



Witchcraft in the Church

(1 Samuel 15:23a) *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”*

The prophet Samuel spoke these words to king Saul. At least three times Saul had disobeyed the Word of God and done his own thing. *Firstly*, Out of fear he offered up a sacrifice himself that was not lawful for him to do. *Secondly*, he did not destroy all of the Amalekites but spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the cattle, the lambs and everything that was good. *Finally*, he went down to Gilgal and set up a monument to himself there. When Samuel challenged him Saul replied, *“I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”* However, Samuel rebuked Saul and told him plainly that he had not done all that the lord told him to do and that his sin was equivalent to witchcraft.

Obedience to the Lord does not mean doing some things or most things He asks us to do but consists in doing everything that God asks us to do. King Saul’s rebellion opened the way for the power of the occult to take hold of his life. In the end we find him going to a witch to seek God’s guidance. On the mountain of Gilboa Saul and his sons perished along with many Israelites because he had allowed the sin of witchcraft to exist in Israel. He knew better but went ahead anyway bringing disastrous consequences upon his own family and the whole nation of Israel. God’s Word is totally against anything to do with witchcraft or the occult. As far as God is concerned witchcraft is the same sin as

the pride and rebellion of Satan himself.

1. Witchcraft is described in different ways in the Bible.

a. *‘Sorcerer’* (*‘witchcraft’*) (Deuteronomy 18:10-11) A sorcerer is someone who engages in reading star signs, practices witchcraft itself, casts spells, operates as one who channels spirits or who consults the dead. The New Age movement contains all of these elements. Even in the Church much of so-called ‘personal prophecy’ is nothing more than fortune telling. It is common knowledge that Benny Hinn has openly practiced Necromancy i.e., trying to contact the dead. The Church of Rome also practices this when its members pray to dead saints. Sorcerers are aligned with false prophets. (Jeremiah 27:9) In the New Testament the same word is used for sorcery and it directly relates to drugs and potions. In Revelation 9:21 and 18:23 the Greek word is the word from which we get *‘pharmacy’*. The primary meaning is *‘drugs.’* The apostle John is telling us in these verses in Revelation that drug use will be a common feature of the ‘great city of Babylon’ in the last days.

b. *‘Magician’* (Exodus 7:11) These people can actually perform counterfeit signs, miracles and wonders. Jannes and Jambres Pharaoh’s magicians were able to duplicate the miracles of Moses and Aaron by the power of the occult. There are those today in the church who are doing the same thing by using occult power especially to get peoples money.

c. *'Curious Arts'* (Acts 19:19) This is the black art of interfering with the lives of others through casting spells and curses and using incantations to call down curses on the lives of others. When you see Benny Hinn and Paul Crouch of TBN fame on TV calling down curses on other Christians who speak out against them you see this art being practiced in the guise of spiritual discernment.

d. *'Enchantment'* (Charmer) (Deuteronomy 18:11) When you see a snake charmer at work mesmerizing the snake with the seductive music of the charmers flute you have a picture of what false prophets in the Church can do with their smooth talking charismatic personalities. They are able to hypnotize others just like professional hypnotists do only they dress it up in Christian language and call it the work of the Holy Spirit. This is another aspect of the occult mentioned in the Bible. These people can also put curses on others by getting them to wear charms and bracelets or amulets, which is a common practice in witchcraft and in Roman Catholicism.

e. *'Imposter'* (Enchanter) (2 Timothy 3:13) Paul the apostle mentions these kinds of people when he calls them "evil men and imposters (enchanters), deceiving and being deceived." This word also has the idea of spiritual seduction that is closely aligned with an enchanter, hypnotist or a charmer. False prophets and teachers are experts in this kind of thing. This is the kind of approach Satan used with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

2. The Source of witchcraft.

In Ezekiel chapter 28 we have a very clear description of Satan. He is addressed as the King of Tyre or principality behind the throne of the real Prince of Tyre. Satan was once called Lucifer and was in the Eden of God before the fall of man and entrusted with great responsibility.

He was probably the highest angel that God had created. *"You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in the Eden, the garden of God: Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created"* (Vs 8-13)

It is clear that Satan, before he fell, was clothed with priceless stones and had been invested with the power of music. Recently we saw videotape exposing the dangers of rock music and saw that its source was demonic. Many of these rock stars actually spoke of some force or power outside of themselves that gave them the lyrics and melodies for their songs. Many of the lyrics displayed were demonic in nature and filled with words of rebellion, hate and violence and some actually blaspheming the Lord Himself. When we see the worship of the Golden Calf we see the power of music swaying and mesmerizing the people of God to loose control of their faculties and go into all kinds of immoral and decadent behaviour.

The ancient civilizations of Babylon, Greece and Rome were heavily into music and it was always conspicuous in their daily life and in their religious worship. Remember that King Nebuchadnezzar had all kinds of instruments playing when he commanded everyone to worship his image. The antichrist will do the same thing. He will use music as one way to control, seduce and to sway people to worship him as God. The One World apostate Church will be filled with very powerful and seductive music. While music originally was something God created for the pleasure of man Satan has used it to spiritually seduce the Church today. Now the Bible says that we can worship the Lord with all kinds of instruments and we should. Not all

music with a beat is wrong, however, we must be very aware of its power to lead us off into the works of the flesh.

Before he fell Satan lived in God's presence constantly until rebellion was found in him and consequently he was cast out from his high position. *"You were the anointed cherub who covers: I established you: You were on the holy mountain of God: You walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones: You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you"* (Vs 14-15). One other thing we read is that Satan became proud because of his beauty. (Vs 17)

It is clear that there are three conspicuous things that Satan uses in the Church today to spiritual seduce Christians. *Firstly*, he uses the power of wealth or prosperity. *Secondly*, he uses the power of music to sway the emotions and to activate the flesh. *Thirdly*, he promotes an emphasis on outward appearance. All these three features are conspicuous in the Church today. The three things that preoccupy the faith prosperity people is their love of money, their use of music to control people and their emphasis on the outward appearance of material prosperity. This is witchcraft in the Church!

The most predominant feature of Satan is the assertion of the will. In the book of Isaiah the prophet describes the attitude of Satan that got him expelled from his position in heaven. *"You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit"* (Isaiah 14:13-15) Notice that he said "I will" five times.

When we see men like Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland saying that we are "little Gods" you see witchcraft in the Church. So then there are four clear aspects of witchcraft in the Church today. 1. The love and worship of money. 2. The use of music to control people. 3. The emphasis on the outward appearance especially where prosperity is concerned. 4. The self-exultation and self-promotion of personalities. Many Christian musicians today are treated like rock stars and many preachers like Hollywood stars. This is witchcraft in the Church today! These four things originally were found in Satan.

3. God's Word condemns any association with witchcraft.

(Exodus 22:18) "Do not allow a sorceress to live." (Deuteronomy 18:9-14) "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 his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engaged in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so."

How some Christians and even ministers of the gospel can endorse Harry Potter is astounding in the light of what God says in His Word the Bible. If you read Richard Abanes book 'Harry Potter and the Bible' it is very clear that the whole Harry Potter thing is demonic. Richard himself was heavily into the occult before he was saved. In Leviticus we read, *"Do not eat meat with the blood still in it. Do not practice divination or sor-*

cery" (*Leviticus 19: 26*). Satanists drink blood and mock the cross constantly.

When we look at the idolatry that was practiced among the Israelites we can see the same thing today in the Christian Church. The worship of the golden calf by the Israelites has its counterpart today in the worship of money being perpetuated on TV by the faith prosperity preachers from America. Not only that but the Hebrew text tells us that when the Israelites "*rose up to play*" or '*to laugh*' that it was contrived just like we see in many Charismatic meetings today. In the Bible any form of Idolatry is demon worship. (*Leviticus 17:7*) (*Deuteronomy 32:16-17*)

Witchcraft always obscures the message of the cross and the gospel of the faith prosperity preachers is doing exactly that. Check out Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland concerning their theology of the cross and you will find that it is unbiblical. See the video tape of Kenneth Copeland and Rodney Howard Browne clowning around speaking in tongues in a dazzling display of showmanship and see believers rolling uncontrollably on the floor, a woman beginning to tear her clothes off and pastors falling down in their seats laughing uncontrollably.

Then see Kenneth Copeland swaggering up to the lectern and calling one of his associate pastors Dennis Bourke and saying to him, "come up here Dennis Bourke and take the mark of the beast." This videotape shows all kinds of excessive behaviour and Rodney Howard Browne swaggers up and down the front of the great audience calling himself the Holy Ghost bartender. By the way I heard it said that Rodney Howard Browne believes that when Jesus came to earth He left His divinity in heaven!

This is an outrageous situation in the Church today and the sad tragedy is that multitudes of so-called "Spirit Filled" Christians are flocking to their meetings. This is the kind of thing that Jesus and the apostles warned us about would happen in the last days. This sort of thing has always been around but in the last days it will be rampant in the Church. Today we need to know what the Bible teaches and doctrine is important even though Paul Crouch of TBN says it isn't important.

Doctrine is important because in these last days Paul warns us that some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons and that such teaching come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared (permanently scarred) as with a hot iron. (*1 Timothy 4:1-20*).

Paul also tells us that the time will come and is here now when men will not put up with sound doctrine but will turn their ears away from the truth to listen to false prophets and teachers and to myths and stories that people have made up. (*2 Timothy 4:3-4*) There is no doubt that witchcraft in any form is strictly forbidden in the Bible.

4. Witchcraft infiltrates the Church when its leaders compromise God's Word.

(*1 Kings 22:20-22*) "*And the Lord said, 'Who will lure Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' 'One suggested this, and another that. Finally a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will lure him.' 'By what means?' the Lord asked. 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' He said. 'You will succeed in luring him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.'*"

King Ahab was a leader who had married a witch. Jezebel is a type of the spirit of false religion and Ahab is a type of those Church leaders who compromise with those who teach false doctrines. It is a terrible thing when God actually sends a lying spirit to deceive those who refuse to love and obey the truth. (2 *Thessalonians* 2:11-12) Ahab promoted Baal Worship that was nothing more than demon worship. Baal worship was excessively emotional and very seductive and spectacular as we see on Mount Carmel when the prophets of Baal faced Elijah. These false prophets had captivated God's people with their spectacular displays and only God's power coming through His faithful servant Elijah was able to break the spell that held them.

The fire falling from heaven was in type a demonstration of the power of the cross that destroys witchcraft in the Church and delivers those in bondage to Satan's power. When the cross of Jesus Christ once more becomes the central emphasis in the Church the fire of the Holy Spirit falls again on God's people. When Elijah killed the prophets of Baal with the sword we see a type of the faithful remnant exposing the false prophets and killing them with the sword of the Spirit.

The prophets of Baal were a type of the kinds of prophets that are around today in the Church. They are always saying things that Christians want to hear and they are always prophesying blessing and prosperity. They are very persuasive with their smooth speech and Charismatic personalities and are able to sway Christians to their way of thinking. They are always trying to 'call down the fire' but it never falls! Many Church leaders know that what these false prophets are saying is wrong but say nothing because they are more concerned with the approval of men than they are with the approval of God. They are like the spec-

tators standing on Mount Carmel who said nothing and neither did they support Elijah.

Ahab did more to provoke the Lord to anger than did all the kings of Israel did before him. (1 *Kings* 16:33) Ahab also married Jezebel and began to serve Baal and worship him. His alliance with a practicing witch and sorceress brought him under the spell of witchcraft. Ahab then erected an Asherah pole, an image of a false god and encouraged God's people to worship it. When we see Ahab doing this we see a type of what the antichrist will do in the last days both in Israel and in the Church. Already the spirit of antichrist is at work especially when we see Roman Catholics bowing down to images and genuflecting before a statue of Mary. This is nothing more than idolatry and witchcraft in the Church.

In the last days we will see more and more 'Ahab's' who are aligning themselves with Ecumenism and Interfaith worship. Already our Church leaders are compromising the standards of God's Word. The Jezebel of all false religion is infiltrating the Church. The 'spirit of Jezebel' is in the Church today. Ahab also murdered Naboth and this teaches us that the false leaders in the last days will persecute the true followers of Jesus and those who would be faithful to the God of Israel and to His Word.

Ahab murdered Naboth under the direct influence of Jezebel. Today in the Church false brethren who have compromised and ignored the Word of God are already persecuting those who stand up for the truth of God's Word. Elijah the prophet is a type of the faithful remnant who will oppose the false teachers and prophets abounding in the Church in the last days. In the end after a contest of power Elijah won the victory over these prophets. Finally Elijah was caught up to

heaven and so will the faithful remnant be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His Coming. At that time the kingdoms of the Antichrist will be devastated and the plagues and bowls of God's wrath poured out!

There were four hundred and fifty of those false prophets and only one of Elijah yet in Israel there were still seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal. There will always be a faithful remnant in the Church but in the last days they will not be easy to find as spiritual seduction will be commonplace in most churches. In the end Ahab was killed and when he died it was sunset. This is the Bible's way of saying that he was not really saved. Ahab had the opportunity to listen to God's prophet but chose to listen to the false ones and perished. When the leaders of the Church deliberately reject the Word of God as Ahab did they will always come under the spell of witchcraft and ultimately into judgment if they do not repent.

5. Only the power of the Gospel can break the power of witchcraft.

(Acts 19:18-20) "Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."

Only the preaching of the cross can break the power of witchcraft and this is especially true in the Church. Witchcraft will always obscure the work of the cross. When the Holy Spirit is really at work the power of the occult is broken in people's lives. It's interesting to note that at Ephesus there was great wealth attached to the sorcery and witchcraft that had been practiced there. Witchcraft and the

love of money always go hand in hand. Notice also that it was God's Word that prevailed in the end at Ephesus.

When the fire fell on Mount Carmel the people were delivered from their spiritually hypnotic state. The fire from heaven speaks of the purifying work of the Holy Spirit. Once more the fire falling teaches us that in the last days the fire of the Holy Spirit will once more illuminate the cross of Jesus in the Church and purify the altars of those hearts that are seeking sanctification. When God pours out His Spirit one last time on the Church those who have not bowed the knee to Baal will rejoice and those who have bowed the knee that repent will be delivered. However it will be a faithful remnant that will ultimately be saved.

Conclusion.

The Bible is very clear that before the Lord Jesus comes for His bride the majority of professing Christians will fall away and choose the way of Ahab consequently losing their first love for Jesus and for the Word of God. In the end only those who love and obey the truth will be saved. If we really love Jesus we will love the Word of God because Jesus is the Word of God made flesh and when we love and obey the Word of God we are loving and obeying Him. As for the rest who have refused to love and obey the truth they will go on being deceived and ultimately believe the lie of the antichrist. God will send them a delusion just as He sent the lying spirit to deceive Ahab. We need to ask ourselves the question. Are we following the 'prophets of Baal' or the Word of God? Just before Jesus returns witchcraft will dominate the professing Christian Church. There will be multitudes of 'Ahabs' leading God's people astray because they have chosen to reject God's Word and have come under the power of witchcraft and the 'spirit of Jezebel.'