Deliverance Ministry in the Inner City, Deliverance to Occult Members and Workers, Basic Issues in Deliverance, Spiritual House Cleaning and The Multiple Means of Deliverance. The Congress, sponsored by Wagner Institute, filled three full days and two evenings until 9:00 PM. This was a working-teaching-learning Congress with approximately 3,000 registrants from 47 states and 16 nations. Since this was a “first,” those who planned the Congress expected maybe a few hundred to attend. The almost 3,000 registrants is testimony loud and clear that the Lord’s Church is awakening to the task ahead. An encouraged, enlightened and confident army left Colorado Springs prepared to return to their home congregations to teach and minister deliverance to “set the captives free!” Those of us who attended were encouraged that God is saying similar things to His people around the world: Jesus is coming for a Church without spot and wrinkle – and those in the deliverance ministry will play an important role that preparation!

This letter (Part Four) will conclude my series

on the deliverance ministry. I realize much more could be written. My reason for the four-part series is to alert the Church to a present-day need. Deliverance is for the Church – for born again believers who struggle with recurring problems which they are unable to overcome. The day will come when congregations who are free reach a certain size, full-time staff members will coordinate inner healing and deliverance. I believe that this is a must for believers to participate fully in the end-time battle in progress. Covenant Church in Dallas now has two full-time staff members who coordinate, teach and administer inner healing and deliverance. Dale and I had a second informational fill-in-the-blanks meeting with these two ministers on October 13, 1999. At that time they had inner healing and deliverance appointments booked into the year 2000. Once an educational program is started in a congregation, the needs will become apparent and ministry will set the captives free! It’s a marvelous thing to see one set free.

This ministry must be Spirit empowered and Spirit led to become effective. Therefore let this be a clarion call to all congregations to accept and teach openly the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as a basis for this ministry. All four of the “Gospel” writers record that Jesus came for this purpose.¹⁷

Those of us who understand the inner healing and deliverance ministry must not over emphasize that ministry. We must remember that when the “seventy” returned with joy saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name,” Jesus replied, “Do not rejoice that demons are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”¹⁸ Salvation is the greatest blessing! Deliverance is a supportive ministry to help set the captives free! This ministry must prioritize discernment, wisdom and balance, joined with grace, love and tender good sense, rather than trumpeting high claims of “authority” or “power.”¹⁹

. . . more later, the Lord willing.

¹⁷Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33.

¹⁸See Luke 10:17-20.

¹⁹This is a quotation from Jack Hayford, one of the speakers at the World Congress on Deliverance.