

Perspective

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Halloween—making the Occult “FUN”?

What is the occult? The occult refers to hidden or secret spiritual, mystical, or supernatural beliefs and practices—such as magic, divination, alchemy, and esoteric traditions—derived from the Latin, *occultus*, meaning “hidden.” The term, occult, historically described unseen or concealed forces. In modern usage, it refers to a broad category of esoteric, mystical, or supernatural systems that fall far outside the teachings of the Bible. In an article written by Nick Redfern titled, “Is Occultism, Orders and Magic in decline?” it states, “In the United States, the number of self-identified Wiccans and Pagans rose dramatically from an estimated 8,000 in 1990 to about 340,000 in 2008 and further to roughly 1 to 1.5 million by the late 2010s. By 2014, surveys indicated that about 0.3–0.4% of Americans (close to one million people) identified as Wiccan or Pagan. This makes modern witchcraft one of the fastest-growing religious/spiritual categories in the U.S. rather than a vanishing one. To put this in perspective, one report noted that “the number of self-identified witches in the United States has surpassed the number of Presbyterians, highlighting how sizeable Wicca has become.”

Soon children dressed as witches and goblins, werewolves, vampires, and other macabre figures will be ringing doorbells on Halloween and trick or treating. Some will say this is all in the name of “fun.” How does God view Halloween, which has a direct link to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, a pagan harvest-and-spirit festival? How does the Almighty God view the occult? What does the Bible say about toying with the occult?

Society paints the occult and witches as good

If you ask AI if witches are evil, it will say, “No, witches are not inherently evil; the idea that they are comes from historical fear, religious influence, and cultural misconceptions. Historically, witches were often respected figures in their communities, serving as healers, herbalists, midwives, or spiritual guides. In ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome, magic and witchcraft were used for public good, divination, and healing, rather than malevolent purposes. The perception of witches as evil largely emerged with the spread of Christianity in Europe, which sought to suppress pagan traditions and labeled magical practices as heretical or demonic.”

Society strives to present witchcraft and the occult as playing a positive role. It tries to lure children in as early as possible. Halloween is just one example, but there are both real-life “occult-style” games and video games that blend spooky or mystical themes with “kid-friendly fun,” but many of them carry risks and should be avoided.

Ouija boards are no joke—they can invite demonic spirits. Another such game is *Bloody Mary*, which involves standing before a mirror in the dark, repeating a name to summon a “spirit.” What may be meant to be all in the name of “fun” may result in real demonic activity.

What does the Bible say about toying with the demonic world?

When ancient Israel came amidst the Canaanites, it was among a people whose religion was polytheistic and was filled with pagan rituals, sacrifices, and magical practices (Wikipedia). The Bible repeatedly accuses the Canaanites of engaging in divination, sorcery, and other occult arts (Deuteronomy 18:10–12; Leviticus 18:21). These passages list practices such as interpreting omens, casting spells, consulting mediums, and spiritism as “*detestable to the LORD*,” and they are presented as part of the Canaanite religious tradition that Israel was pointedly warned against adopting.

Deuteronomy 12:4 cautions, “*You must not worship the LORD your God in their way*” (NIV). This command was given as Israel approached the Promised Land, and God warned them against adopting the religious customs of the Canaanites. In Deuteronomy 12:30–31 God commanded Israel: “*take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.*”

Again, God sternly commanded Israel: “*You shall not permit a sorceress to live.*” (Exodus 22:18). Leviticus 19:31 strongly instructed, “*Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.*”

In Leviticus 20:6-8 it again says, *“And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”* The message reiterates God’s people are to remain holy; participation in the occult makes one defiled and unclean. Again, God commands in Leviticus 20:27: *“A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them.”*

Deuteronomy 18:9-12 says to stay away from pagan practices: *“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.”*

Clearly, the occult is not fun and games to God. Why? It is delving into Satan’s world, and God’s holy people are to have nothing to do with the demonic world of the Devil.

Saul consults the witch of Endor

The account of King Saul consulting the Witch of Endor is a significant biblical narrative that illustrates Saul’s desperation and spiritual spiral down as he sought guidance from a witch rather than God. The story is in 1 Samuel 28:3-25. At this time, Saul, the first king of Israel, faced a dire situation as the Philistines gathered for battle against Israel. Samuel, the prophet who had previously guided Saul, was dead, and Saul was troubled. He could not receive God’s guidance from God due to his rebelliousness. So, Saul disguised himself and went to the Witch of Endor at night, asking her to summon the spirit of Samuel. The witch was initially hesitant, fearing for her life, but Saul assured her that she would not be punished for her actions. I Chronicles 10:13 gives the tragic end of King Saul’s life: *“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.”*

The only king of Israel or Judah in the Bible who consulted a “witch” was Saul. Incidentally, we should make clear the witch of Endor did not summon up Samuel, but it was a demon pretending to be the prophet. Do not be deceived by Satan and his demons. Demons are often conjured up at seances, and they will masquerade as a dead relative or loved one. Ecclesiastes 9:5 clearly shows us, *“For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing.”*

The Bible doesn’t record King Ahab ever consulting a medium or witch, but it clearly associates Jezebel with witchery: *“Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, ‘Is it peace, Jehu?’ So, he answered, ‘What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?’”* (II Kings 9:22)

Be you holy as God is holy

God has called us out of this world. The occult is another religion, even as the false churches of Christianity, and we must remain sanctified and separate from it. The world may think dressing children up in macabre outfits and sending them out to trick or treat is adorable; God does not think it’s cute! Galatians 5:20-21 lists idolatry and sorcery as works of the flesh, *“that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

The judgement of God is on those who participate in the occult: *“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”* (Revelation 21:8)

God is jealous over His people, and He is the great Creator of all things with absolute authority over the entire universe. The demonic world is real. The righteous angelic realm is real.

The Eternal God wants us to always look to Him and His Son, Jesus Christ. We are never to pray to or worship an angel, as Colossians 2:18 clearly teaches: *“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”*

The people of God are forbidden to ever try to communicate with the demonic realm. God desires we remain untainted from these abominations: *“Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.’”* (II Corinthians 6:17-18) We are His holy people!