

DISCERNING LIGHT FROM DARKNESS

THE OCCULT AND THE GOSPEL

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

1 JOHN 1:5

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Discerning Light from Darkness

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INTRODUCTION

The Occult and the Christian: Discerning Light from Darkness

Open a newspaper's horoscope column, scroll past a friend's "what's your sign" post, or walk into almost any bookstore, and you will find the occult sitting in plain view, dressed in the language of harmless fun. Zodiac signs appear on birthday cards. Tarot decks are sold beside coloring books. Crystals promise healing energy on store shelves next to vitamins. And on screen, some of the most beloved and profitable entertainment franchises of the last three decades — wizards, witches, spells, and magic — have shaped the imagination of entire generations of children raised in professing Christian homes.

Meanwhile, in that same cultural moment, open identification with biblical Christianity — its exclusive claims, its doctrine of sin, its call to repentance — is increasingly met with mockery, suspicion, or outright hostility in the very same media spaces that treat occult practice as charming, aspirational, even wise.

This book asks a question the modern church too rarely asks plainly: is this asymmetry an accident, or does it reveal something true about which spirit is being served?

We will show that:

- Astrology, zodiac signs, and divination are not neutral cultural curiosities but practices Scripture directly and repeatedly condemns
- These practices did not originate in Christian civilization but in the pagan religious systems of Babylon and Egypt that the Bible identifies as the very antithesis of the worship of the true God
- Mainstream media — including some of the most successful entertainment franchises in history — has normalized and glamorized occult practice for children and adults alike, even as it frequently portrays sincere Christian conviction as backward, oppressive, or dangerous
- Occult symbols and practices, far from being harmless aesthetic choices, carry real spiritual weight in Scripture — associated not with blessing but with curse, bondage, and separation from God
- The Christian's calling is not curiosity toward these things but decisive rejection of them, replaced by the true, sufficient light of God's Word

Scripture does not treat this subject as a matter of personal taste. God's people were commanded, upon entering the Promised Land, to learn nothing of the practices of the nations around them:

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD.” — Deuteronomy 18:10-12

CHAPTER ONE

Astrology, the Zodiac, and Their Pagan Babylonian Roots

Ask a room full of professing Christians whether they know their “sign,” and most will answer without hesitation — often the same people who would never claim to read tarot cards or visit a psychic. Astrology has achieved a strange cultural status: it is treated as a lighter, more socially acceptable cousin of the occult, fit for small talk and dating apps rather than serious spiritual concern. Scripture does not grant it that exemption.

Born in the Temples of Babylon

Astrology is not a timeless human intuition or a harmless byproduct of stargazing. It has a documented birthplace, and that birthplace is pagan. Babylonian astrology was the first known organized system of astrology, arising in the second millennium BC, and in Babylon astrology took its place as one of the two chief means the priests used for ascertaining the will and intention of their gods — the other being the examination of animal livers for omens. This was not incidental fortune-telling on the margins of Babylonian religion; it was central, priestly, and explicitly polytheistic. The patron god of Babylon, Marduk, was recognized in Babylonian astrology as the planet Jupiter, and the Babylonians associated their various gods with specific planets, believing that the gods' activities and displeasure were communicated through celestial events.

The zodiac's origins are rooted in ancient Babylon, where astronomers divided the sky into twelve segments, laying the foundation for astrological practices that continue to this day, with Babylonian astronomers developing this twelve-part wheel around the end of the fifth century BC. Each of these twelve segments was named after a constellation lying along the ecliptic — the sun's apparent path through the sky — and because these constellations served as “houses” for the sun's yearly journey, they were given special religious significance. From Babylon, this system did not stay contained. Astrology moved from Babylon to Egypt, Greece, and Rome, with each civilization adding its own gods and mythologies — in Egypt it became linked to the sun god Ra and beliefs about the afterlife, while the Greeks elaborated the zodiac further, tying each sign to its own myth. The zodiac now hanging on birthday cards and coffee mugs was forged in the furnace of pagan idol worship, built to divine the will of false gods believed to inhabit the planets themselves.

Scripture's Direct Confrontation With Babylonian Astrology

The Bible does not treat this history as incidental background — it puts astrology on trial directly, in its own pagan capital. The book of Daniel repeatedly sets the astrologers of Babylon's royal court against the prophet of the living God, and every time, they lose. When Middle East archaeology confirmed astrology's origin in ancient Babylon — with cuneiform tablets excavated depicting horoscope charts — the biblical record had already made God's verdict clear: when King Nebuchadnezzar demanded his troubling dream be interpreted, the astrologers themselves admitted, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks!” Their entire system of stargazing and divination collapsed before a genuine word from God, given instead to Daniel, who declared plainly that the mystery could not be solved by “the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers” but only by “a God in heaven who revealeth secrets” (Daniel 2:27-28).

Isaiah's confrontation with Babylonian astrology is even more direct and scornful. Writing of Babylon's coming judgment, the prophet mocks the nation's confidence in its stargazers with unmistakable irony:

“Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame.” — Isaiah 47:13-14

Isaiah names three distinct groups of professional astrologers among the Babylonians in this passage, and for all their efforts, the prophet says they could achieve nothing and learn nothing — their entire craft reduced to kindling for the very fire of judgment they could not foresee or escape. This is not a mild caution. It is God's direct verdict on the founding civilization of astrology: their star-charts could not save even themselves.

The Law's Explicit Prohibition

Long before Isaiah or Daniel confronted Babylon, Moses had already forbidden God's people from adopting these very practices as they prepared to enter Canaan, surrounded by nations steeped in identical star-worship and divination:

“When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one... that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.” — Deuteronomy 18:9-10

The Bible explicitly condemns astrology as a form of divination in passages like Leviticus 19:26 and Deuteronomy 18:10-14, and Deuteronomy 4:19 warns Israel not to be enticed into worshipping “the sun, and the moon, and the stars,” practices God has “divided unto all nations under the whole heaven,” but never given His own

people license to serve. The prohibition is not incidental; it is woven into the very entrance requirements for life in the land God was giving them.

Astronomy Is Not Astrology

None of this hostility extends to the stars themselves, or to their honest study. The Bible distinguishes between astronomy, the scientific study of celestial bodies, and astrology, a metaphysical practice it deems sinful — God created the stars for practical purposes like marking seasons, as stated in Genesis 1:14, but He never intended them for divination. God pointed Abraham to the stars as a tangible reminder of a specific, personal promise — not a chart to divine Abraham's fate, but a sign of God's own faithfulness to a covenant already spoken (Genesis 15:5). The heavens themselves are not the problem: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Psalm 19:1). The problem is asking the stars to do what only God can do — reveal the future, direct a life, or explain a man's character and destiny.

Why the Zodiac Cannot Be “Just for Fun”

This is precisely where modern astrology hides its danger: it presents itself as trivial. A zodiac sign feels like a personality quiz, not a religious commitment. But astrology gives power to stars and planets instead of recognizing God's authority over everything, which is why Scripture treats it as spiritually dangerous — it can lead people to worship something other than God. A Christian who checks a horoscope “just for fun” is engaging, however casually, in a divinatory system built by pagan priests to discern the will of false gods they believed inhabited the planets — the same system God's prophets mocked as powerless and God's law forbade His people from touching.

The contrast Scripture offers is not a competing chart or a Christianized zodiac, but a completely different source of guidance: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). Babylon's astrologers could not save even themselves from the fire. The believer has been given something Babylon never had — a God who reveals secrets, freely, to those who ask.

CHAPTER TWO**Hollywood's Double Standard:
Glamorizing the Occult, Mocking the
Faith**

If Chapter 1 established that Scripture treats astrology and divination as spiritually serious matters, this chapter turns to the machine that shapes how an entire culture actually feels about those matters: mainstream film and television. And here a striking asymmetry emerges. The very medium that has spent decades making witchcraft, wizardry, and the occult feel enchanting, aspirational, and morally neutral has, in that same span of decades, made devout, Bible-believing Christianity feel foolish, hypocritical, or dangerous.

A Cultural Phenomenon Built on Witchcraft

No single franchise illustrates the scale of this shift better than Harry Potter. Since the first book's release, the series has sold more than five hundred million copies worldwide in eighty languages, an achievement so vast that it created its own subculture — theme parks, real-life Quidditch leagues, conventions, and “Wizard Rock” bands. The story follows a boy who discovers on his eleventh birthday that he is a wizard, and spends seven books training at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, casting spells, brewing potions, and communing with a magical world hidden just behind our own.

The concern many Christians raised was not a subtle one. Focus on the Family's own spokesperson, in one of the earliest public evangelical responses to the series, stated plainly that although the books contain “powerful and valuable lessons about love and courage,” those messages are packaged in “a medium — witchcraft — that is directly denounced in Scripture.” Occult researcher Caryl Matrisciana went further, arguing that the books introduce children to a range of real occult concepts — casting spells, reading omens, consulting crystal balls — dressed in the language of childhood adventure rather than religious practice. Deuteronomy's list of forbidden practices — divination, enchantment, sorcery, spiritism, necromancy — reads today like a chapter list from a fantasy shelf, precisely because the modern entertainment industry has spent decades normalizing the vocabulary of exactly what Scripture calls “an abomination unto the LORD” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Harry Potter is not the exception; it is the standard-bearer of a much larger pattern. A survey of witch-themed film and television spans nearly a century — from *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939 through *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Practical Magic*, *Hocus Pocus*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, and, more recently, *The Chilling Adventures of*

Sabrina and A Discovery of Witches — with witchcraft-and-magic content now substantial enough that Netflix maintains it as its own standalone content genre.

Defenders, Critics, and a Genuinely Contested Question

It would be unfair to pretend this question has only one answer among Christians. Many thoughtful believers — including some evangelical publications — have defended Harry Potter specifically, arguing that its magic functions as a literary device in the tradition of fairy tales and the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, both explicitly Christian authors who also employed magical elements in service of deeper Christian themes. J.K. Rowling herself identifies as a Christian and has stated that she intentionally wove Christian themes into the series, particularly the idea that self-sacrificial love holds power over death.

That defense deserves to be weighed honestly. But it does not fully answer the concern this book raises, for two reasons. First, whatever Rowling's personal intentions, the vocabulary, imagery, and everyday practice the books popularize — spells, wands, potions, divination, communion with the dead — is drawn directly from real-world occult terminology, and children do not reliably parse the difference between “fictional magic as a literary device” and “real magic to be curious about.” Rowling herself has acknowledged receiving letters from children begging, in complete earnest, to be admitted to Hogwarts. Second, and more fundamentally, Scripture's prohibition in Deuteronomy 18 is not qualified by literary intent or sympathetic characters. The concern is whether the practices themselves are being made familiar, comfortable, and admirable to a watching child, regardless of the moral character wrapped around them.

The Double Standard: What Gets Sympathy, and What Gets Scorn

Set this widespread cultural embrace of magical practice beside how the same entertainment industry treats sincere, orthodox Christian conviction, and the asymmetry becomes hard to miss. A review of religious characters across decades of film observed that during Hollywood's earlier era, religious characters were often portrayed as heroes, but that beginning in the late 1960s, positive portrayals of devout faith became far rarer, with critics noting a pattern in which Christian characters, and evangelical Protestants and devout Catholics in particular, are disproportionately depicted as hypocrites, fools, or fanatics. A global study surveying nearly ten thousand entertainment consumers across eleven countries found that a majority of viewers worldwide believe Hollywood perpetuates negative religious stereotypes, with religious identity flagged as the most sensationalized and least accurately represented aspect of on-screen identity.

Among American evangelicals themselves, research found that fifty-eight percent believe Hollywood portrays Christianity in a negative light, compared with just four percent who see the portrayal as positive. One pastor and author, reflecting on this pattern, observed that the versions of Christianity Hollywood tends to find acceptable are the ones stripped of doctrinal conviction — a “watered down” social gospel — while depictions of Christians who actually hold to the exclusive claims of the Gospel are reliably rendered as the Bible-thumping fanatic or the cartoonish televangelist.

Put plainly: a boy casting real-sounding incantations at a school for witchcraft is a beloved global hero. A believer who holds plainly to “thou shalt have no other gods before me” and speaks of sin, repentance, and the exclusivity of Christ is, far more often than not, the film's fool, hypocrite, or threat. This is not a coincidence of storytelling taste. It is a consistent cultural signal about which spiritual claims a post-Christian entertainment industry finds comfortable, and which ones it does not.

Why This Pattern Matters Spiritually, Not Just Culturally

Scripture never promises that the world will treat true faith and false religion evenhandedly — in fact, it predicts precisely the opposite. Christ told His disciples plainly: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). A culture's entertainment industry is not a neutral mirror; it is formed by, and forms in turn, the spiritual affections of its audience. When that industry spends decades cultivating warmth toward the very practices God's Word calls abomination, while reserving its scorn for those who take that same Word at its plain meaning, it is doing exactly what Paul warned first-century believers to expect: calling “evil good, and good evil,” putting “darkness for light, and light for darkness” (Isaiah 5:20).

This is not a call for Christians to retreat from all fiction or fantasy. The concern is narrower and more serious: a culture that has spent a generation training children to find sorcery charming and Christian conviction embarrassing has not done so by accident, and Christian parents cannot assume their children will absorb that same steady cultural diet without being shaped by it.

CHAPTER THREE

Automatic Speaking and Writing: When the Hand Moves, Whose Voice Is It?

Not every occult practice announces itself with a pentagram or a tarot deck. Some of the most spiritually dangerous practices in this survey wear the most respectable clothing — including, as this chapter will show, the clothing of Christian devotional literature sitting on the nightstands of millions of sincere believers. This chapter examines automatic writing and automatic speaking: the practice of emptying the mind, surrendering conscious control of the hand or the voice, and allowing something else to move it.

What Automatic Writing and Channeling Actually Are

Automatic writing has been a staple of spiritualist practice for well over a century, most closely associated with the séances, mediums, and table-turning of the nineteenth-century Spiritualist movement. The practice typically involves a person emptying their mind, holding a pen loosely, and waiting for their hand to move on its own — producing writing the person did not consciously compose and, in many recorded cases, does not even remember producing. The companion practice, automatic or “trance” speaking — commonly called channeling — follows the identical logic applied to the voice: a psychic or medium allows what they believe to be a disembodied spirit to speak through their own vocal cords.

This is not a fringe curiosity. Well-known channeled texts produced this way include the Seth material of Jane Roberts and *A Course in Miracles*, dictated, according to its author Helen Schucman, by a voice she identified as Jesus Christ over a period of seven years — a text explicitly designed to dismantle the reader's Judeo-Christian worldview from within, using Christian vocabulary to do it. The common thread across every documented case is the same: a person deliberately empties their own will and invites an unidentified spiritual source to occupy the vacancy, trusting the resulting words to be trustworthy simply because they did not consciously originate them.

Why This Is Not a New Danger

Scripture does not need updated categories to address this practice — it falls squarely within the oldest prohibitions in the Law:

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.” — Leviticus 19:31

Automatic writing and channeling are, functionally, the modern names for exactly this ancient practice: a human being surrendering their own faculties as a conduit for a spirit not their own, and trusting the message that results. The most vivid biblical narrative of this exact transaction is the account of King Saul and the witch of Endor, who summoned what appeared to Saul as the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 28:7-19) — an episode Scripture records not as a triumph but as the final act of a king already under God's judgment. Isaiah's warning to Israel addresses this same temptation directly:

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?” — Isaiah 8:19

Paul later warns that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, “giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1) — a warning that assumes real spiritual entities actively seeking a hearing, dressed in whatever religious language will gain them entry.

When the Practice Wears a Christian Face

This is where the danger becomes acute for the sincere believer, because automatic writing has not stayed confined to séance parlors — it has, in at least one well-documented and enormously popular case, entered evangelical publishing itself, largely unrecognized by the millions who bought the result.

Jesus Calling, a daily devotional written in the first-person voice of Jesus speaking directly to the reader, has sold more than forty-five million copies since 2004, making it one of the best-selling Christian books of the past two decades. Its author, Sarah Young, has explained candidly that she was inspired to write it after reading God Calling, an earlier devotional whose two anonymous authors recorded messages they believed came from God while, in Young's own words, “waiting quietly in God's Presence, pencils and paper in hand, recording the messages they received from Him.” What Young may not have fully reckoned with — and what her later critics have documented at length — is that the authors of God Calling produced their material through the recognized occult technique of automatic writing. Young herself described adopting an almost identical method, writing that she began to “listen to God with pen in hand, writing down whatever I believe He was saying,” and, in early editions of the book, referring to the results explicitly as “messages I have received.”

The controversy this has generated within Young's own denomination is instructive. In 2024, leaders of the Presbyterian Church in America voted to have a denominational committee formally assess whether Jesus Calling is appropriate for Christians to read, following years of concern from pastors within that same

denomination. One PCA pastor and outspoken critic described the book's method plainly as an "occult practice" in which a devotee channels a message and presents it in the voice of Christ. A professor of religion at Calvin College, reviewing the book for *Christianity Today*, put the theological problem in the sharpest possible terms: Young "puts her thoughts into the first person and then presents that 'person' as the resurrected Lord," a move he said he was "tempted to call... blasphemy."

None of this requires assuming Sarah Young's personal sincerity was in question — by every account, including her family's, she loved Christ and intended to draw readers closer to Him. That is precisely what makes this example so important: automatic writing does not announce itself as demonic. It presents itself as intimacy with God, as spiritual hunger finally satisfied, as a shortcut past the discipline of Scripture study into direct, personal words from the Lord's own mouth.

Scripture Is Sufficient; the Method Matters

The deepest problem automatic writing and channeling expose is a hunger to hear God speak more, and more personally, than His completed Word already does. Scripture answers that hunger by declaring its own sufficiency in the plainest possible terms: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). John's instruction to the early church applies with equal force to a Ouija board, a séance, or a devotional journal written in the first-person voice of Christ: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

A Christian does not need to empty his mind and wait for a hand or a voice to move on its own. He has been given something better and safer than any channeled message: a completed, sufficient, unchanging Word, already spoken, already inspired, already enough. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

CHAPTER FOUR

Celtic Paganism: Groves, Druids, and the Modern Revival

When most people hear the word “Celtic,” they picture ornamental knotwork jewelry, folk music, or a certain professional basketball team — a cultural aesthetic almost entirely stripped of religious content. This chapter concerns something different: Celtic paganism as an actual ancient religion, the druidic priesthood that administered it, and its direct modern revival in movements that today sit comfortably alongside the broader occult and neopagan world discussed throughout this book.

The Druids: Priests of a Polytheistic Faith

Celtic religion was one of a larger group of polytheistic religions across Iron Age Europe, and its priestly class, the Druids, held enormous authority within Celtic society. Julius Caesar, our fullest ancient source, wrote that the Druids “are engaged in things sacred, conduct the public and private sacrifices, and interpret all matters of religion,” and functioned simultaneously as judges, deciding public and private disputes and decreeing rewards and punishments. The very name “Druid” is widely thought to derive from a Celtic root meaning “knower of the oak,” reflecting the central place that particular tree held in their worship.

That sacred-tree devotion was not incidental decoration. The Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder recorded that Druids performed rituals within sacred groves of oak trees, treating mistletoe found growing on those oaks as a symbol of the tree's own divinity, ritually harvesting it with a golden sickle as part of their ceremonies.

A Darker Element: Ritual Human Sacrifice

Beyond tree veneration, multiple independent classical sources describe the Druids as practitioners of human sacrifice. Caesar wrote directly that “the Gauls who are engaged in the perils of battle either sacrifice human victims or vow to do so, employing Druids as ministers... for they believe that unless a man's life is paid for another's, the majesty of the gods may not be appeased” — describing, among other methods, the construction of massive wicker figures in which living victims were burned alive as an offering. Modern historians rightly caution that these accounts come to us from Rome, a conquering power with every political motive to portray the peoples it was subjugating as savage. But even granting substantial skepticism, the pattern across multiple independent classical writers is difficult to dismiss entirely as invention.

Scripture's Own Language for This Exact Practice

What makes this chapter's inclusion so directly relevant to the rest of this book is how precisely Celtic druidic practice mirrors the very paganism the Old Testament confronts by name, on the other side of the ancient world entirely. God's law to Israel gave explicit, repeated warning against exactly this kind of grove-and-tree worship:

“Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree... Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God.” — Deuteronomy 12:2, 16:21

Jeremiah, confronting Israel's own drift into surrounding pagan customs, describes a practice striking in its resemblance to druidic tree ritual: “For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe” (Jeremiah 10:3). This is not a coincidence of imagery; it is the same spiritual pattern recurring wherever fallen man, apart from special revelation, constructs religion out of creation itself rather than the Creator: “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Romans 1:25).

From Ancient Grove to Modern Revival

Unlike Babylonian astrology, actual Celtic paganism was largely extinguished by Roman conquest and centuries of Christian mission. What exists today under the name “Celtic paganism” or “Druidry” is, by scholarly consensus, an almost entirely modern reconstruction. Neo-Druidism arose from the eighteenth-century Romanticist movement in England, and modern Druid organizations have, by their own historians' admission, “no actual connection” to the ancient priesthood despite claims of ancient lineage. One historian examining the phenomenon plainly stated that the rituals and festivals of modern “Celtic” neopaganism are “largely the invention of twentieth century occultists.”

That reconstruction has not remained a harmless historical hobby. Wicca, though not exclusively Celtic in origin, often incorporates Celtic deities, seasonal festivals, and sacred rituals directly into its practice, and modern neopaganism now encompasses an entire family of related movements — Celtic Reconstructionism, Neo-Druidism, Celtic Wicca, Celtic Neoshamanism. The Druid Network became the first modern pagan organization formally recognized as a religious charity in the United Kingdom, and public solstice gatherings at Stonehenge are organized and led by practicing modern Druids as genuine acts of worship — not historical reenactment.

Why This Matters for the Christian

The autumn festival of Samhain, a Celtic observance marking the boundary between the living and the dead, sits directly behind the modern celebration of Halloween — itself now saturated, as Chapter 2 already showed, with entertainment glamorizing witches, spirits, and the very practices this chapter has surveyed. The Christian is not called to fear ancient history, nor to treat every reference to “Celtic” culture as inherently occult. Scripture's concern is narrower and clearer: the worship of creation rather than the Creator, divination in place of God's revealed Word, and ritual sacrifice offered to gods who are, in Paul's blunt phrase, no gods at all but demons (1 Corinthians 10:20).

“For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.”
— *Psalm 96:5*

CHAPTER FIVE**Demon Worship and Consultation: What Is Actually Behind the Curtain**

Every chapter of this book so far has examined a different door into the occult — astrology's Babylonian star-charts, Hollywood's glamorized witchcraft, automatic writing's surrendered pen, the druidic groves of ancient Gaul. This chapter asks the question that ties them all together: when a person consults a horoscope, channels a spirit, or bows before an idol, who — or what — is actually on the other side of that transaction?

Scripture's answer is direct, consistent, and considerably less comfortable than modern skepticism or modern fascination would prefer: behind every false god of every pagan system stands not merely human imagination, but a real and malevolent spiritual being. The Bible calls these beings demons, and it treats their existence, and their eagerness to be worshiped, as an established fact rather than a metaphor.

Idols Are Nothing — But Demons Are Real

Scripture holds two truths in tension that many readers assume must contradict each other, but do not. On one hand, the Bible repeatedly insists that idols themselves are powerless, lifeless objects — “eyes have they, but they see not” (Psalm 115:5). On the other hand, Scripture is equally insistent that something real and dangerous stands behind the idol, using it as a point of contact with the humans who bow before it. Paul states this pairing explicitly to the Corinthians:

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” — 1 Corinthians 10:20

The wooden idol itself is nothing. But the sacrifice offered to it is received by something — a demon, masquerading behind the carved image, accepting worship that belongs to God alone. Moses had already stated the same principle centuries earlier: “They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not” (Deuteronomy 32:17). Every false religious system this book has surveyed fits this same pattern: a visible ritual, an invisible recipient, and that recipient is never neutral.

Familiar Spirits: Demons by Another Name

The Old Testament's recurring category of “familiar spirits” — the entities consulted by mediums, wizards, and necromancers throughout Scripture's condemnations of divination — describes precisely this same demonic reality under different

vocabulary. When Leviticus commands, “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards” (Leviticus 19:31), the text is not warning against clever human trickery alone. It is warning against real spiritual entities willing to answer when summoned — the same category of being Isaiah has in mind when he asks why the living would seek the dead through “them that have familiar spirits” (Isaiah 8:19), rather than seeking their own God.

Demons Behind Every False God

This principle extends beyond formal divination to the entire structure of pagan religion surveyed across this book's earlier chapters. Scripture names specific pagan deities — Baal, Molech, Dagon, Chemosh, Ashtoreth — not as harmless cultural inventions but as names under which real demonic beings received Israel's worship whenever the nation strayed. The Babylonian astrologers of Chapter 1 were not merely miscalculating the stars; they were serving a religious system built to discern the will of gods Scripture identifies as demons. The Celtic Druids of Chapter 4, sacrificing within their sacred oak groves, were not merely practicing a colorful ancient custom; by Paul's own theological logic, their sacrifices were received by devils, not by the true God they never knew.

Consultation Is Never Neutral

Very few people set out deliberately to worship a demon. They set out to check a horoscope, to see what a medium can tell them about a deceased loved one, to try a Ouija board at a sleepover, to explore what a channeled book seems to offer. Scripture's verdict is that none of these approaches is neutral or safe simply because the human intention behind them was curiosity rather than worship. Deuteronomy 18 does not distinguish between the sincere seeker and the committed devotee; it forbids the practice itself, precisely because the being on the other end of that consultation does not require a formal vow of allegiance to gain a hearing, or a foothold.

The Believer's Actual Position

None of this is meant to produce fear in the Christian. The believer united to Christ does not approach this subject as a vulnerable target, but as one already delivered from the dominion these beings hold over the rest of the world: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). James gives the simple, sufficient instruction: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). The demons behind every idol this book has surveyed are real, but they are not sovereign, and they have already been defeated at the cross: “Having spoiled

principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them” (Colossians 2:15).

CHAPTER SIX

Ouija Boards: A “Family Game” With Roots in the Séance Room

Of every occult object surveyed in this book, none has traveled further from its original context than the Ouija board. It sits today on toy store shelves beside chess sets and Monopoly, marketed by Hasbro as a game for a Friday night with friends. Sixty-five percent of Americans nonetheless believe it is genuinely dangerous. Both of these facts are true at once, and understanding why requires going back to where the board actually came from.

Born From the Spiritualist Craze

The Ouija board did not arise as a toy that later acquired a spooky reputation. It arose directly out of nineteenth-century Spiritualism, a religious movement built entirely around the claim that the dead could communicate with the living. Following the American Civil War, mediums did a thriving business allegedly allowing survivors to contact lost relatives, and by 1886 the use of talking boards was already common enough at Spiritualist camps in Ohio to be reported in national newspapers. What became the modern Ouija board was patented in 1890 by Baltimore attorney Elijah Bond, working with his sister-in-law Helen Peters, herself a practicing medium. Even the board's own name is said to have come from a séance.

From the outset, then, the Ouija board was not invented as an innocent parlor amusement. It was purpose-built as a faster, more convenient tool for the explicit religious practice of necromancy — communicating with, and seeking answers from, the spirits of the dead. This is precisely the practice Scripture names and forbids by title: “There shall not be found among you... a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

From Séance Tool to Supermarket Toy

The board's transformation into mass-market family entertainment happened gradually and, notably, for commercial rather than spiritual reasons. The board's specifically demonic reputation in popular culture actually dates to one single cultural event: the 1973 film *The Exorcist*, which opens with its child protagonist playing with a Ouija board shortly before her demonic possession. Before that film, the board had already been a mainstream Hasbro product marketed as wholesome family fun for six years.

What Is Actually Moving the Planchette?

A fair treatment of this subject must include the strongest secular explanation for how the board “works.” Laboratory studies of Ouija board use have repeatedly demonstrated the ideomotor effect — a well-documented phenomenon in which a person's own unconscious muscles produce small, involuntary movements based on expectation, without any awareness that they themselves are the source of the motion. This explanation should not be dismissed. Plain psychology, not necessarily demonic activity, accounts for a great deal of what happens around a Ouija board.

Why the Explanation Doesn't End the Matter

But the ideomotor effect, however well documented, answers a narrower question than the one Scripture is actually concerned with. Even if the physical mechanism moving the planchette is entirely human muscle, the practice itself remains exactly what Deuteronomy 18 forbids: an act undertaken with the explicit intention of contacting the dead, divining hidden knowledge, or receiving guidance from an unseen source outside of God's revealed Word. The sin in view is not fraud detection, but the deliberate posture of consultation itself, offered to whatever might answer.

The Christian's Actual Danger

The greatest risk the Ouija board poses to a Christian is not that it will reliably summon a literal demon on cue. The risk is the normalization of seeking answers, guidance, or contact with the unseen from any source other than the God who has already spoken fully and sufficiently in His Word. Scripture's alternative is confidence in a completely different and sufficient source of guidance: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Shamanism: Ancient Trance, Modern Wellness

Of every practice surveyed in this book, shamanism may be the oldest — and, in its newest incarnation, one of the fastest-growing. This chapter examines a spiritual system stretching back to the Stone Age, still practiced across the globe today, and now being repackaged as luxury wellness travel for Western executives and professional athletes.

An Ancient and Nearly Universal Practice

Shamanism is not confined to any single culture. Evidence of shamanic practice has been found across Siberia, Mongolia, Scandinavia, Korea, Japan, China, Australia, and among indigenous peoples throughout North America, South America, and Africa. At the center of shamanic practice stands the shaman: a person believed to gain access to, and influence over, a world of both benevolent and malevolent spirits, typically by entering a deliberately induced trance state through rhythmic drumming, chanting, dancing, fasting, or the ingestion of psychoactive plants. In this altered state, the shaman is said either to allow his own soul to leave his body and travel into the spirit realm, or to allow a spirit to enter and speak directly through him as its “mouthpiece” — a practice functionally identical to the channeling surveyed in Chapter 3.

The Modern Shamanic Revival

What makes this chapter urgent rather than merely historical is shamanism's explosive re-entry into Western culture through psychedelic “wellness tourism.” Ayahuasca — a psychoactive brew from the Amazon basin, traditionally administered by shamanic practitioners to induce visionary trance states — has moved from an obscure indigenous practice to a globally marketed spiritual commodity. Between 2020 and 2023 alone, the number of listed psychedelic retreat centers worldwide jumped from 64 to 362. High-profile athletes and public figures have openly credited ayahuasca ceremonies with major personal breakthroughs, driving mainstream media coverage and normalizing what was, within living memory, considered exotic and dangerous.

Why the Trance Itself Is the Concern

The core biblical objection to shamanism is not primarily about plant substances, drumming, or cultural aesthetics — it is about the practice's explicit, stated goal: entering an altered state of consciousness for the specific purpose of contacting

spirits and allowing them access to one's own mind and will. Paul's instruction to the Ephesians draws a sharp, deliberate contrast between one kind of spiritual "filling" and another: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). A shamanic journey and Spirit-filling are not two paths up the same mountain; one deliberately displaces the natural mind to invite an unidentified spirit's access, and the other is the sober, willing surrender of a redeemed mind to the one Spirit who already indwells the believer.

The Believer's True Healing

The believer does not need a jungle ceremony, a drumbeat trance, or a visionary plant to find healing, wisdom, or contact with the divine. He has been given direct access to the living God through Christ: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). The Gospel answers every shamanic premise directly: the veil has already been torn (Matthew 27:51), and the way to God stands open, sober, and free.

CHAPTER EIGHT**Occult Symbols: Why They Curse Rather Than Bless**

This book has now surveyed astrology, Hollywood's glamorized witchcraft, automatic writing, Celtic paganism, demon worship, Ouija boards, and shamanism. Each of these practices carries its own visual shorthand — a pentagram, a hexagram, an all-seeing eye, a serpent devouring its tail. This chapter asks the question implied by all the others: what should a Christian make of the symbols themselves?

A Quick Survey of the Symbols

The pentagram began among the Pythagoreans of ancient Greece as a mathematical emblem of harmony, later adopted into modern witchcraft and, when inverted, deliberately adopted as a symbol of Satanism. The hexagram is recognized as the Star of David in Judaism, yet in modern ceremonial magic it functions as a central working tool used to invoke what practitioners describe as “planetary forces.” The ouroboros, a serpent eating its own tail, appears across Egyptian, Norse, and Greek traditions, consistently representing cyclical existence achieved through esoteric process rather than divine grace. The All-Seeing Eye traces to ancient Egypt, later adopted into Freemasonry and used in witchcraft for what practitioners themselves describe as “psychic control” and the casting of curses.

The Modern Secular Argument: Symbols Are Neutral

Contemporary defenders of occult symbolism argue that a symbol carries no inherent power apart from the intention brought to it. This argument contains a partial truth Scripture itself does not deny: “an idol is nothing in the world” (1 Corinthians 8:4). No pentagram has agency by geometry alone.

Why the Neutral-Symbol Argument Does Not End the Matter

But Scripture's response to pagan religious objects has never rested on whether the object itself has independent magical power. It rests on what the object represents and what it was consecrated to serve:

“The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee... Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.” — Deuteronomy 7:25-26

The danger is not that the object itself is hexed mechanically, but that God treats voluntary association with a pagan religious object as bringing the household under the same “cursed thing” designation the object itself bears.

Achan's Sin: A Biblical Case Study

Scripture provides a vivid illustration in the story of Achan (Joshua 7). At the fall of Jericho, God commanded that the city's goods be set apart entirely for destruction. Achan disobeyed, secretly keeping a Babylonian garment along with silver and gold. Israel's very next battle ended in inexplicable defeat, and God revealed that the “accursed thing” hidden in Achan's tent had brought that curse upon the entire camp. The garment had no independent magical power to cause Israel's defeat. What mattered was that an object devoted to a pagan system had been treasured by someone who belonged to God — and that alone was sufficient grounds for the curse.

Symbols Are Not All Equally Occult — Discernment Still Matters

Not every ancient symbol carries equal weight. The Star of David functions, for most who display it, as a marker of Jewish identity rather than ceremonial magic, even though the identical shape is separately used in occult ritual. Context, present-day usage, and the wearer's actual community of meaning are not irrelevant considerations. The relevant question is not whether a shape ever appears in occult contexts, but whether it is currently and primarily functioning as a marker of occult identity, worn with awareness of that association.

Why the Christian Chooses Neither Fear Nor Indifference

The Christian's response should reflect neither superstitious terror nor casual indifference, but discernment — and where discernment reveals a symbol knowingly worn as a marker of occult belief, Scripture's counsel is Achan's lesson: “utterly detest it, and utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing” (Deuteronomy 7:26). The Christian does not need protective symbols of any kind, because he already carries something no pentagram or ankh was ever able to grant its wearer: “Fear not: for I am with thee... I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10).

CHAPTER NINE**Spiritualism: The Religion Built on Talking to the Dead**

Chapter 6 traced the Ouija board back to its origin in nineteenth-century Spiritualism. This chapter examines that movement itself — not as a passing fad, but as a full-fledged religious system, built entirely on the premise that the dead speak to the living, and one whose modern descendants now fill primetime television rather than Victorian parlors.

Born From a Prank in a Farmhouse Bedroom

Modern Spiritualism traces to March 1848, in the farmhouse bedroom of the Fox family in Hydesville, New York, where two young sisters began reporting mysterious rapping sounds that appeared to answer questions with intelligent responses. Within a few years the sisters were conducting sold-out séances in New York City, and had spawned a movement that would eventually claim more than eight million adherents in America by 1897. The founding event was, by the confession of one of its own originators, a deliberate hoax — Margaret Fox later admitted the first “spirit” sounds had been produced by an apple tied to a string, and their public séance-rappings by cracking their own knuckle and toe joints.

A Genuine Religion, Not Merely a Parlor Trick

Whatever its origins, Spiritualism quickly became something far more serious than sleight of hand. It developed into an organized religious movement with its own theology, meeting places, and periodicals. Spiritualists gathered in private homes, lecture halls, and dedicated camps — Lily Dale in western New York, founded in 1879, remains an active Spiritualist community to this day — to hear trance lectures and participate in séances led by mediums believed to serve as a bridge between the visible and spirit worlds.

The Same Practice, Every Era's New Packaging

What makes Spiritualism relevant to this book beyond nineteenth-century history is how directly its core claim persists in twenty-first-century entertainment. Modern television mediums — Theresa Caputo of *Long Island Medium*, which ran fourteen seasons on TLC; Tyler Henry, whose *Hollywood Medium* and subsequent Netflix series have reached hundreds of thousands on a waiting list — offer audiences the identical proposition the Fox sisters offered in 1848: contact with, and messages from, the spirits of the dead. The methods have modernized, but the underlying spiritual transaction is unchanged. Modern mediums describe working with “spirit

guides,” and some explicitly practice automatic writing as one of their techniques — directly connecting this chapter back to Chapter 3.

Scripture's Answer Has Not Changed With the Television Format

Deuteronomy's prohibition on necromancy does not carry an exception for practices reframed as grief therapy or broadcast for entertainment value. Isaiah's rebuke of those who would seek “unto them that have familiar spirits” instead of seeking their own God (Isaiah 8:19) applies with equal force whether the medium works a Victorian séance table or a television studio.

The Comfort Spiritualism Offers — and the Comfort It Cannot

The emotional pull of Spiritualism is not hard to understand, and Scripture does not mock the grief that drives someone toward it. But Scripture offers grieving believers something Spiritualism cannot: not contact with the dead, but the sure hope of reunion in resurrection, secured by Christ's own finished work. “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope... for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 16).

CHAPTER TEN

Kabbalah: Secret Knowledge and the Red String

Kabbalah presents a different kind of case entirely — a mystical tradition that emerged from within Judaism itself, historically connected to the Hebrew Scriptures, later drawn into occult magical systems, and today sold to Western celebrities largely stripped of both its Jewish roots and its original theological seriousness.

A Mystical Tradition Within Judaism

Kabbalah, meaning “that which is received,” refers to the tradition of Jewish mysticism that developed gradually through texts including the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the *Sefer HaBahir*, and above all the *Zohar*, a massive thirteenth-century work traditionally attributed to a second-century sage but almost certainly composed largely by Moses de León. At the heart of Kabbalistic theology sits the *Ein Sof* — God's utterly transcendent, unknowable essence — and the *Sefirot*, ten divine emanations pictured as a “Tree of Life,” through which God's infinite energy is said to flow into the finite world.

Where This Book's Concern Actually Lies

This book does not classify traditional, halakhically-grounded Jewish mysticism as equivalent to Babylonian astrology or druidic sacrifice. This chapter's concern is with two specific developments: the deliberate absorption of Kabbalistic concepts into explicitly occult, magical systems by non-Jewish Western esotericists, and the commercialized, celebrity-driven “Kabbalah” now marketed to spiritual consumers with only a thin connection to its Jewish source.

Kabbalah's Absorption Into Western Occultism

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in 1888, deliberately integrated Kabbalistic concepts — spelling the tradition with a “Q,” as “Qabalah” — with tarot, astrology, and ceremonial magic, and its key figures included Aleister Crowley. Crowley's *Liber 777* went so far as to invert the *Sefirot* into their “evil” counterparts, called the *Qliphoth*, and assigned specific demons to each — a deliberate occult perversion organized around contacting demonic forces.

The Celebrity Kabbalah Centre

The modern popularization of Kabbalah through organizations like the Kabbalah Centre, founded by Rabbi Philip Berg, brought the tradition into mainstream

Western pop culture through celebrity students including Madonna, most visibly through the red string bracelet sold as protection against the “evil eye.” Traditional and Orthodox Jewish scholars have criticized this movement sharply as a commercialized and doctrinally distorted rip-off of authentic Jewish mysticism, stripped of the rigorous study and moral prerequisites that historically governed engagement with this material.

The Biblical Concern

The occult “Qabalah” of Crowley and the Golden Dawn falls squarely within everything this book has established: a deliberately constructed system for accessing spiritual forces Scripture identifies as demonic. The commercialized red-string Kabbalah presents a subtler danger: a red string worn as a magical talisman functions, regardless of its source tradition, exactly like any other occult protective object surveyed in Chapter 8 — physical reliance on a symbol for spiritual protection God alone can provide. “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10).

What the Christian Should Actually Value in This History

The Christian does not need the Sefirot to bridge the gap between an unknowable infinite God and the finite created world — that gap has already been bridged by the incarnation itself: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Whatever secret knowledge Kabbalah promises to the initiated, the Gospel offers to anyone: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

CHAPTER ELEVEN – CONCLUSION

One Light, Many Shadows

Ten chapters ago, this book opened with a horoscope column and a bookstore's tarot display — small, almost weightless things, the kind of cultural wallpaper most people walk past without a second thought. It closes having traced those same small things back to Babylon's star-priests, Gaul's blood-soaked oak groves, Victorian séance parlors, Amazonian ayahuasca ceremonies, and medieval mystical diagrams now sold as celebrity jewelry. The distance between “harmless fun” and “ancient pagan religion” turns out, on close inspection, to be far shorter than modern culture assumes.

What the Chapters Actually Showed

Pull back and look at the whole shape of this book, and a single pattern emerges across every chapter's specific history. Babylonian astrologers divined the will of gods they believed inhabited the planets (Chapter 1). Hollywood spent decades making that same spiritual instinct feel enchanting rather than forbidden, while treating sincere biblical conviction as a punchline (Chapter 2). Automatic writers emptied their minds and let an unidentified hand move theirs, sometimes even in the name of Christ Himself (Chapter 3). Celtic Druids worshiped in sacred groves and offered human sacrifice to secure their gods' favor (Chapter 4). Behind every one of these systems, Scripture insists, stood not merely human imagination but real spiritual beings eager to receive the worship offered to them (Chapter 5). A parlor game born from Victorian necromancy still invites the same forbidden consultation from a toy store shelf (Chapter 6). Ancient shamanic trance, repackaged as luxury wellness travel, still promises what it always promised (Chapter 7). The very symbols marking all of this carry real spiritual association, however casually they are worn (Chapter 8). A movement built on talking to the dead has traded Victorian séance tables for primetime television without changing its underlying claim (Chapter 9). And a mystical tradition rooted in Judaism's own search for the unknowable God was drawn by Western occultists into deliberate demon-work, then sold back to a celebrity spiritual marketplace as a red string bracelet (Chapter 10).

Different centuries, different continents, different vocabulary — the same spiritual transaction, offered again and again: contact with, power from, or knowledge through something other than the one true God, sought outside the means He has actually appointed.

Why the Cultural Moment Makes This Harder to See

This book began by naming an asymmetry: a culture that glamorizes the very practices Scripture forbids by name, while treating exclusive, orthodox Christian conviction as embarrassing or dangerous. Paul's warning to the Romans anticipated this exact inversion nearly two thousand years before television, retreat centers, or celebrity spirituality existed: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man" (Romans 1:22-23). Every subject surveyed in this book is a variation on precisely that ancient exchange — the true and living God traded for something smaller, stranger, and ultimately more manageable to human pride.

The Believer's Actual Position

None of this is meant to leave the Christian anxious, as though demonic power lurked equally behind every zodiac mug and Halloween decoration. Chapter 5 already established the correct posture: the demons behind these systems are real, but they are neither sovereign nor victorious. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). What Scripture asks is far simpler and considerably more freeing: recognize these systems for what they are, decline to participate in them, and rest entirely in the sufficiency of what God has already given.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." — Hebrews 1:1-2

The Only Necessary Light

There is no lost name to recover through ritual, no hand to surrender to an unidentified spirit, no grove, no trance, no retreat, no red string that can offer what has already been freely given in Christ. The astrologers of Babylon could not save even themselves from the fire (Isaiah 47:14); the believer has been given a Savior who has already conquered death itself.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." — John 1:4-5

Every occult practice this book has surveyed is, finally, a shadow — cast in a hundred different shapes across a hundred different centuries and cultures, but a shadow nonetheless, and shadows have no substance of their own. They can only ever testify, however unintentionally, to the reality of the one Light they are cast by and cannot overcome. The Christian's calling, having walked through Babylon's star-charts, Gaul's oak groves, and every stop between, is not fear of the shadows. It is simply this: turn fully toward the Light, and stay there.

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." — 1 John 1:5