



A Course
In
**OCCULT
RELIGIONS**

PART TWO

Prepared by the
Committee on Religious Education
of the
American Bible College

Pineland, Florida 33945

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RECOGNITION

The daily application of Christian Apologetics (the science of defending the Christian faith) is dependant upon not only a knowledge of the Word of God, but also a working knowledge of the beliefs of other religions. Down through the ages most wars have been fought over differences in such. Many have been martyred because of their religious beliefs. Heathen can be converted only as they see the fallacies of their own religion as compared with Biblical Christianity. Hence, it is imperative that witnessing Christians should have a broad understanding of cults and world religions.

In his book, "CULTS, WORLD RELIGIONS, AND YOU", Dr. Kenneth Boa has compiled a masterful collection of anti-Christian religions and their major beliefs in stark contrast with the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. The American Bible College uses this book with the author's gracious permission as a free textbook included with this course.

Dr. Boa is an outstanding evangelical Bible scholar who has authored other books that that will enrich your understanding of God's Word, and we encourage the purchase and reading of such.

The New American Standard Version quotes have been substituted in compliance with the King James Version as the A.B.C's standard Bible version.

As the student seeks to win others to Christ, he will be confronted with questions coming from strange beliefs. These questions must be prayerfully answered in an enlightening, non-confrontational manner. I Peter 3:15 states "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." It is our desire that this course will aid you in being a more successful soul-winner for Christ.

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Occult Religions and Systems

Witchcraft and Satanism

Background and Teachings

Witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and magic are ancient and universal. Every culture, primitive or civilized, East or West, has had its share of magicians, sorcerers, and witches.

The varieties of witchcraft are so many that they defy systematic analysis. Yet some constant factors can be found: the lust for power, for knowledge (especially of the future), and for control over opposing forces. There is usually an appeal to an external and often mysterious source of power. The proper rituals, spells, and charms must be followed in order to produce the desired results. These things are true whether the conjurer is a sorcerer, a Satanist, a medicine man, a witch, a shaman, a magus, or a witch doctor.

In the West, witchcraft is often called "The Old Religion," pointing to the fact that witchcraft existed long before the Christian Church began to spread. As Christianity became more dominant in Europe, witchcraft and occultism were suppressed but not eliminated. Many who were called Christians continued their pagan practices and the practitioners of witchcraft borrowed a number of ideas and rituals from the Church.

Satanism and witchcraft began to grow with the decline of medieval society. Even some priests got involved. Several new cults like the Luciferians and the Templars appeared, teaching gnostic doctrines which encouraged homage to Satan. Black magic, Satan worship, and various forms of witchcraft were especially prevalent in Europe from about 1250 to 1700. Many people became fearful, and the Church began to retaliate. The papal inquisition against witches reached its greatest intensity in the 16th and 17th centuries. During these years, tens of thousands of accused witches were put to death, usually by fire. Confessions were often extracted under torture, and many were condemned without sufficient evidence.

A number of Renaissance magicians became famous, and their writings are still revered by some occultists today. Men such as Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Giordano Bruno used magic in an attempt to attain knowledge about the secrets of the universe.

Satanism and witchcraft declined and went underground for a few centuries, but revived about the beginning of the 20th century. Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) played an important part in this revival of the black arts. Crowley, who made a pact with Satan, referred to himself as the "Great Beast" of Revelation, and even branded one of his mistresses with the mark of the Beast. Crowley and his disciples were heavily involved with drugs, demonism, and sexual perversions.

Since Crowley's time, witchcraft and Satan worship have found increasing numbers of adherents in Europe and America. Hundreds of new witches' covens have appeared. A variety of types of people are involved, including many business and professional people. More books on the subject are available to the general public than ever before. Many high schools and colleges offer courses on witchcraft, magic, and occultism [although Christianity will not be taught in most high-schools].

Three recently popular witches are Sybil Leek, Louise Huebner, and Alex Sanders. The best-known promoter of Satanism is Anton La Vey, who founded the First Church of Satan in San Francisco, and rose to fame as the author of *The Satanic Bible*. For La Vey, who was born in 1930, and his followers, Satan symbolizes a force which can be tapped to achieve power and success. Sexual indulgence and hedonism play a central role in La Vey's satanic rituals.

Books on witchcraft do not agree about the genuineness of the powers behind it. Some writers claim that witchcraft is nothing more than legend and ritual. An intermediate view is that witchcraft may involve the combined psychic power of groups of people. There is some truth to these two positions, but they do not explain all the phenomena in witchcraft. Many witches claim to traffic with outside spiritual forces, and it appears that in some cases they do. The Bible calls these spiritual forces demons.

One of the ancient beliefs in witchcraft is that spirit beings sometimes incarnate themselves in humans or animals and appear to worshipers in various forms. The most important of these beings is said to appear in the form of a horned god, usually half-man and half-goat. He is identified with Lucifer or Pan (the Greek god which came to represent the mystical personification of nature).

The word *witch* is derived from the Old English word *wicca* which meant "wisdom" or "knowledge." This word is usually used of females who engage in witchcraft, while the term *wizard* or *warlock* is used of

males. However, some warlocks prefer to be called witches.

There are various forms of witchcraft, and some practitioners are more committed to the forces of darkness than others. Some witches believe they are practicing "white magic" (their spells are used for the benefit of others) as opposed to "black magic." In most cases, however, witches desire to attain their own ends through the practice of their craft. They believe certain powers of evil affect the destinies of men, and that the person who gets in contact with these powers can use them for his own purposes.

People who engage in witchcraft have various motivations for doing so, but some of the most common are the desire to gain power over other people and material things, the appeal of mysterious adventure, sexual pleasure, and the promise of occult knowledge.

There is a catch, of course. These things are not free. Most of those who are serious about witchcraft know that some kind of contractual arrangement is involved. Just as they are served by the dark powers (demons), so they must also serve these beings.

Some witches are given great power through demonic agency. By using the proper spells they can have demons inflict pain, disease, despair, and suicidal thoughts on others. Or they can manipulate people and situations to their advantage.

The more a practitioner of witchcraft thinks he is in control of these powers, the more deluded he becomes. He may convince himself that he is master of the situation, but he actually becomes subject to the forces he thinks he has conquered.

Most of what has just been said about witchcraft is also true of Satanism. In general, Satanism and witchcraft do not differ as much in kind as they do in degree. A witch may be uncertain about the source of power he or she is tapping, but a Satanist freely acknowledges that the power comes from demons or from Satan himself. Witches often worship the horned god, Pan, or Lucifer, but the Satanist knows his true identity.

Some Satanist groups are more "orthodox" in their views of Satan than others, regarding Satan as a real spirit being with an intellect, a will, and emotions. Others think that Satan is only a symbol of a dark force of nature that can be mobilized for personal gain.

There is also a great deal of variety in the *practice* of witchcraft and Satanism. Because of these variations, most of what follows should be regarded as general information.

Satanism is a more direct perversion of Christianity than is witchcraft. Satan is the ape of God, and his servants often imitate and mock Christian practices and institutions. For instance, witches and Satanists generally organize themselves into local covens consisting of 13 members (a parody of Christ and His apostles).

Most covens consist of both men and women, and they are headed by high priests and priestesses. Members of a coven are required to attend a weekly (usually Friday night) or monthly meeting known as the esbat. Special meetings, larger and held less frequently, are called sabbats or grand sabbats. (This word may be derived from the word Sabbath, but there is disagreement over this.) Dates for the sabbats vary from country to country. In England the most important sabbats are held on February 2 (Candlemas), May-eve (Roodmas), August 1 (Lammas), and November-eve (All Hallow E'en).

There are innumerable variations in the order and content of esbat and sabbat meetings, which are presided over by the high priests and priestess. Depending on the group, they range from silliness and clowning to great seriousness and horror. Esbats and sabbats are often held outdoors in remote locations, preferably by a clump of trees and near a source of water.

These meetings are held at night (a reflection of Satan's delight in darkness), generally beginning at midnight and lasting until dawn. There are many stories of unusual means of arriving at sabbat meetings, including the use of levitation and "astral projection" (out-of-body experiences). In any event, some covens portray this idea of levitation by riding broomsticks.

Attire at these meetings may be black robes or nothing at all. In some cases, the witches or Satan worshipers array themselves in animal skins. They may wear ritual masks.

A large circle with mystical symbolism is usually drawn on the ground, and the worshipers stand inside it. There they recite certain oaths. The most popular chant is "Yod He Vav He—Blessed be." This chant utilizes the four Hebrew letters which make up the tetragrammaton YHWH—the most important Old Testament name for God.

Some old accounts describe how the devil would appear at this point in the form of a tall man, a goat, a bull, or a cat. The worshipers would then offer him candles and kiss his posterior in a perverse act of homage.

Early in the sabbat meeting there is usually some kind of general confession. Those present may mockingly renounce any good deeds they have done. This is followed by a ritual dance (another act of devotion) which is often primitive or degraded. Discordant and bizarre music is sometimes used, and the dancers may attempt to achieve an ecstatic frenzy. This reveling may be followed by a sexual orgy and then a feast, preceded by a blasphemous "grace." Sometimes the participants will mock moderation by stuffing themselves, though some groups use un-savory food.

Following the feast may be some version of a black mass, which can be simple or elaborate. Many covens use strictly prescribed rituals and rites, and the words must be recited properly. Some rituals use Latin, and in a few cases, renegade Catholic priests are involved.

Black masses generally open with a group renunciation of God and Jesus Christ. Sometimes a blasphemous sermon follows. Accoutrements may include various black vestments, "holy water" (usually including urine), black candles, toads, inverted crucifixes, torches burning with a sulfurous blue flame, incense, crucibles which burn nightshade (belladonna), perfumed material, and sulfur.

A house used for celebrating black masses usually has a special room containing a permanent altar (covered in black), dark heavy curtains, and symbolic images of the devil.

Witches and Satan worshipers generally use some kind of missal (either a manuscript or printed). A few of these missals are bound in human skin, usually that of an unbaptized infant. Christian hymns are sometimes sung backwards or in the name of Lucifer, Beelzebub, and other demons.

Stolen items from Catholic churches are frequently used. For instance, a ciborium (the eucharistic chalice) will be filled with a mixture of wine and blood or bitter beverages and passed among the members of the coven. Black mass participants will desecrate hosts (the eucharistic wafers) by cutting and stabbing them with a knife. Sometimes black triangular wafers are used instead.

Almost always a naked girl, representing the sacrifice, lies on the altar during this portion of the sabbat. She is not killed, but a ceremonial animal sacrifice (perhaps a dog or a cat) is offered to the devil. The animal is killed above the girl and the blood allowed to spill on her body. In rare cases (this was more common a few hundred years ago), an unbaptized human infant is sacrificed instead of the animal. In

earlier times the infants were obtained for this purpose through midwives or purchase. Sometimes they were the witches' own offspring.

An esbat or sabbat meeting usually includes an opportunity for members to express grievances against enemies and to cast vengeful spells. Charms, herbs, unguents, poisons, and potions are often used in witchcraft. Sometimes wax or cloth images of enemies are made and then destroyed, as in voodooism. These practices and others sometimes lead to violent crimes. The Manson murders are the best-known example; other brutal crimes inspired by witchcraft and Satanism have received little attention.

One of the central themes of witchcraft is the conjuration of demons for specific purposes. Special rituals, invocations, and books of magic are used in this connection. Divination through crystals, planchettes, Ouija boards, and Tarot cards also plays an important role in witchcraft.

Another key part of witchcraft and Satanism is the recruitment and initiation of new members. People are promised knowledge, wealth, power, honor, pleasure, and vengeance upon their enemies if they become devotees of the devil.

Initiation of new members requires a formal pact or contract with the devil. This contract may be verbal or a written document signed in the blood of the initiate. Blood is used because it is thought to be a sacred and irrevocable seal. The contract binds the initiate *with* blasphemous oaths to the service of the dark powers. This may involve striking his name out of the book of Christ and inscribing it in the devil's. Books with names thus signed in blood are kept in secrecy by the chief officer of a coven or by the grand master of a district. Some contracts are made for life and others for a number of years.

An initiate is usually required to undergo a perverse baptism (the mixture may consist of water, salt, and sulfur), at which time he may receive a new name. Sexual intercourse is often involved in the initiation ceremony as well. The initiate may receive a small devil's mark on a normally hidden part of the body.

Many witches and wizards receive animal "familiars" which are said to assist them in divination and casting spells. These animals (birds, frogs, especially cats) in some cases are demonized. Some witches also claim to experience sexual relations with incubi and succubi (demons which assume male and female forms). Others claim the power to transform themselves into animals, usually wolves.

Many witches, wizards, and Satanists are involved in a hierarchy of four stages and perhaps a fifth, known as the Illuminati. However, other practitioners of witchcraft are independent of covens and higher organizations.

Biblical Evaluation

(1) The Old and New Testaments repeatedly allude to the practice of witchcraft and sorcery. From the earliest Old Testament books through Revelation, the Bible speaks of magic, sorcery, divination, necromancy, and related practices in a hostile and condemnatory manner. All forms of witchcraft and demonolatry are explicitly denounced. The Bible mentions divination by witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, human and animal entrails, rods and arrows, water in a cup or basin, teraphim (household idols), and necromancy.

(2) The Bible also acknowledges the reality and power behind some forms of witchcraft and magic. For instance, the ability of Jannes and Jambres to duplicate some of the plagues of Moses demonstrated a genuine force and learning behind their sorcery. In the New Testament, Simon Magus, Elymas the magician, and the medium at Philippi also had certain powers. However, the Scriptures frequently emphasize that the power behind sorcery and witchcraft is limited, unlike the power of God.

(3) Some biblical passages describing the reality and danger of the various forms of witchcraft are Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10-11, 14; 1 Samuel 15:23; 28:3,7; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6; 23:24; 1 Chronicles 10:13; Isaiah 8:19; 19:3; 47:12-13; Jeremiah 27:9-10; Daniel 2:2; Malachi 3:5; Acts 8:9,11; 13:6,8; 16:16; Galatians 5:20-21; Revelation 21:8; 22:15.

(4) Satan is temporarily the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 16:11). He fell because of his pride and his desire to be equal with and independent of God. He acts as a counterfeit of God and demands that demons and humans worship him. Many witches and Satanists have given themselves over to Satan as their master, creator, and god. His followers pray to him, work "miracles" through demonic power, and "prophecy" (practice divination).

Things to Keep in Mind

(1) We must remember that many diverse phenomena are subsumed under the category of Satanism and witchcraft. Much of it is superstitious and

psychological. It attracts large numbers of cranks, charlatans, and dilettantes. But after all allowances have been made for these factors, there remains a significant number of related phenomena which cannot be explained apart from the supernatural.

(2) Many people who are involved in witchcraft claim to practice "white magic" instead of "black magic." They do not believe that they are in league with demonic powers. To the extent that they do utilize genuine power, however, they are dabbling with forces which are more diabolic than they suspect. The difference between white and black magic is more in degree than in kind. There is great danger in all forms of witchcraft because sorcerers are involved with powers much stronger than they. In order to effectively use these powers for their own desires and ends, they must to some extent yield to and serve them. Satan's gifts are never free. Those who willingly receive them often become his slaves, whether they like it or not.

(3) There is also the danger of demonic control. The New Testament makes it clear that demons can possess people. Unlike the servants of Christ, the servants of Satan are not free, they are controlled by malicious forces.

(4) It is important to be aware of the basic reasons for which people go into witchcraft. These may vary with different individuals, but most seek some or all of the following benefits :

(a) Power over people and things; an ability to manipulate one's environment and circumstances for his own ends.

(b) Mystery. For most people religion has lost the mysterious communion with the supernatural. Witchcraft and Satanism claim to have an alternative. They provide experiences with the eerie and the unknown. They offer something out of the ordinary: the spice of adventure with the occult world.

(c) Sexual indulgence and gratification of the drive for pleasure.

(d) Financial success.

(e) Knowledge through divination and communication with higher powers.

(f) Pride and intellectual arrogance.

(g) A means of rebelling against the restraints of society. In a pragmatic sense, Satanism and witchcraft actually *work* in enough cases to attract people. But a relationship with Christ provides a far better solution to human needs and problems, and His followers are on the side that will be victorious.

END OF SAMPLE