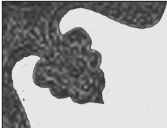


THE KINGDOM OF THE OCCULT

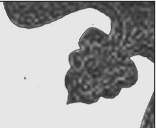
From the Author of *Kingdom of the Cults*

WALTER MARTIN

JILL MARTIN RISCHÉ
KURT VAN GORDEN



The Kingdom of the Occult



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The Kingdom of the Occult

WALTER MARTIN

JILL MARTIN RISCHE

KURT VAN GORDEN



THOMAS NELSON
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Dedication

To Darlene Martin, with love. Thank you for trusting me with something very dear—the legacy of Walter Martin. I never could have done it without you.

And to Carol Rische, a mother-in-law who gave me a mother's love and taught me how to be content. Absent from the body and at home with her Lord. We miss you, Mom.

“Her children rise up and call her blessed” (Prov. 31:28).

—JILL MARTIN RISCHE

To my wife, Cindy, who abounded in patience and love throughout this project.

And to the entire Martin family, whose love for God's truth is never ending. When Dr. Martin officiated our wedding in 1980, he blessed my wife and me with a blessing that continues today. A hearty thanks to the Martin family for inviting me into this project, and for their love, prayers, and support for our mission work among the cults and occult all of these years.

“And whatever you do, do it heartily,
as to the Lord and not to men” (Col. 3:23).

—KURT VAN GORDEN

ABOUT THE MANAGING EDITOR

KEVIN RISCHE is the founder and director of Walter Martin Ministries, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is the producer of the nationwide radio program *Essential Christianity*, featuring Dr. Walter Martin as “The *Original* Bible Answer Man.” Kevin designed, developed, and maintains the Walter Martin Ministries website www.waltermartin.com, including the extensive listening library and CD/DVD/audiotape catalog. He is responsible for conserving hundreds of Dr. Martin’s lectures and resources. Kevin is a graduate of Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota.



Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Introduction</i>	xi
1. The Kingdom of the Occult	1
2. The Occult Revolution	17
3. The Doctrine of the Demons	49
4. Ancient Paganism	67
5. Kabbalah	129
6. Eastern Mysticism and the New Age	189
7. Psychic Phenomena	225
8. Astrology	269
9. Tools of the Occult	307
10. UFOs	357
11. Satanism	383
12. Goddess Worship, Witchcraft, and Wicca	435

13. Traditional Religions	473
14. Demon Possession and Exorcism	519
15. The Jesus of the Occult	555
16. Spiritual Warfare	587
17. Christian Counseling and the Occult	613
18. Evangelism: Reaching the Hearts of People	649
<i>Appendix A: Questions and Answers on the Occult</i>	679
<i>Appendix B: Counseling Assessment Sheet</i>	687
<i>Bibliography</i>	693
<i>Index</i>	715



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This book could not have been written without the love and support of my husband, Kevin, and our children, Christina and Justin. I would also like to thank everyone who sent us Walter Martin tapes—your kindness means so much; Kathleen Rasmussen—for your excellent work transcribing my father’s tapes—you were a vital part of our team; Steve Laube, whose wisdom made a difference; my mother, Elaine Stein, for her constant encouragement; my sister and dearest friend, Elaine Martin—you brighten all our lives; my sister-in-law, Lynn Friedman, for the counseling ideas (and all those fun Fridays); Rick and Ronaele Wolf, for loving us—you have a special place in my heart; Jan Loewen and her daughter, Amanda, for your friendship and love—you are a gift to us; and Rhonda Hogan and Jennifer Stair, for their kindness.

—JILL MARTIN RISCHÉ

I would like to acknowledge Steve Laube, who did a masterful job as our agent, and the hardest worker on my behalf, my wife, Cindy, who as the codirector of our missions assisted in keeping our work balanced, and proofread chapter after chapter, providing helpful suggestions. Mark, our son, also did a great job proofreading the manuscript chapters. I love you all.

Finally, I would like to thank my late friend and mentor Dr. Walter R. Martin, who taught me the skills of research and initiated our mission work among the cults. His biblical apologetic answers still stand today because truth is impenetrable by error.

—KURT VAN GORDEN



Introduction

Years ago, I remember my father pacing the foyer of our home, leafing through a notebook of references on the occult. It had always been in the back of his mind to write a companion volume to *The Kingdom of the Cults*, but something always prevented him from beginning the new project.

Looking back, I can see that God had other plans.

When my husband, Kevin, and I began Walter Martin Ministries in 1998, we talked about the things we hoped to accomplish, and *The Kingdom of the Occult* was at the top of our list. I never thought I would be the one to do it; I just felt it should be done. And then one day our friend (and intrepid agent) Steve Laube brought up the pressing need for a book on the occult, and this time I knew God's plan for *The Kingdom of the Occult* included me. Kurt Van Gorden, my father's gifted researcher and longtime family friend, seemed the perfect fit for a coauthor, and this journey began. I can honestly say it has been an extraordinary one in so many ways. I never thought that working on a book about the occult would be the experience of a lifetime, but that is exactly what it has become. During the past year, one verse made all the difference in my life and in Kurt's life as well: "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10).

In the midst of all the evil things that needed to be read and evaluated, the presence of the Holy Spirit constantly protected us. Each time we sat down to write, we prayed for God's protection, and every single time, He answered us. Surrounded by books on Witchcraft, Satanism, and demon possession, our hearts would be filled with joy that Jesus defeated Satan and every dark aspect of the occult on the Cross. There was joy in the fact that He is greater than anything that might come against us, and peace in knowing He loves us and called us to His work. The Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit strengthened and encouraged us in a way we had never experienced before. It has been a wonderful year, and we hope the sense of overwhelming joy and victory we felt each day in writing this book shines through on every page.

Although my father is with the Lord, the ministry he had on earth as a repre-

sentative of the gospel of Jesus Christ lives on. The wisdom of God is, of course, eternal. Our physical lives may end in this world, but that does not mean God is finished using our walk and our witness for His glory. My father always intended to write *The Kingdom of the Occult*, and now—in thought and word—he has done so. The deed belongs to God.

The occult deserves a healthy respect, but it is nothing any Christian need fear. It is the ultimate enemy in power and purpose, but Jesus faced the worst it had to offer . . . victoriously. We are the winners—we are the chosen children of God. And as His beloved children, we must be ready not only to proclaim the gospel, but to *defend* it. And that is exactly what my father, Kurt and I have done in this book.

The Kingdom of the Occult is the product of a unique blend of ideas. My father's work on the occult provided the foundation that Kurt and I built upon. We edited transcripts from his lectures and sections of his writing, adding our chapters, comments, and critiques where necessary. Whenever possible, his words remain verbatim—changes or additions were made only to include subject matter my father rarely taught or to facilitate the flow of the manuscript. The meaning behind his words was carefully preserved and, in all new material, his position clearly expressed. Many of the case studies in this book reflect my father's experiences in dealing with the occult, and they are invaluable learning tools for those fighting against the world of the occult.

In 1978, Walter Martin had this to say about the defense of the faith:

Today, the Christian Church is not on the advance, she is in retreat. The reason she is in retreat is because the world threatens her. About us on every side are people trying to poke holes in Scripture instead of proclaiming Scripture. We are attacked by philosophers, psychologists, and psychiatrists; by the whole massive front of evil, no matter what garb it takes. The idea is to push back the Christian Church. And there is only one way that you can resist such force: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, Says the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). It is a grounding in the Word of God, it is a fullness in the Spirit and life, it is the realization that if we are going to be more than conquerors for Christ, then we must have our priorities ordered and we must get *into* the Scriptures and get *out* with the answers. . . .

When you are talking with people in the occult, remember that they are flesh and blood human beings, not supernatural caricatures. They have needs and wants—they are people who will bleed if you stick them with a pin or cry if a loved one dies. They did not abdicate their citizenship in the human race because they were taken captive by the devil. You must be able to identify with them. You have to realize, “There but for the grace of God, go I.” It is terribly important to understand that they are people of value and worth to God, and all the blasphemy, the anger, and the awful things they may say to you and *about* Christ they say in ignorance—exactly like the apostle Paul, who called himself the least of all the apostles who obtained mercy because he did what he did in ignorance.

You and I are the commissioned and ordained servants of the King of Kings. He gave us the opportunity to obtain that knowledge. He gave us the power of the Spirit. He gave us access to His Word. He challenged us to become more than conquerors. He opened the fields unto harvest.

Will you not hear the voice of the Lord of the Vineyard? See these fields of the cults and the occult, and reach out to them in the name of Jesus.¹

Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against ancient powers and principalities (Eph. 6:12). It takes the Word of God, His beloved Son, and the awesome power of His Holy Spirit to defeat them.

In the end, *The Kingdom of the Occult* is about the magnificent power of God and its triumph over evil—the proof of what my father always used to say: “Cheer up! I’ve got good news for you: I’ve read the end of the book, and *we win!*”

Jill Martin Rische

Kurt Van Gorden

September 15, 2007

1. Martin, *Evangelizing People in the Cults and Occult*, CD/audiotape (Anaheim, CA: Melodyland Christian Center, August, 1978).

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

—EPHESIANS 1:18–19 NIV

QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF THE OCCULT

- The word *occult* comes from the Latin word *occultus*, meaning hidden or secret things.²
- God defines the *occult* as having its origin with Satan, the devil.
- Satan is a proud spirit-being, a personality created in another dimension by the all-powerful Being, the God of creation.
- Occultism often denies the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His atonement on the Cross for our sins, and His bodily resurrection, but it may also promote a blend of Christian and occult beliefs.

2. *University of Notre Dame Latin Dictionary and Grammar Aid Online*, s.v. “occult,” <http://catholic-archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/lookup.pl?stem=occulo&ending=> (accessed September 25, 2006).

The Kingdom of the Occult

It is a sad and frightening fact that people are fascinated with the secret or “occult” things that God has condemned (Deut. 18:9–12). One cannot see a movie like *Harry Potter* or read *The Exorcist*, which presents Satan unvarnished and portrays the truth about demonic possession in terms everyone can understand, without being plunged into the core of the occult. Today there is a tremendous fascination with the mysterious and the unknown. The great scholar C. S. Lewis wrote, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”¹

The modern age is strong proof of this unhealthy fascination. People are attracted to evil and captivated by it. They are vulnerable to temptation because of a growing revolt against science and technology that, for all their efforts, cannot meet man’s spiritual hunger. People are asking, “If science and technology are supposed to produce all the good things, why haven’t they accomplished it?” Instead, there is a continuous degradation of personality. People are not treated as human beings anymore but as computer data, numbers assigned from womb to tomb.

Today, a terrible spiritual vacuum exists in which people are forced to live because they turned from the living God and tried to fill the resulting emptiness with physical pleasure. Man crowds into this vacuum all the moral and ethical values attached to the material world. Again and again people protest, “There’s got to be something more than this, because we’re not satisfied.” Satisfaction has not come through the dollar sign. Satisfaction has not come through the pill. Satisfaction has not come through economic aggrandizement or political conquests

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: HarperCollins, 1961, copyright restored 1996 C. S. Lewis Pte. Ltd.), preface.

or military supremacy. Lost in a spiritual void, the human heart searches for some kind of reality apart from God and His Word, and discovers the occult reality from another dimension.

Today, the kingdom of the occult encompasses the globe like a spiderweb of immense proportions, its overall membership estimated in the hundreds of millions.² It is the purpose of this book to investigate this dimension of darkness and to examine its influence in America and throughout the world. It is also our aim to familiarize readers with the refreshing truths of the Gospel of Christ that they may see the great heritage that is ours in the Christian faith and be challenged to live and to witness more effectively for the Savior.³

Our approach to the subject is threefold: (1) *historical analysis* of key facts connected with the rise of the occult, (2) *theological evaluation* of the occult's major teachings, and (3) *apologetic contrast* from the viewpoint of biblical theology, with an emphasis upon exegesis and doctrine.⁴ A study of the occult is a serious business. Its teachings represent a growing spiritual force in the world today, a force intent on turning people away from established Christian churches and the historic teachings of the Bible.

THE DIMENSION OF DARKNESS

The Bible is a dimensional book in the sense that a dimension is a realm of reality, sometimes imperceptible, but nonetheless genuine. Human beings live in a dimension subject to the five senses, and they tend to make the mistake of believing that anything beyond the realm of those senses simply is not there. To accept such reasoning would be a fatal mistake from a biblical perspective.

Even as people live in the dimension of earth, so the Bible says there is another dimension of heaven, where God reigns as Sovereign. This second dimension of heaven, or the throne of God Himself, is more real than human senses can perceive; it is a dimension that was bridged when God chose to become man in the person

2. *The Association of Religion Data Archives Online*, s.v. "International Data," http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_234_2.asp (data collected by World Christian Encyclopedia and World Christian Trends), <http://worldchristiandatabase.org/wed/> (accessed September 26, 2006).

3. Walter Martin, ed. Ravi Zacharias, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, rev., upd., exp. ed. (Grand Rapids: Bethany House, 2003), 23.

4. Adapted from Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 18.

of Jesus Christ. Because of Him, mankind now has access to a realm of infinite power, indescribable love, and cosmic justice.

The third dimension is one of spiritual darkness, controlled by Satan and his hosts. The Bible describes it as hell, or the alienation of the spiritual nature of man from fellowship with his Creator. It belongs to the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). This dimension is portrayed in Ephesians 6:10–12, where the warning is given that it is the domain of the forces of incalculable wickedness, presided over by the one whom the Bible designates as “the ruler of this world” and “the god of this age” (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4). This domain is described variously in the Bible as “outer darkness” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30), “fire” (Matt. 5:22; 13:42; 18:8, 9; 25:41; Mark 9:22–49), “suffering” (Jude 7), consciousness of separation from God, and fear of others suffering the same (Luke 16:19–31), “prison” (1 Peter 3:19), and, metaphorically, a vast lake of molten sulfur, from which there is no deliverance (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8).

Perhaps this dimension is best described in terms of the condition of its occupants, who are portrayed as “wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 13).⁵ The apostle Peter indicated that some of the fallen angels were already chained in the darkness of hell, awaiting judgment: “God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4). It is possible, then, that hell may be one dimension with many levels, some restrictive and some not, since Satan and an unknown number of his demons are still free to roam the earth.⁶

5. These three realms are enumerated only for distinction, not biblical order.

6. Albert Barnes analyzes the possible structure of hell: “[Cast them down to hell]—Greek *tartaroosas*—‘thrusting them down to Tartarus.’ The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though it is common in the Classical writers. It is a verb formed from [Tartaros], Tartarus, which in Greek mythology was the lower part, or abyss of Hades, Hadees, where the shades of the wicked were supposed to be imprisoned and tormented, and corresponded to the Jewish word Geenna—‘Gehenna.’ It was regarded, commonly, as beneath the earth; as entered through the grave; as dark, dismal, gloomy; and as a place of punishment. Compare the notes at Job 10:21–22, and Matt 5:22. The word here is one that properly refers to a place of punishment, since the whole argument relates to that, and since it cannot be pretended that the ‘angels that sinned’ were removed to a place of happiness on account of their transgression. It must also refer to punishment in some other world than this, for there is no evidence that THIS world is made a place of punishment for fallen angels. [And delivered them into chains of darkness]

cont'd on next page

Biblical theology teaches us that Jesus Christ came into the world to deliver men from this darkness, because originally hell was prepared *not for man* but for Satan and his followers. They go there by divine decree, while man is the only creation that chooses it freely. This is clearly derived from Jesus' words: "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Matt. 25:41). Whatever hell's dimension may be, one thing is absolutely certain: if it required the death of the most perfect Being who ever lived to deliver us from it, then it is to be avoided at all costs.

It is against this domain of darkness that the Christian is in mortal combat, and not against mere flesh and blood. This dimension is the unopened door with its handle on *our side* in the dimension of earth. It is with the tools of the occult that men open this door, and through it proceeds the power of awesome evil. There is no force on earth that can overpower Satan except Jesus, who is head of all principalities and powers, and the Church, which is His body (Col. 1:15–20; Eph. 6:12).⁷

SATAN—YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Down through history, Satan's public awareness has ranged from fascinating to revolting, and as far back as scholars can reach into the study of religion they find some kind of concept or image of him (although his name often varies). The Chaldeans and Babylonians, for example, produced numerous caricatures and portrayals of Satan. Resh Lakish comments in the Babylonian Talmud that "Satan, the evil prompter, and the Angel of Death are all one."⁸ However, the clearest picture

6. (cont'd): 'Where darkness lies like chains upon them'—Robinson, *Lexicon*. The meaning seems to be, that they are confined in that dark prisonhouse AS IF by chains. We are not to suppose that spirits are literally bound; but it was common to bind or fetter prisoners who were in dungeons, and the representation here is taken from that fact. This representation that the mass of fallen angels are confined in 'Tartarus,' or in hell, is not inconsistent with the representations which elsewhere occur that their leader is permitted to roam the earth, and that even many of those spirits are allowed to tempt men. It may be still true that the mass are confined within the limits of their dark abode; and it may even be true also that Satan and those who are permitted to roam the earth are under bondage, and are permitted to range only within certain bounds, and that they are so secured that they will be brought to trial at the last day." *Barnes' Notes*, Biblesoft.

7. There are several other ways to open a door to Satan's domain besides the occult. Rebellion, which is like Witchcraft, stubbornness, which is like idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23), and just outright sin. Dr. Martin used to say, "Had the Devil never existed, there is enough residual evil within man to send him to hell without the Devil's aid."

8. *Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Baba Bathra Online*, s.v. "Folio 16a v. 4," http://www.come-and-hear.com/bababathra/bababathra_16.html (accessed August 20, 2007).

of Satan, alias the Devil, the adversary, Abaddon, Belial, or Beelzebub (“Baal-Zebub,” from 2 Kings 1:2)—appears in the New Testament. It is important to understand the clear, biblical picture of the nature of Satan in order to grasp the power of the occult.

According to Ezekiel 28, Satan, called the “king of Tyre” was once a beautiful, created being; a marvelous messenger of light. Satan’s original name, Lucifer, means *light bearer*, and he occupied a position of tremendous privilege and responsibility in the kingdom of heaven. Today, many popular teachers state that Satan was “the most beautiful” of God’s creations, but this is a claim that cannot be proven, since *beautiful* is the only description given. The Bible reveals that Lucifer was hurled from his high position in heaven. He was, quite literally, driven out by Michael the archangel, who fought against him until the power of God prevailed (Rev. 12:7–9).⁹

In the account by the prophet Isaiah, Lucifer revolted against the throne of God because he wanted to be like the Most High God, thereby falling from his place of glory through his pride (14:12–21). Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18), which, for Christians, removes all doubt of Satan’s existence and fall. Though he lost the radiance and splendor that was reflected from the throne of the Lord, and with which he was anointed because of his exalted position, Lucifer (at this point renamed Satan) threw the whole force of his own being and of his partners in angelic rebellion into a great cosmic war intended to disrupt God’s divine plan and win for himself either terms of armistice with the Creator or else, ultimate triumph.

Satan’s strategy evidently depended on the fallacious premise that because he had not been annihilated by divine wrath, God was incapable of such an action and was therefore neither infinite nor omnipotent.¹⁰ There is no delusion like self-delusion, and Satan became self-deceived. Satan’s decision to pursue his own prideful goals, rather than the will of the Creator, caused him to wield the vast

9. Satan was the real force behind the king of Tyre, who became his puppet king. Also, the popularity of the inaccurate teaching that Satan was “the most beautiful” of God’s creations is evident in the number of search engine hits it receives, but it has no biblical basis.

10. Some may argue that we do not know Satan’s reasoning, except for Isaiah’s disclosure of his prideful thoughts, but this does not necessarily mean that he thought God was *not* almighty. Instead, he may have thought of himself as coequal. Satan, in destroying humanity, may not think that he can *still* ascend God’s throne or beat Him in battle. He may just be fighting to destroy as many of God’s creatures as possible before going down in the end.

power and authority at his command in spiritual warfare against the throne of the Eternal.

In the third chapter of Genesis, Satan tempts Eve to sin through the same avenue of pride that paved the way for his own downfall eons earlier. Although his handiwork was well-known in the universe at large (already disrupted by sin and its consequences), Satan had not yet succeeded in penetrating the garden of Eden and subjecting this part of God's creation to his sphere of influence and power. But with the fall of Eve and Adam, Satan accomplished this goal, too, though not without incurring the divine prophecy that the physical seed of the people he had led to spiritual rebellion and physical destruction would someday crush him and bring about his ultimate destruction (Gen. 3:15). As the last Adam, Jesus Christ accomplished this triumph through His death and resurrection.

SATAN'S TRIUMPH

Satan triumphed in Eden. Man was expelled from the garden and separated from fellowship with his Creator, a fact that no doubt added fuel to Satan's theory that the Creator was not almighty, since He could have prevented the fall of man even as He could have prevented the fall of angels. Ignoring the biblical truth that true love is based on freedom of choice (John 3:16) and that God had displayed this kind of love in creating angels and men with this capacity, Satan plunged on to disrupt the entire human race and to interfere with the will of his Creator.

Throughout Scripture, we find Satan repeatedly attempting to thwart the divine will. It was the power of Satan that energized the priests of the demon gods of Egypt, who opposed Moses as he sought to deliver Israel, and it was Satan who imitated the miracles of God to confuse Pharaoh, something he will also do through the great coming Antichrist (Ex. 7:11–12; 2 Thess. 2:9–12).

In the book of Job, Satan accused, attacked, and tempted the righteous Job. Satan told God that Job would curse Him to His face, and he argued for the end of the divine power that protected Job and his family. Satan hoped to strengthen his argument that God would lose out to him whenever man was faced with a free choice. But Job proved Satan wrong, for he maintained his spiritual integrity. Job's experience reveals much about the devil's methods and nature. For example, Satan inspired Herod to murder children in an attempt to destroy the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:16), and he influenced Judas to betray the Son of God (John 13:27). The Lord

Jesus Christ, however, invaded Satan's kingdom and successfully bound him during his earthly ministry: He encountered him on the Mount of Temptation and exerted divine authority by defeating him on the Cross (Luke 4:1–13).

Christ gave His apostles power over demons and the capacity to resist the devil, though He did not hesitate to describe Satan as “the ruler of this world” (John 14:30). The apostle Paul called Satan “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4), and he urged the Church to “put on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11–18). Other apostles wrote that we must resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9).

THE TRUE SATAN

We must try our best to avoid thinking of Satan in terms of historic caricatures. He does not wear a red suit, nor does he possess a beard, horns, or leering smile as he is so frequently depicted at Halloween. The cloven hoof is a symbol of Satan, as are the goat's head and the inverted cross, but they are only imaginative figures assigned to him. Satan does not smell of sulfur, he does not possess a pointed tail, and he is in no way connected with the flames of hell. Based on what we can learn from the Bible, he has not yet been near any flames of that nature, and he has no desire to be.

Satan is not a *he* as we understand male or female; Satan is, according to the Bible, a personality independent of gender. Satan is a proud spirit, a personality created in another dimension by an all-powerful Being, the God of creation. He was created to serve the Lord, but he was given free will. He chose to exercise his will against the sovereignty of God, and he fell from his first position of glory when he uttered that terrible pronouncement, “I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14). “I . . . I . . . I” is Satan's constant egotistical affirmation.

In *Paradise Lost*, the poet John Milton portrayed Satan as somewhat of a hero. Many media outlets, in discussing exorcism, have emphasized the power of Satan so that he makes Jesus Christ seem pallid by comparison. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Though Satan's power is enormous, and though he exercised that power in Eden to usher in sin and death, he was nevertheless encountered and defeated by the last Adam, Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:14–15).

In John 14:30, Jesus said He had defeated Satan, but Satan was to remain powerful and capable of great authority for a time. The brilliant twentieth-century preacher Donald Grey Barnhouse once observed, “The ruler of this world has come

and has found *plenty* in us.”¹¹ Satan’s activity is well-known throughout the world. If we recall the Nazi concentration camps of Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen, Buchenwald, or *The Gulag Archipelago* of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, then we are aware that Satan’s activity is not “corporate evil” but *personal* violence, deceit, and hatred.

When men deal with Satan, they are not dealing with an illusion or a projection of human evil; they are dealing with a real entity who was totally and absolutely routed by Jesus Christ. The finality of Satan’s defeat will come when he is cast into a lake of fire and sulfur, a place that the Bible describes as *eternity without God*.¹² There Satan and all who followed him, acknowledging him as their god by refusing to recognize the true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, will then find eternal judgment a terrifying reality.

CASE STUDY

Walter Martin

I cannot help but think, when we talk about occultism, just how deadly it can become. I was giving a series of lectures in New York some time ago, and a minister and his wife came to me with an incredible story. He began by saying, “Walter, I want to tell you something because I know you’ll believe me. If I tell other people, they’ll just write me off.”

This took me a bit by surprise and I answered, “Well, after twenty years of seeing all the things I’ve seen, yes, I think I might just believe you. What happened to you?”

He gave the following account:

We come from a family of Spiritists. Everyone in our family practiced mediumship and held séances. I was born again and escaped, but my sister was still in it. She practiced with the Ouija board and went through the whole routine. I was so concerned about her that

11. Walter Martin, *Doctrine of the Demons*, CD/Audio, www.waltermartin.com.

12. See Jesus’ illustration of this in Mark 9:44, 46, 48.

one night I went over to her home. On the way there, I said to my wife, "Tonight is the night we face her with this."

We arrived and went inside, and she was sitting there with a Ouija board on the table in front of her. I warned her, "I've come here to show you this thing is devilish." She just laughed at me.

I sat down across from her, and the two of us started a dialogue with the Ouija board. (Parker Brothers manufactures the "game" *Ouija* by the thousands.) And as I sat there in that room, an eerie feeling came over me. I started to ask questions of the Ouija board—and it answered me.

The first question I asked of this "force" was, "Who are you?"

The force spelled out the word, "S-P-I-R-I-T."

"What is your name?" It refused to give it.

"Were you there when the resurrection of Christ took place?"

The answer came on the board, "Yes."

"What did you experience?"

"F-E-A-R."

It was then I began to get very concerned. I asked, "What do you feel toward me?"

"H-A-T-E."

"What do you think of the Bible?" It spelled out a four-letter obscenity.

At that point, I decided to break off contact with the Ouija board. So I stood up from the table, took my Bible, and said, "I'll have no more to do with this. It's devilish." And I threw my Bible into the center of the Ouija board.

At that moment, the board levitated off the table and flipped the Bible into the air with such force that it flew across the room and hit the wall. My sister and my wife screamed.

As I stood there looking at it, something smashed me in my stomach and knocked me to the floor. I was doubled over—breathless—with my head between my knees, and the only thing I could gasp was, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Help!"

My sister said, “Really, you’ve gone too far now. You’re not going to try to fool me anymore.”

But I was lying on the floor in such a convincing position that my wife and sister came over to help me. When we pulled up my shirt, there was a red welt the size of a fist over my solar plexus! At that juncture, my sister recognized that I had been hit—*but by nothing visible in that room*. The next thing I knew, we were all having a prayer meeting. My sister came out of the occult to Christ, and the Ouija board was splintered and burned.

“I never would have believed this, Walt, unless I lived through it,” he finished. “What do you think hit me?”

“Well, read the book of Acts,” I said. “The seven sons of Sceva probably had the same question. Remember how they tried to cast out demons? What happened? The demon said, ‘Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you? Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding’” (Acts 19:15–16 NIV).

“I’ve learned my lesson,” he replied. “I leave the Ouija boards and all of this to the Holy Spirit. I don’t bother with it anymore.”

These are not innocent things. They are dangerous things that must be faced by believers in Christ. The people who play with Ouija boards and think it is cute; the people who try to levitate tables, read tarot cards, tea leaves, and their palms; the people who try to find out whether they are Gemini, Virgo or Scorpio, and what the paper said today about what tomorrow will be—these are the people who are flirting with the kingdom of the occult. And it is *dangerous*, because it reaches out to another dimension and endangers the soul. You do not have to go to Africa to find demons. Africa, South America, the dark continents of the world—none are darker than America.¹³

13. Martin, *Doctrine of the Demons*, CD/Audio, www.waltermartin.com.

SCRIPTURAL RESPONSE

In Acts 13, the apostles Paul and Barnabas had been sent forth by the Holy Spirit. Passing through the city of Paphos, they encountered a sorcerer (occultist), a false prophet who called himself Bar-Jesus or “Son of Jesus”:

Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. (vv. 6–12)

A number of interesting things emerge from this encounter that reveal the unchanging attitude of God toward all forms of occultic practices and those who are involved in them. The word *sorcerer* is derived from the Greek word *mavgo*, meaning *seer* or *sorcerer*.¹⁴ Bar-Jesus’ primary goal was to divert Sergius Paulus, governor of the island, from the Christian faith. When Paul addressed Bar-Jesus, it should be noted that Paul was “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and so it was actually the Holy Spirit who spoke in condemnation of the occultist and occult practices in general. The words of the Spirit are definitive, compelling, and judgmental. He accused the occultist of fraud and of being filled with all deceit, and termed him a son of Satan and an enemy of all that is right. He accused him of perverting the path or the way of the Lord, which is termed *right* in contrast to his *wrong*. Then

14. *The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon Online*, s.v. “mavgo,” <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/Greek/grk.cgi?number=3097&version=kjv> (accessed August 20, 2007).

he followed this assessment with swift judgment (blindness). As a result of that judgment by the Holy Spirit, salvation came to Sergius Paulus because he saw the power of the Lord and was convinced of the truth of the teaching of Paul and Barnabas.

God's Truth

A closer examination of this encounter in Acts 13 reveals precisely what occult practitioners, knowingly or unknowingly, truly are:

1. They are in league with Satan and possess certain supernatural powers.
2. They are false prophets.
3. They seek to influence people politically and ecclesiastically, particularly those in positions of power (vv. 6–7).
4. They attempt to prevent those who are seeking to hear the Word of God from learning it by opposing those who preach it (v. 8).
5. They deliberately attempt to divert prospective converts from the faith as their ultimate goal (v. 8).

In contrast to this, the judgment of the Holy Spirit is explicit:

1. He calls such attempts and practices “full of all kinds of deceit and trickery” (v. 10 NIV).
2. He designates occultism and the occult as having its origin with the devil, by calling Bar-Jesus “son of the devil” (v. 10).
3. He unmasks the occultists’ tactics and declares them to be enemies of all that is righteous. He calls them perverters of the ways of the Lord, which are designated as “straight,” or right (v. 10).

If this were not sufficient, the Spirit then struck the occultist (a medium) blind and used this judgment to convince Sergius Paulus, the seeker after truth, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth and that the way of occultism leads to destruction.

God’s attitude toward occultism and occult practices has not altered. Neither has His attitude altered toward those who teach such practices, and those who persist in pursuing them for their own ends.

Satan's Lies

The occult seduces the unwary with its offer of limited knowledge of the future and supposed control over the lives of others.¹⁵ It promises power. If someone involved in the occult can provide secret information to an individual that only he knows, and then predict something that does indeed occur, then the occultist has secured power over the other person through fear.

The occult holds out the promise of love, but it is not the divine, unconditional love of God (*agape*) as described in Scripture. Rather, it is psychosexual love (*eros*), which explains why many of those who are in the world of the occult are immoral, recognizing only a standard of authority established by their own reasoning.¹⁶

The occult offers a small degree of certainty in a world of uncertainty. Moving outside the realm of established religion, it promises things that the Church forbids. It provides a sense of belonging, so desperately needed by people who reject God's love in Jesus Christ, and accept substitutes rather than regeneration in the image of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. At its heart it is egocentric: the occultist seeks first his own ends and then the ends of others. It provides no exit from the realities of life and the problem of sin, but is merely a satanic diversion that frequently masks itself in Christian terminology. That is why we often see Spiritist churches deny the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His atonement on the Cross for our sins, and His bodily resurrection, yet still use Christian terminology, quote the Bible, and sing hymns (altered to fit their theological system). They have the *form* of Christian unity, as did the sorcerer in the book of Acts, but they are devoid of the saving, historic gospel (2 Tim. 3:5). It should come as no surprise to us that Satan, who created "another Jesus . . . a different spirit . . . and a different gospel" (2 Cor. 11:4), should introduce under the guise of Christianity practices that seem to follow a biblical pattern but culminate in eternal spiritual death.

15. Deuteronomy 13:1–2 tells us that sometimes occultists will give a sign or wonder that actually "comes to pass." The Lord God allows this to "test" our hearts to see if we will follow false gods (Deut. 13:5). True knowledge is fed to the occultist by Satan.

16. For more information on the difference between *eros* and *agape* love, see Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

CONCLUSION

It is only necessary to read Deuteronomy 18:9–14 to learn that God considered Canaanite occult practices “abominations” worthy of capital punishment:

When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There 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, or one 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 the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 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.

In these verses, God has given an index of occultic practices. Additional passages, such as Isaiah 47:12–15 and the book of Daniel, where astrology and other such practices are condemned by God in the strongest terms, prove that the Lord did not change His mind; He is still diametrically opposed to all occultism.

The divine edict “I am the LORD, I do not change” (Mal. 3:6) extends also to the New Testament revelation. In Acts 19:19, those who heard the word of the Lord and believed it brought all the tools of the occult in their possession to the feet of the apostles, and burned them because such practices were accursed. The practice of Witchcraft is specifically mentioned and strongly condemned in the Old and the New Testaments (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9–14; 1 Sam. 28:7–19; Gal. 5:20). God recognized what men had failed to recognize: knowledge of the future is in *His* hand, and any attempt to obtain from the hand of demons what has been denied by the will of the Divine is an experiment fraught with peril and dangers undreamed of by the human soul.

The world of the occult is to be avoided by believers in Christ because we are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). We are to avoid *participation* in the activities of this dark dimension while, at the same time, standing firmly against it to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”

(Jude 3). Christians are urged to put on the full armor of God to do warfare in the spiritual dimension, confident that if we resist the devil, he will flee. Remember, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4), a reference to the strength of God’s power against Satan and all his hosts, whether spiritual or corporeal (Eph. 6:11; James 4:7).

The Church of Jesus Christ must stand and fight against the evil of the occult because she has been commanded to do so, and because she possesses the power to do so. Christ has risen from the dead and is triumphant over all the forces arrayed against Him; it was impossible that death should hold Him who alone is designated in Scripture “Prince of life” (Acts 3:15). The “great High Priest” of the Christian church rebuked Satan on earth and defeated him on the Cross to redeem the sons of men (Heb. 4:14; Luke 4). The King of eternity disdained occultic practices, for they originate with Satan, and those who practice them are indeed fools who rush in where the angels fear to tread (Jude 9).

The revolt against reason and logic today has brought on the drug culture and a yearning for some sense of security. It has brought on the absorption with alcohol, drugs, sex, and now the absorption with death that is rapidly replacing sex in Western culture. This revolt against reason and logic has produced an irrational faith and an irrational way of life—fertile ground for the seeds of the occult.

In direct opposition to these false, satanic doctrines are the good, sound doctrines of Scripture that are taught by Christ and ordained by the apostles. These doctrines alone are pure and true since their origin is God Himself, who adjures us through the Holy Spirit to continue in the things we have learned from His Word and to study to show ourselves approved, faithful handlers of the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. Barnhouse, Donald Grey. *The Invisible War*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965.
2. Lewis, C. S. *The Screwtape Letters*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
3. Martin, Walter. *Spiritual Warfare*. CD/audiotape, Walter Martin Ministries, www.waltermartin.com.
4. Mather, George and Larry Nichols. *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.