DETESTABLE PRACTICES

Deuteronomy 18:12 Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out these nations before you.

Why God Drove out the Canaanites Before Israel

Deuteronomy 9:4&5 After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis 15:16 “In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

The Detestable Practices Listed

Deuteronomy 18:9-11 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

“Who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire:” Leviticus 18:21 “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molek, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.”

“Practices divination:” Ezekiel 21:21 (NASB) For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the household idols, he looks at the liver.

Divination is the practice of seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means: pendulum, tarot cards, crystals, essential oils, Ouija boards. Satan is a liar and so are his followers, so most of what happens in the occult world is “smoke and mirrors.” John 8:44 “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

“Sorcery” is the use of power gained from the assistance or control of an evil spirit. Isaiah 47:9b (NASB) “They will come on you in full measure in spite of your many sorceries, in spite of the great power of your spells.”

An omen is something that is believed to be a sign or warning of something that will happen in the future. “Interpreting omens” is predicting the future based on things believed to be a sign or warning.

“Witchcraft,” according to Britannica Online, is “traditionally, the exercise or invocation of alleged supernatural powers to control people or events, practices typically involving sorcery or magic.” If there is a difference between sorcery and witchcraft it is that a sorcerer uses means and a witch’s power is inherent.

2 Chronicles 33:6 He sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

2 Kings 23:26&27 Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn away from the heat of his fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to arouse his anger. So the LORD said, “I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, ‘My Name shall be there.’ “

According to Britannica Online in its article on Witchcraft, “Wicca is a predominantly Western movement whose followers practice witchcraft and nature worship and see it as a religion based on pre-Christian traditions of northern and western Europe. Adherents of Wicca worship the Goddess, honour nature, practice ceremonial magic, invoke the aid of deities, and celebrate Halloween, the summer solstice, and the vernal equinox.”

To cast a spell is to use magic to make something happen to someone. Isaiah 47:12a “Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have labored at since childhood.

According to Dictionary.com, “Mediums claim to act as communicators between the natural world and the spiritual world. They convey statements or images which they claim have been provided by spirits and that can have significant personal and often private meanings to their clients.”

I Chronicles 10:13&14a Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the LORD.

Notice that mediums and spiritists are linked in Deuteronomy 18:11. “Spiritism or Spiritist Doctrine is a system of explanation of phenomenon having in common the general belief in the survival of a spirit after death. In a stricter sense, Spiritism is a doctrine founded upon the existence, manifestations and teachings of the spirits.” Spiritists do not use means, tarot cards, crystal balls, etc., to contact the spirit world but rather contact them directly through mediums or seances.

The phrase “who consults the dead” means exactly what it says. Usually this involves seances.

Related Terminology

Spiritualism is “a system of beliefs or religious practice based on a supposed communication with the spirits of the dead, especially through mediums.” Spiritists believe in reincarnation, many spiritualists do not.

Psychic: the third definition of psychic in Merriam-Webster online is: “sensitive to nonphysical or supernatural forces and influences: marked by extraordinary or mysterious sensitivity, perception or understanding.” It lists channeler, medium, spiritist and spiritualist as synonyms.

Astrology is the study of the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies interpreted as having an influence on human affairs and the natural world. A horoscope is a forecast of a person’s future, typically including a delineation of character and circumstances, based on the relative position of the stars and planets at the time of that person’s birth.

Magic is “a supernatural power that allows people (such as witches and wizards) to do impossible things by saying special words or performing special actions”

(Merriam-Webster online). An enchanter is a person who uses magic or sorcery to put someone or something under a spell.

Daniel 2:2a So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed.

Isaiah 47:9-13 They will come upon you in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells… Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries…let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you.

Biblical Perspective

Isaiah 8:19 When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?

Hebrews 9:27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that face judgment,

Luke 16:22&23&26 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and say Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side…And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

Things to Remember

God wants to lead us by His Spirit who always leads us in accordance with His Word.

The detestable practices listed in Deuteronomy 18:10&11 are why God told the Israelites to drive the Canaanites out of their land and why God sent Judah into exile.

The practices are child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, interpreting omens, witchcraft, casting spells, being a medium or spiritist, or consulting the dead.

Related occultic practices are spiritualism, astrology, magic and being a psychic.

Wicca is a modern form of witchcraft.

Avoid any “alternative guidance source” or anything that involves contact with spirits.