



## THE OCCULT

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(1 Samuel 28:7)



Young people are turning to the satanic and the demonic at rates unparalleled since medieval times. They are experimenting with astrology, witchcraft, divination, and more.

Satan has cleverly convinced the modern mind that he is not to be taken seriously until all other spiritual options are exhausted. Then when empty souls turn to him in desperation, he can take them over completely. C. S. Lewis wrote that there are two equal and opposite errors into which people can fall about demons: One is to not believe they exist; the other is to believe they exist, and to feel an excessive interest in them.

The current fad of satanism is reaching epidemic proportions in developed countries. There is compelling evidence of the existence of an international network of satanic cults. The United States harbors the fastest growing and most highly organized body of satanists in the world. Today's occult practices include a variety of activities such as witchcraft, voodoo, astrology, divination, visualization, and spiritism.

The psychological packaging of occultism has made it more acceptable to moderns. The appeal is that the occult will help the experimenter to have an experience that transcends previous spiritual emptiness. Experimentation with the occult is like experimenting with drugs. Once someone starts, it's hard to quit. Most people who become involved get in deeper than they ever intended to, and they stay in longer than they ever thought they would.

### WITCHCRAFT AND SATANISM

Satanic circles, ritual dances, incantations to the devil, human and animal sacrifices, and the drinking of blood have all been part of satanic worship for centuries. These practices can be found in settings ranging from primitive tribes to modern educated circles. In every case where such arts are

practiced, evil spirits (demons) or the devil himself are called upon in some manifestation of destructive power.

Witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and magic are ancient and universal. Every culture, primitive or civilized, Eastern or Western, has had its share of magicians, sorcerers, and witches. What possesses an Adolf Hitler to exterminate six million Jews? What provokes a Saddam Hussein to assassinate his own officers? What compels a Charles Manson to murder innocent people? What disturbing influence causes a Jeffrey Dahmer to rape, kill, and cannibalize his victims? What tempts people to reject the grace of God and renounce the glories of heaven? Is it not Satan and his demons?

The Bible treats occultism as a serious threat. Pharaoh's sorcerers were able to mimic some of Moses' miracles (Ex. 7:22; 8:7). Two sorcerers, Simon (Acts 8:9-11) and Elymas (Acts 13:8-10), as well as the medium at Philippi (Acts 16:16-18), seem to have had powers that went well beyond normal human ability or trickery.

Several Bible passages clearly condemn witchcraft and demonism (for example, Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26; 1 Sam. 15:23). The apostle Paul, in enumerating "the works of the flesh," included sorcery, and said "those who practice such things will

not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). In Revelation 21:8 and 22:15, sorcerers, murderers, and idolaters are pictured as being excluded from heaven and cast into the lake of fire.

### **THE DOCTRINE OF SATAN AND DEMONS**

The existence of Satan is taught in several Old Testament books and by every New Testament writer. Jesus Himself referred to Satan several times (for example, Matt. 13:39; Luke 10:18; 11:18). Satan is represented both as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) and as "the great dragon . . . that serpent of old" (Rev. 12:9). Satan is described as the tempter (1 Thess. 3:5), the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4), the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), and the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). He deceives the nations (Rev. 20:3), blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4), and hinders the work of believers (1 Thess. 2:18).

Demons are described in the Bible as fallen angels over whom Satan rules (Matt. 12:24; Eph. 6:11, 12). They are spirit beings (Matt. 17:18) who attempt to thwart the purposes of God (Dan. 10:10-14). Demon possession refers to a demon residing in a person and exerting direct control and influence over that person. Most biblical scholars believe that Christians cannot be possessed by demons because they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, believers can be the targets of demonic activity. Demon possession can result in physical disease (Matt. 9:32, 33) and in some cases, mental derangement (Matt. 17:15-18). Eventually, the Bible predicts, all demons will be cast into the lake of fire along with Satan (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

Dabbling in occult fads, symbols, or practices is the first step toward serious trouble for curiosity seekers. Eventually it can lead to hard-core satanic cult activity,

even including animal and human sacrifice. Behind the variety of witches, mediums, psychic healers, and parapsychologists looms the actual spirit power that is the source of their knowledge and strength. In our modern culture, satanism expresses itself in a variety of ways—sexual perversion, ritual abuse of children, excessive violence, the misuse of drugs, and the epidemic proportion of suicide. Satanism especially offers to fit the needs and wants of middle- and upper-class teens of high intelligence who are creative, curious, and possibly underachievers with low self-esteem.

Believers must take this aspect of spiritual warfare seriously as they attempt to minister to today's generation.

### **FURTHER MEDITATION:**

Other passages to study about the issue of the occult include:

- Leviticus 20:27
- Deuteronomy 18:9-14
- 1 Samuel 15:23; 28:3-25
- Acts 26:18
- 2 Corinthians 11:12-15
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- 1 Peter 5:8

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To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on the occult at Ephesians 6:10-20 on page 1559. See also the personality profile of the witch of En Dor on page 381.

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<sup>11</sup>Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

<sup>12</sup>When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul!"

<sup>13</sup>And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit<sup>a</sup> ascending out of the earth."

<sup>14</sup>So he said to her, "What is his form?"

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground and bowed down.

<sup>15</sup>Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

And Saul answered, "I am deeply dis-

tressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do."

<sup>16</sup>Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? <sup>17</sup>And the LORD has done for Himself<sup>a</sup> as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David.

<sup>18</sup>Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. <sup>19</sup>Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the

28:13 <sup>a</sup>Hebrew *elohim* 28:17 <sup>a</sup>Or *him*, that is, David

## PERSONALITY PROFILE



### THE WITCH OF EN DOR— THE OCCULT TEMPTATION

(1 SAMUEL 28:7)

One night the medium that lived in En Dor had an unexpected visitor. Her customer was in disguise, but she assumed he must be someone of means, since he was in the company of two men. When he asked her to conduct a séance for him, she was frightened. King Saul had recently banned all witches and mediums from the land. In addition, the ancient laws of God spoke in no uncertain terms against witchcraft (Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9–14). She suspected a trap. She did not yet realize the identity of her guest—King Saul himself.

Ironically, the stranger granted the witch immunity with an oath to God. He asked her to summon up Samuel from the dead. Much to her shock, Samuel actually appeared. She now knew that her customer was the king, and the matter was out of her hands. She was terrified.

Samuel had devastating news for Saul. God really had deserted him. His fate and the fate of his army were sealed. His own disobedience, including the consulting of the witch, had created a distance between the king and God that could now only be bridged by judgment.

Once Saul had ignored God's guidance, he left himself exposed. Once Samuel had died, that solitude had overwhelmed Saul. He didn't even have Samuel's bad news to keep him company. He didn't realize how much help he needed until he had cut himself off from every good source. In desperation, he reached for evil.

The more people turn away from the true things of God, the more we can expect to see a rising interest in the occult. People need answers. Once they have rejected the true source, they are exposed to the temptation to look to evil sources for guidance. The attraction of the occult may be fascinating and powerful, but it is deadly.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about the occult on pages 382, 383. See also the key passage note at Ephesians 6:10–20 on page 1559.

them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also<sup>a</sup> is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

#### THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

<sup>10</sup>Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,<sup>a</sup> against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

<sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit,

which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup>praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—<sup>19</sup>and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in  
the Lord and in the power  
of His might.

EPHESIANS 6:10

#### A GRACIOUS GREETING

<sup>21</sup>But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; <sup>22</sup>whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.

<sup>23</sup>Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>24</sup>Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

6:9 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *He who is both their Master and yours.* 6:12 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *rulers of this darkness.*

#### KEY PASSAGE



Occult

### DANGEROUS LIAISONS

(6:10-20)

Satan is God's avowed enemy, seeking to subvert and corrupt every part of God's creation. From the beauty of the earth to the love between people, every good thing is Satan's target. His realm is powerful, but he is not more powerful than God.

The occult is aligned with Satan. Mysterious powers and forces work in the occult, attempting to convince many people. Those involved in the occult may practice various forms of satanic worship; others attempt to tell the future or cast spells; still others seek to contact dead people and communicate with their spirits. Satan is quite real, and occult powers can be very real, too. Believers must not let a desire to know the future or understand the past lead them into any form of involvement in the occult. Yet even people who have been involved in occult practices can be forgiven by God. His power is infinitely greater than Satan's.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about the occult on pages 382, 383. See also the personality profile of the witch of En Dor on page 381.

<sup>23</sup>When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. <sup>24</sup>It shall not be eaten. <sup>25</sup>But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. <sup>26</sup>And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>27</sup>You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. <sup>28</sup>You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. <sup>29</sup>You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness.

<sup>31</sup>You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD.

<sup>32</sup>Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>33</sup>You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>34</sup>And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. <sup>35</sup>The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him

as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>36</sup>You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume.

<sup>37</sup>You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

<sup>38</sup>Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD.

#### PENALTIES FOR BREAKING THE LAW

**20** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives *any* of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. <sup>3</sup>I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given *some* of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. <sup>4</sup>And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives *some* of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, <sup>5</sup>then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

#### SOUL NOTE



**Elder Care (19:32)** God's laws include prohibitions against disrespecting the elderly. The "gray headed" and the "old man" are to be treated with honor and respect. This treatment reflects a just society. The fact that laws are needed against elder abuse—physical, sexual, verbal, or financial—shows how far modern society has strayed from this basic attitude of respect. The Bible commands respect for one's elders, who have much to teach from their vast experience. **Topic: Aging/Elderly**

#### SOUL NOTE



**Which Craft? (20:6-9)** Chapter 20 prohibits occult practices, including consulting mediums, practicing witchcraft, and sacrificing children. The prophet Samuel told King Saul that his rebellion was like the "sin of witchcraft" (1 Sam. 15:22, 23). In the Bible, rebellion is pictured as the work of Satan. What begins as a spirit of resistance often leads to a person's spiritual downfall. God does not leave doubt about His moral and spiritual absolutes. His answer to the human dilemma is to keep Satan's influence and attitudes far from us. **Topic: Occult**



because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. <sup>13</sup>You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. <sup>14</sup>For 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.

#### A NEW PROPHET LIKE MOSES

<sup>15</sup>"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, <sup>16</sup>according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

<sup>17</sup>"And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. <sup>18</sup>I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. <sup>19</sup>And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. <sup>20</sup>But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' <sup>21</sup>And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'— <sup>22</sup>when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

#### THREE CITIES OF REFUGE

**19** "When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses,

<sup>2</sup>you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. <sup>3</sup>You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there.

<sup>4</sup>"And this is the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, not having hated him in time past— <sup>5</sup>as when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; <sup>6</sup>lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. <sup>7</sup>Therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall separate three cities for yourself.'

<sup>8</sup>"Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers, <sup>9</sup>and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, <sup>10</sup>lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and thus guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

<sup>11</sup>"But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, <sup>12</sup>then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that



#### SOUL NOTE

**Steer Clear! (18:9-14)** The Bible is very clear in its condemnation of witchcraft and other occult practices. The Israelites were told to drive such people out of the land. Worshipers of Satan, such as witches and other members of satanic cults, still exist today. Forms of the occult are also found in New Age teachings, psychic hotlines, astrology and astrological charts, horoscopes, and the tricks of tarot card readers. All of these are from the realm of Satan. Believers must discern the evil inherent in these practices and steer clear of any involvement with them. **Topic: Occult**

in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name."<sup>5</sup> And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.<sup>6</sup> Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.<sup>7</sup> He even set a carved image of Asherah<sup>a</sup> that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had 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, I will put My name forever;<sup>8</sup> and I will not make the feet of Israel wander any more from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them."<sup>9</sup> But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), <sup>12</sup> therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. <sup>13</sup> And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. <sup>14</sup> So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, <sup>15</sup> because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked

Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.' "

<sup>16</sup> Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>18</sup> So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

#### AMON'S REIGN AND DEATH

<sup>19</sup> Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. <sup>20</sup> And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. <sup>21</sup> So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. <sup>22</sup> He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. <sup>24</sup> But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

<sup>25</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>26</sup> And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

21:7 <sup>a</sup>A Canaanite goddess

#### SOUL NOTE



**A Dangerous World (21:6)** Manasseh was one of many evil kings who reigned in Judah. He encouraged idolatry and occult practices. Like Ahaz (16:3), he sacrificed his son in the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. Extensive witchcraft and satanic worship even culminated in Manasseh's setting up an idol in God's temple (21:7). The occult is a dangerous trap—a world of darkness, horror, and death. While some may be fascinated by its power, they must understand that it is power that seeks only to destroy them eventually. **Topic: Occult**

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said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. <sup>25</sup>But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. <sup>26</sup>I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. <sup>27</sup>For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

#### PAUL'S EARLY LIFE

**26** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: <sup>2</sup>"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, <sup>3</sup>especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

<sup>4</sup>"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. <sup>5</sup>They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup>And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. <sup>7</sup>To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. <sup>8</sup>Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

<sup>9</sup>"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Naza-

reth. <sup>10</sup>This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup>And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

#### PAUL RECOUNTS HIS CONVERSION

<sup>12</sup>"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, <sup>13</sup>at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup>And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' <sup>15</sup>So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' <sup>16</sup>But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. <sup>17</sup>I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now<sup>a</sup> send you, <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

#### PAUL'S POST-CONVERSION LIFE

<sup>19</sup>"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup>but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of

**26:17** <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text omit *now*.

#### SOUL NOTE



**Called Out of Darkness** (26:17, 18) Jesus had told Paul of his mission to the Gentiles—to turn them from darkness and away from the power of Satan. Many people are involved in Satan worship and or various forms of the occult. Satan's powerful hold can be broken only by the power of Jesus Christ. No matter what someone's past is, they can "receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith." We can trust in Christ's power over Satan—the victory has already been won. **Topic: Occult**

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#### AGRIPPA PAUL

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the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, <sup>13</sup>while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, <sup>14</sup>and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

#### THE SPIRITUAL WAR

**10** Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you. <sup>2</sup>But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. <sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup>casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, <sup>6</sup>and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

#### REALITY OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY

<sup>7</sup>Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.<sup>a</sup> <sup>8</sup>For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us<sup>a</sup> for edification and not for your destruction, I shall

not be ashamed—<sup>9</sup>lest I seem to terrify you by letters. <sup>10</sup>"For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." <sup>11</sup>Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

#### LIMITS OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY

<sup>12</sup>For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. <sup>13</sup>We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. <sup>14</sup>For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; <sup>15</sup>not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, <sup>16</sup>to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

<sup>17</sup>But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD."<sup>a</sup> <sup>18</sup>For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

#### CONCERN FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS

**11** Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. <sup>2</sup>For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin

10:7 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads even as we are. 10:8 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits us 10:17 <sup>a</sup>Jeremiah 9:24



#### SOUL NOTE

**Satan's Strongholds** (10:3, 4) The Christian life is like a war. Christians "walk in the flesh," meaning they are human beings capable of being tempted, hurt, even killed in this war. The battleground is the world, but the true battle is in the spiritual realm between the forces of Christ and the forces of Satan. Believers have weapons to protect them (Eph. 6:10-17) and help them pull down Satan's strongholds. Satan and his forces have a tight grip on this world, but they are already defeated. Believers must stand their ground, obeying their Commander, knowing that He has already won the war. **Topic: Occult**


## THE OUTWORKING OF LOVE

<sup>16</sup>By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup>But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

<sup>18</sup>My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup>And by this we know<sup>a</sup> that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. <sup>20</sup>For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. <sup>22</sup>And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. <sup>23</sup>And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us<sup>a</sup> commandment.

## THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR

<sup>24</sup>Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but <sup>1</sup>test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess that<sup>a</sup> Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

<sup>4</sup>You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup>They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. <sup>6</sup>We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

## KNOWING GOD THROUGH LOVE

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>He who does not love

3:19 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *we shall know*. 3:23 <sup>a</sup>M-Text omits *us*. 4:3 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *that* and *Christ has come in the flesh*.

## SOUL NOTE



**In Deed! (3:18)** To understand true love, we need only to look at the Cross, where Christ performed the ultimate act of love. Christ loved us so much that He died for us. This should motivate us to love others. This means not just saying we love people but really loving them by our actions. We can love our families by showing respect, patience, and understanding in many ways. We can love our neighbors as we reach out in kindness. We can love the needy of the world by sharing our possessions with them. Loving actions reveal the truth and depth of our love. **Topic: Love**

## SOUL NOTE



**Battle Lines (4:4)** There are two types of people in this world—Christians and non-Christians. Christians worship God; non-Christians, no matter what they say, worship Satan. They may not formally be members of the occult religion, but their refusal to accept Christ puts them on Satan's side. Satan is already a defeated enemy, so believers can continue their work for God's kingdom fearlessly. For as powerful as Satan's army appears to be, Christ is greater by far: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." **Topic: Occult**