

# Warfare the Devil

by David Watson

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*David Watson's sermon explores the nature and strategies of Satan, emphasizing the importance of understanding spiritual warfare for Christians.*

**Duration:** 54:25

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 2:10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Understanding the Devil"

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## Description

David Watson emphasizes the necessity of understanding the devil's strategies and works in the Christian life, warning against both ignorance and excessive focus on Satan. He outlines the importance of studying the devil to recognize his deceptions, test spirits, and engage in spiritual warfare, citing biblical references to support his points. Watson explains the origin and character of Satan, describing him as the adversary of God and a master of disguise, who uses various tactics to lead believers astray. He also addresses the dangers of cults, schisms, and occultism, urging Christians to remain vigilant and grounded in Scripture. Ultimately, Watson encourages believers to rely on the power of Jesus Christ to overcome the enemy's schemes.

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## Transcript

Praise the Lord that Satan has a sore head. But I hope you've got a clear head this morning because I'm going to ask you to work very hard indeed. As I think you can see by even looking at the notes, which are almost twice as many as any we've had so far.

But if we're going to try to get even an outline of the devil and all his works in one Bible study, this is a fantastically huge area. I feel almost like the young curate who was just ordained and his vicar briefing him about his first sermon said, preach about God and keep it to 20 minutes. And I'm concerned very much in our study today that we look not only at one aspect of Satan's work such as demonology, but to try and get some idea of his strategy and his work in many different ways.

Therefore I'm going to ask you to work hard. And may I also say that this morning's Bible study will be incomplete and unsatisfactory on its own. It very much needs the more positive and probably more devotional and more practical Bible studies of tomorrow morning and Friday morning.

I hope very much that you'll be able to come to those as well. And if by any chance you cannot, please try and get the notes or the tapes or something to complete what we're looking at this morning. Now why

study the devil at all? Some Christians would rightly point out the dangers of this that Satan does not like being exposed.

He's a great deceiver and therefore to talk about him and to expose some of his deceptions is rather like stirring up a hornet's nest. Why not leave well alone? Why not just concentrate upon Jesus? C.S. Lewis has warned us of a double danger like this. 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.

However, four reasons briefly why it's important I believe to study the devil and all his works. First, there are very many references in the scriptures concerning this and I put here for your interest and study, of course I'm not going to turn to all these now, they're concerning occultism and its dangers and its consequences. There are at least 35 references in the scriptures and since I made this list I've found others which I might well have added to it.

But there's for your future study and for your reference, I hope. Second, we are not to be ignorant about these things. In 2 Corinthians 2, 10 and 11, Paul explains the reason for a certain action of his.

I quote, to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us for we are not ignorant of his designs or devices. But many Christians today are. Third, we are to test the spirits, says John in 1 John 4, 1 to 3. I'm going to turn to that just for a moment.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they're of God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God.

Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of Antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming and now it is in the world already. Now how can you and I test the spirits unless we know something about them, unless we know what this test means? Third, or fourth rather, we are to wage war against the powers of darkness.

Jesus said to the 70 in Luke 10, I've given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. And Paul in Ephesians 6, that we should be studying tomorrow, gives very detailed instructions about this warfare, reminding us that we are not contending against flesh and blood but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places. And I believe we need to study the devil and all his works providing we start from the Bible and providing we are trusting personally in the name and the blood of Jesus Christ.

First then the origin of Satan. We're not told very much except that Satan is a fallen angel thrown out of heaven because of the sin of pride. Isaiah chapter 14, verses 12 to 14.

How you are fallen from heaven, O day star, sun of dawn. How you are cut down to the ground, you who lay the nations low. You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God, I will set my throne on high.

I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high.

Notice two things from that. First of all, his name, he's called O day star, sun of dawn. And therefore he is not a grotesque monster with horns and hoofs and a trident fork and so on.

Originally he's called in Ezekiel 28, perfect in beauty and therefore can well masquerade as an angel of light. Notice to his ambition, I will make myself like the most high. And this of course is reflected in his temptation of Adam and Eve.

When you eat of this fruit, he says, you will be like God. Anyway, because of his pride and ambition, Satan and his angels were condemned and thrown out of heaven. And the consequence of Satan's fall is something like this, that Satan and his angels lost their heavenly bodies and are now therefore disembodied spirits who said Jesus in Luke 11 are seeking rest.

And that is why you will have the phenomenon of demon possession when an evil spirit, a demon will occupy a person or maybe an animal or maybe a house or some place because they are seeking rest. Incidentally, devil possession should rightly be called demon possession. There is only one devil, but there are many, many demons.

Second, the character of Satan. The very word Satan transliterates the Hebrew word for adversary. And this is the most important fact about Satan.

As Peter says, he is your adversary, the devil. Notice basically he is the adversary of God and not of people. The whole world lies in the arms of the evil one.

And providing we are asleep in Satan arms and he's lulling us to sleep like that, he's not particularly troubled with us. And we're not necessarily troubled by him. The strong man keeps his goods in peace.

And therefore, if you are not a Christian, Satan is not particularly your adversary. You belong to his kingdom anyway. He won't give you a very happy time.

He's leading you to destruction. He's robbing you of the riches of Jesus Christ and his wages are death. But he's not primarily your adversary.

But when you become a Christian, when you turn from darkness to light, out of the power of Satan to God, then he is against you because he's against God's work. And the more you are used by God, the more you are filled by his spirit, the more Satan will attack you. And we have known in our own setup, for example in York, that when we have particularly important evangelistic services or when I'm away on university missions, we have often seen in the past, though increasingly we're learning how to deal with this, very specific attacks of the enemy.

Very often I find some of these attacks coming on my own family. Corrie ten Boom found when she was first of all talking about spiritual warfare and trying to help people to understand about this, she said, when I've been speaking about this subject, afterwards I just felt so tired and so ill that I could scarcely get to my bed. My heart beat irregularly.

And she was tremendously tempted to give up talking about this altogether and talk about something entirely different. And then she realized how Satan was trying to undermine her strength and her

confidence in the Lord. And she learned to claim the victory of the name of Jesus and found peace in his victory over this.

So first he's the adversary, particularly of God and of God's work. Now in 2 Corinthians 11, 14 we're told that Satan disguises himself. And he has many disguises.

He performs, for example, a vanishing trick, pretending he does not exist. Many people have been deceived by that. That's why the so-called enlightened churches of today, which do not believe in the very existence of Satan, are so utterly lifeless and powerless spiritually.

MacNeil Dixon once wrote this, The kind-hearted humanitarians of the 19th century decided to improve on Christianity. The thought of hell offended their susceptibilities. They closed it.

And to their surprise, the gates of heaven closed with a melancholy bang. The malignant countenance of Satan disturbed them. They dispensed with him.

And at the same time, God took his departure. The devil was fairly voted out and, of course, the devil's gone. But simple folk would like to know who carries his business on.

The vanishing trick. Thirdly, he comes as the angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11, verses 13 to 15.

There Paul writes about false teachers, such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.

Their end will correspond to their deeds. And Satan may use certain messengers who appear to come as an angel of light or as ministers of Christ, bringing new and intriguing interpretations of scripture perhaps, maybe claiming some special unusual revelation of God, going right beyond God's word, often with a subtle and mystical form of super-spirituality, as is particularly evident in the various sects. For example, Mary Baker Eddy wrote about her Christian science textbook called Science and Health.

These words, It was not myself but the divine power of truth and love infinitely above me which dictated science and health. I should blush to write this book as I have were it of human origin than I apart from God its author. But as I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of heaven and divine metaphysics, I cannot be super-modest in my estimation of the Christian science textbook.

Now to the unwary that may sound very modest, but it's the most utmost presumption to claim that her book has been inspired by God. And so it is with the angel of light. And incidentally the devil can easily quote scripture and often quotes it freely.

Fourth, he disguised himself or comes rather as the father of lies. Jesus says in John chapter 8, verse 43. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.

You are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks according to his own nature for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Strong meat. And one great lie that he brings across us again and again is that he promises great rewards as he did to Jesus in the very wilderness temptation. To you, he said to Jesus, I will give, showing him the kingdoms of the world, all this authority and the glory of them if you'll only fall down and worship me.

And today he may say to us, I'll give you an easy life, I'll give you success, I'll give you happiness, I'll give you riches, I'll give you wealth. And Jesus says, what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Yes, this father of lies is a murderer from the beginning. Or he may tempt us to be super spiritual, say that a Christian, for example, may feel that he will refuse all medical help because he says the Lord is my doctor.

I believe the Lord is my doctor and I believe we should look to the Lord much more than we do for our own physical needs as well as spiritual needs. But while it is true that the Lord is our doctor, the Lord is our healer, truth that is exaggerated becomes error. Heresy means literally going off on a tangent, so that within the balanced circle of truth that we have in the scriptures, we take a point of truth which is true, it's in God's word, and go off at a tangent, exaggerated, make it unbalanced, and then it becomes error.

And Satan knows all about those tangents. He's the father of lies. Or, for example, he comes as the father of lies by spreading false gossip and rumours about other Christians.

Now, of course, it's one thing to be misrepresented by the secular press. Some of you may know the story when the Archbishop of Canterbury visited New York and he came down the plane and he was met by a great battery of photographers and reporters and the very first question which came up to him was this from one reporter, are you going to any of the nightclubs in New York? And Dr Ramsey said very mildly, are there any? And the next day the headlines of the national press was this, Archbishop's first question, are there any nightclubs in New York? Some of us will know what it is to be misrepresented perhaps by the press like this, but I believe that this father of lies is at work in a tremendously powerful way, particularly in evangelical circles today, by just causing a certain amount of gossip or uncertainty about other Christians. Did you hear the story about Cernser? No, this man Cernser, you know, he, I should be aware of him, I've heard some very strange thing about him.

Secondhand stories, rumour, gossip, which can do tremendous damage to God's work. Tremendous damage. Next he comes as a serpent, beguiling and enticing into sin.

You see, with God's word, it is tremendously important that we stick to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. We mustn't change it, we mustn't subtract from it, we mustn't add to it. And if we had time, if you look sometime in Genesis 3, in that original temptation, you will find that the serpent there does all those three things with God's word, and in particular seeks to undermine God's word.

Did God say, has God said, are you very sure? You see this at the start of Jesus' ministry. At his baptism, the father, when the spirit came down upon Jesus, said, you are my beloved son. The next moment, Jesus was in the wilderness, and the tempter was saying to him twice, if you are the son of God, if you are the son of God.

As he may say to you or to me, if you are a Christian, why do you behave like that? Why don't you feel more the reality of God? If Jesus is with you, why don't you know his experience today in your own heart? Why haven't you got great feelings with him today? If you are dead unto sin, alive unto God, then why are you still so selfish? If, if, the serpent. Next, the accuser, the accuser of our brethren in Revelation 12, who accuses us day and night. The very word devil means slanderer.

It comes 13 times in the New Testament, and he comes and accuses us of something like this. You are such a failure. You are such a miserable Christian.

Look at all your sins. God doesn't love you. God doesn't use you.

God cannot use you, because you are such a failure. And I think one thing which I have come across here during this week, as the number of Christians I have talked to have been bothered by this, Satan can accuse you by making you doubt if you are in the right place. You have mistaken God's guidance.

You are in the wrong place, and where you are now, God cannot use you. And it gets you all bothered and wondering whether you made some desperate mistake concerning guidance. Of course you and I can make mistakes about guidance, but as we surrender our possible mistakes to the Lord like that, He can take them and use them for His glory.

And the devil just goes on nagging, nagging, nagging, nagging. He's a tremendous nagger. If some of you husbands think that your wife nags or vice versa, you know nothing at all about nagging until you realize how Satan goes on nagging, nagging, nagging, nagging, trying to rob us of peace in the Lord Jesus.

And there is his method. Sometimes he comes creeping up behind us and whispers some blasphemous thought maybe in our ear. Then before we know what's happened, he comes whipping around in front of us and says, Now you call yourself a Christian? You've got a thought like that in your mind? And I wonder if you've ever found when in times of prayer or times when, especially sacred moments, suddenly you find that in your mind are the most blasphemous, the most unclean, the most impure, most lustful thoughts suddenly attack you, in the most unexpected moments.

Well, he is the accuser. He puts these things in our mind and trying to work, of course, upon our own nature that we might respond to them and then accuse us for ever having those there in the first place. Next, he's a roaring lion.

And this speaks of a particularly powerful attack maybe, perhaps of fear, of guilt, of depression, of sickness, whatever it may be, or persecution possibly. In 1 Peter chapter 5, I'll just read verses 8 and 9. There he says, Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. Next, he comes as the prince of the power of the air, the prince of this world. And as prince, he has a great legion of evil spirits working for him.

And just in passing, the New Testament speaks of such spirits as a spirit of error, an unclean spirit, maybe that's a spirit of lust, a seducing spirit, an overbalance of some truth, a deaf spirit, a dumb spirit, some physical consequence, a spirit of fear, a lying spirit, giving false guidance or false prophecy, and a familiar spirit. That speaks of a medium. And all these are utterly evil.

All these are opposed to God. Now briefly, as I have to be, I want to look at Satan's work in three extremely important areas. Cults, schisms, and occultism.

Three vast areas. I can only just touch on them, but I want to give some basic principles because I find many Christians are a little bit uncertain about these things. First then, cults.

And by cults, I'm not, of course, talking about other religions such as Buddhism. But by cults, I'm referring to Christian scientists and Mormons and Unitarians and Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians, the cult of Scientology or Theosophy or MRA or Spiritualism and so on. The dictionary definition of a cult is

this.

It's a devotion to a particular person or thing as paid by a body of professed adherence. And that is a good definition because nearly all the cults follow a particular person as well as a set of doctrines. First then, three main characteristics about the cults in general.

First, most of them or many of them seem on the surface like true Christianity. That's why for some they're so deceiving. I remember looking at some Mormon literature which was given out in my first parish when Mormons invaded that area to begin with.

And as I examined this beautifully turned out literature, I read page after page and could scarcely discern anything which was obviously wrong. It spoke about God, it spoke about Jesus, it spoke about the Spirit of God, it quoted the Bible. What was wrong with it? On the surface, it was most deceptive.

Again, I found various people in my own parish at the moment have been reading and been following the various magazines which come out from Brother Mandus. And I mention him specifically because I find many Christians are deceived by this. He's one person who would call himself a faith healer.

And as I read his magazine, I think it's called Crusader, I read for quite a long time without seeing anything very obviously wrong except the whole thing seemed to be off-center somehow. Of course, if you look at his itinerary where he goes and speaks, you'll find that mostly he speaks in Unitarian churches and in Spiritualist churches. He is in fact a Spiritualist.

Harry Edwards too is a Spiritualist, but many people are deceived by this faith healer. On the surface, it looks good, it looks almost Christian, but it is not. And I believe a person can be very seriously hindered in their Christian life by reading and following literature from such people.

Secondly, they offer cults great blessings, sometimes far greater blessings than from more Orthodox branches of the Church. And the reaction that we have, or some people have, is why haven't we heard of this before? This is exactly what we need. And so often they flourish in times of stress and danger, a national crisis, and the sects have a tremendous field day.

Or again, at the moment they're having a field day if they are concentrating on prophecy and prophecies about the last days because of the crisis in the world as a whole. Or just after the war, of course, Spiritualism had a most tremendous advance because of all the men who had died and been killed in the war. And they offer wonderful blessings for those who are sad or sick or anxious.

Thirdly, their adherents are nearly always sincere and zealous, as you will know if you've had various knocks on your door. And they're quite clear about what they believe and quite convinced about what they believe. I've often asked Jehovah's Witnesses, why did you become a Jehovah's Witness? And so often the story is the same.

I was longing to know God, and I went along to my local vicar or my local minister and I said, can you help me? I want to find God. And sadly, that man could not help him. And at that time, someone came and knocked on his door.

And this person had all the answers and was so sure, so certain about what he believed, could point to the Bible. And this was so appealing for someone who was searching for the truth. And that's why they are enjoying such a tremendous field day today, at a time when the established church is discussing ad

nauseam what it does not believe.

Well then, five objective tests of the cult. First, the origin of the cult. You see, Christianity stands and falls, if you like, on the person of Jesus Christ.

Because Christ was and is the Son of God, what he said and what he did is of supreme importance. But with a cult, most of them are based on the various men and women whose personal lives, by any standard, leave a great deal to be desired. That's why Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount, beware of false prophets, you will know them by their fruits.

Take, for example, Jehovah's Witnesses. The founder was a man called C.T. Russell, who was in several law courts for divorce and shady financial dealings. His successor was a man called Judge Rutherford.

He was not a judge, and he was jailed for sedition. Second, the authority of the cult. And always you will find some special authority, like, for example, the Book of Mormon.

And even if reference is made to the Bible, the main authority is always something other than the Bible, which therefore completely undermines the supreme authority of the Bible. And so you find, for example, the leader of Scientology, Ron L. Hubbard, who says this, thousands of philosophers have sought, every one of them from Socrates to Russell, the way to salvage the individual and society. All right, we have found the way.

And if you're attracted by Scientology and his special knowledge, you need the very basic equipment to have a Ron L. Hubbard Mark V electrometer, which will cost you 25 pounds, and then you've only just started, of course, financially. Third, the essential doctrines of the cult. And by these essential doctrines, I mean, of course, to begin with, the person of Jesus Christ.

This is the test of the Spirit. By this, says John in 1 John 4, you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God.

I won't expand that in detail, but what he's saying here, that if you believe that Jesus is both perfect man and perfect God, that is essential, if you're going to have any doctrine from God. Because unless Jesus is both man and God, there could be no saviour, no mediator between man and God. And therefore, the very person of Jesus Christ, his divinity and his humanity together are essential.

But you will not find this to be true about the cults. They will say that Jesus was a great medium, or a great leader, or the super leader, whatever he may be, but not both God and man. Or again, the doctrine of the Trinity.

Most cults are unitarian and talk about God in terms of a life force, the eternal consciousness, and so on. Usually a very little reference to Jesus. Again, take the whole concepts of sin, and the atonement, and the need for repentance.

Almost always these are entirely missing. Positive thinking says this. Believe in yourself.

You're wonderful if only you realised it. The concept of sin is an insult. It is simply psychological.

And therefore, if you believe that, there is no need for Christ. There is no need for the cross. There is no need for salvation.

There is no need for the new birth. There is no need for repentance. Judgment goes, hell goes, and of course with it, heaven goes.

Fourth, the method of the cult. And usually there is a simple formula or technique for blessing. I studied carefully a little time ago the MRA standard textbook called Remaking Men.

There, there is no reference of Christ worth mentioning. I think he's only mentioned once in quoting a verse of a hymn. There is no mention of repentance or the new birth.

There are just these four absolutes. Absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. And if you just follow these four absolutes, that is the secret of it all.

Always some formula, some technique, which replaces any living relationship with Jesus Christ. And as we saw on Monday, that was the spirit of the world. Fifth, these cults are man-centered.

Again, a Scientology advertisement. Free yourself from the barriers that hold you back in life. Let the real you emerge.

God forbid. But let the real you emerge. Dynamic, able, aware.

Get Scientology processing. Martin Doyle Jones comments on this question of being man-centered very helpfully like this. It always starts with you.

It comes to you and tells you that it can do this, that, and the other for you. What do you need? What is your trouble? What is the matter with you? What are you looking for? Are you worried or troubled? Do you find it difficult to sleep? Do you find it difficult to forget your business and your profession? Are you ever anxious? Are you looking for peace? Are you looking for guidance? Christianity starts with God. In the beginning, God.

God so loved the world. God, God, God, right at the very center, right at the very beginning, not so with the cults. And I would recommend to your reading and study Dr. Skevington Wood's book in Signs of the Times, where there he gives eight dangers concerning the cults.

And I think you'll find it very helpful. Cults. Secondly, schisms or divisions.

And in particular, divisions for inadequate reasons, such as they were having in the church at Corinth. There are always two dangers for Christians. You'll see, incidentally, I'm not turning to all these references in the notes, but they're there for your further study, which I hope many of you will do.

I'm just passing over some of them because of the shortage of time. There are always two dangers for Christians. First, unity when there ought to be division.

Second, division when there ought to be unity. First, unity when there ought to be division. And I fear the whole ecumenical movement has ignored this danger.

The favorite text, as you may know, of the ecumenical movement is John 17, verse 21, that they all may be one. But a text without its context is a pretext. And the context of this verse is unity based on truth.

And therefore you get John 17, 17, for example, Jesus praying there, sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth. Verse 19, and for their sake I consecrate myself that they also may be consecrated in truth.

Here Christ was praying, first and foremost, for his apostles who were agreed about all the essential truths and doctrines. And therefore Christ is praying about those who do agree about these vital issues, and praying that they may not divide over secondary matters. But if a person denies the divinity of Christ, and if a person denies the atonement and justification by faith, and the resurrection of Christ, and the necessity of new birth, and the authority of scripture, how can there be any true spiritual unity with such a person? These are the very essentials of faith.

And then second, danger, the division where there ought to be unity. Most of you will know the parody of that famous hymn, like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God. Brothers we are treading where we've always trod.

We are all divided, many bodies we. Very strong on doctrine, weak on charity. And there are at least five matters where it is wrong for Christians to divide, and I'm going to leave most of these for you to study and look up for yourselves.

But it's wrong to divide over personalities. I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, and so on. This is a tremendous cult of personality at the moment.

People flitting from church to church, from convention to convention, not because of the life and the truth there, but because of their favourite personality. It's wrong to divide on positions of influence, as Diotrephes there wanted to have the best place. James and John were wanting the places either side of Christ's throne and glory, and the others were indignant.

Why? Why? There was a beginning of a split there in the apostles. It's wrong to divide on social status, giving preference to a rich man. Oh, come and sit here.

I see, very nice to see you, sir. Come and sit in this special place where there's a cushion in the front seat, and so on. It's wrong to divide about spiritual gifts.

You may have one gift, I may have another gift, but we don't vibe with one another. We're not jealous or proud. We're members together of the one body, Christ.

It's wrong to divide, too, on minor doctrinal issues, however important you and I may feel these particular doctrines to be. I put here three very common ones which cause division, and I would say that I suspect on these three doctrines I put on the sheet of paper that the very people here on the platform this morning are not agreed on certain issues. I haven't asked them, but I suspect that that is true.

But we should not divide on these things because we are together in Christ. We are united about all the things that rarely matter. Why do we let these things divide us? This is because it's the work of the devil.

No one person has a complete monopoly of understanding God's Word. We all at the moment see through a glass darkly. There are certain vital issues where, yes, we can see clearly about sin and about the cross and so on, but there are many other issues where I may believe something very definitely and very clearly, but I cannot stand here and say, I know I am right and that so-and-so is wrong.

I just believe I'm right. I seek to understand God's Word. I seek to follow what I understand, being honest with God and with His Word.

But I cannot presume to say that I know I am right and that everyone else is wrong. That is characteristic of the works of the flesh. How ridiculous! I mean, take prophecy, for example.

You may be a pre-millenniaist or you may be a post-millenniaist or you may be an amillenniaist or you may not have the faintest clue what a millenniaist is anyway. But how ridiculous to let the devil divide us on such matters as that. We need a certain amount of humility and not bigotry when it comes to these secondary matters.

Then thirdly, occultism. May I just say one word here, which may be just for a few people here, but I've found something in my study of this to be enlightened and helped by some books by Dr. Koch, in particular the visions here I've got from his book, *Occult Bondage and Deliverance*. But I would just have a word of warning when you read books by him or books like this, that I have known one or two very fine Christians who've come quite spiritually depressed reading books like that, for this simple reason that unless we read them very prayerfully and realizing that we're touching very dangerous ground, then rather as when you're reading maybe a medical textbook, you suddenly feel you've got every single disease there is in that book.

Or even worse, you begin to think that everybody else has got the diseases in that book. So when you read these books just maybe casually, you could begin to be full of negative thoughts. You could be thinking, my, well perhaps that person's besieged by an evil spirit.

And this temper of mine, perhaps this is an evil spirit. And you can really get torn in two by this. So if you feel it is right to study a book like this, do so with prayer.

Now say that thoughtfully. Well, the divisions which he suggests, which I find helpful, are first of all fortune-telling, such as astrology, palmistry, clairvoyance, and so on. According to one fairly recent opinion poll, more than two-thirds of Britain's adults read their horoscopes.

And about one-fifth or seven million take them seriously. Over one-third of the adult population of this country believes in fortune-telling. Now sometimes, of course, it's all manifestly a fake.

On the very first day of the postal strike in this country, when not a single letter was being delivered, the horoscope, one of the horoscopes in the *Daily Mail*, I think it was, had this particular thing. It says, you will receive today a letter of considerable importance. Which was a prophecy of a miracle indeed.

Nevertheless, there have been some brilliant predictions. Perhaps most famous of all, on November 22nd, 1963, a certain Jean Dixon said to her friends in Washington, my mind isn't at ease. I'm afraid our president will suffer something terrible today.

And shortly after that, news was flashed throughout the whole world that President Kennedy had been assassinated. And Jean Dixon has become perhaps the best-known fortune-teller or prophetess in America. And it wasn't her first prediction.

She has made a number of astonishing and remarkable predictions, and her books sell like hotcakes. Fortune-telling. There's a tremendous rise in astrology at the moment.

Books of astrology on almost any subject you can think of. Astrology made practical. Astrology made easy.

Astrology for everyday living. Astrology guide to health and diet. Astrology guide to your sex life.

Some of the current titles. Then magic. Black magic and white magic.

Don't be deceived by those distinctions. All magic is black and dark and satanic in the sight of God. By magic, I'm referring either to possibly the healing of diseases or the inflicting of diseases, charms and curses and what have you.

The sort of magicians in the New Testament, such as Simon Magus and Elamess the sorcerer and so on. And this is very real today. If you doubt it, let me give you just one story.

One man who was a church army captain in West Africa felt that he was being called into the Church of England ministry and went to a theological college in this country. During his time there, a married man with children, he was tremendously depressed. And so depressed that he went to psychiatrists, he went into mental hospitals for treatment and still he was utterly depressed.

And the principal of that college, a very godly man, eventually said to him, well I don't think you can go into the ministry at all. You'll have to get some other job. You could possibly be a minister in this condition.

But he suggested that he should go to see some, what happened to be some very good friends of mine. And they got together with this man and prayed that God would reveal to one of them what was the basic cause of this depression. And it was in prayer, maybe just a night or two afterwards, I don't know exactly, that the man himself saw a kind of vision.

And in this sort of vision he saw that while he was in West Africa, just before he left, he sacked his African boy for some kind of theft. And this boy had gone along to the local witch doctor and had a curse put upon him. Having seen this in this vision in prayer, he came back to this small group of praying friends and they then saw, well now we see what it is.

We will now claim the victory of Jesus over that situation. And they claimed the victory of Jesus and of his blood. And that man today is a normal, healthy, active minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But these things can be very real and very powerful indeed. And then spiritism. Such things as table lifting, glass moving, speaking in a trance, automatic writing, spiritualism.

Spiritualism, incidentally, is the religion of spiritism. Spiritism is the umbrella title. Spiritualism is a particular religion of this.

In other words, spirit communication, or what the Bible calls necromancy. And this is very, very common indeed, as you and I will know, with the tremendous rise of Ouija boards being sold in toy shops and so on. I went into several shops in York when these were being sold by Waddingtons.

And I went to warn the people who were selling them of the dangers of this. I got most tremendously abused as I did it. And I discovered, as I was being abused by the manager of a shop or by the leading salesman in the shop or saleswoman, that these were people using these Ouija boards themselves.

And significantly, praise God, Waddingtons stopped, in fact, producing these Ouija boards. But this is tremendously powerful. In Time magazine, I just quote this, I hope it's true, in Paris, to give you some idea, there is one priest for every 5,000, one doctor for every 514, one spiritualist for every 120.

For most of us know a certain amount about this, and we know of stories and so on. Now, what can we say about occultism in all its many forms? First, it is devilish. One of the great passages on this,

Deuteronomy 18, verses 9 to 14.

There God says, When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. For there shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, an augur, a sorcerer, a charmer, a medium, a wizard, or a necromancer, a spiritualist. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord.

And because of these abominable practices, the Lord your God is driving them out before you, and so on. These things are indeed very powerful. At a seance, the Spirit, speaking through a medium, was asked, Do you believe in the devil? The answer immediately was, Indeed we do.

He's our God and Father. That's why all forms of spiritism are expressly condemned and forbidden in Scripture. Secondly, it is degrading.

Isaiah chapter 8, verses 19 and 20. And when they say to you, Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter. I love that.

Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter. Should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and the testament, to the scriptures. Surely for this word which they speak, these mediums and wizards who chirp and mutter, there is no dawn, no light shed upon the truth at all.

It's utterly degrading when you and I have God's pure and beautiful and powerful word. When you and I have God's supreme revelation in his Son, Jesus Christ. When we have all that we need to know about our present and about our future, as well as about our past, that guilty past of ours.

Why do we think even of turning to mediums and wizards? Why that is utterly degrading. Thirdly, deceptive. Jesus warned, Matthew 24, 24.

False Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. And you see it again in 2 Thessalonians 2. And this can be so deceiving at times. One woman pastor, I know very well indeed, said that once in her church, a couple were attending her church very regularly, having come from some other place.

She came up to them and said, would you like to consider becoming members of my church? And they said, well, we'd like to, yes, but we're not quite sure if you'd be entirely happy if we told you all about ourselves. We've got to be honest. But you see, for the last five years, our life has been wonderfully guided by a Ouija board.

It has told us about our business life, about the house that we should buy, and notice this, it even told us to come to your church. It's a kind of masterly deceptive stroke. It even told us to come to your church.

And it went on to say how for five years it had given them perfect guidance and they had been so prosperous as they had consulted their Ouija board for everything. Well, this wise pastor said nothing. She knew they were terribly deceived, this couple.

And so this pastor spent two days in prayer and fasting for the couple, praying that the spirit behind this thing would reveal itself. She went back to their house after these two days. It was one of those houses I

always admired but never seemed to live in, which was beautifully tidy and everything was always in its place.

When she entered the front door, it was as though a tornado had been through that house. The whole place was in absolute chaos. The couple were dystopia measure.

They'd had no sleep for two nights. They looked awful because the spirit behind this thing had revealed itself as it rarely is, a spirit of destruction, a murderer from the very beginning. And fourth, these things are damaging.

The leading spiritist, or one of the best-known spiritists, I ought to say, in America, said he did not know of a single case of spiritism where the study had been pursued without distinct deterioration of physical, mental, or spiritual faculties. That's the testimony of a leading spiritist. It is damaging spiritually.

Dr. Koch has a fascinating thing to say in his book. For years, he says, I've witnessed the truth of this fact that magic and almost all other occult practices either destroy the Christian faith of a person or just prevent it from developing. And yet, notice this point, one finds that there is no conflict between sorcery and all the other world religions.

You see the uniqueness of the Christian faith? The other religions, which are not the truth, can embrace this whole aspect of occultism. Christianity, which alone is the truth, finds a most tremendous clash between the powers of darkness and the powers of light. Christianity alone.

It's damaging mentally. I think of one very fine Christian girl in our own congregation, mature, fine spiritual girl, who about a year ago came under most suicidal depression. She says on three occasions she was right on the brink of committing suicide.

And she was a tremendous puzzle. She was counseled by doctors and psychiatrists and Christian workers, and I talked to her and prayed with her, and still she was utterly and utterly depressed. She was brought by a friend to one of our half-nights of prayer.

Near the whole body of gathered round her. We really prayed earnestly for her, claiming the victory of the name of Jesus. And there was a very, very great sense of faith in the risen and powerful Lord.

And that girl was instantly and immediately delivered of her depression. And she then wrote quite a long letter to me describing all the things which she'd not been able to say before when she was depressed. What had happened was this, that she comes from a broken home, and her mother in fact is a very important active spiritualist in London.

And although she's always a bit fearful of going to see her mother, when she went on that last occasion, the mother spoke to her about occultism until the small hours of the morning, during which time she uttered two satanic prophecies in the girl's presence. And immediately this awful oppression and darkness just descended upon this girl, and she was utterly depressed. It can be so damaging mentally.

I could give you many, many stories. There's no time for it, and it's probably not right anyway. And it also can be damaging physically.

And there are many cases of paralysis and deafness and dumbness and so on, which have resulted from this. Therefore, beware of the devil and all his works. Don't play with these things.

And I would counsel you not to play with trying to deliver a person who's really been in bondage to these things. Have on the one hand a healthy respect for Satan's power, though of course a confidence in the all-powerful name of Jesus. But don't rush into things.

Don't play with things, which are in fact tremendously powerful. It's like playing with a hand grenade. You never know when it's going to go off.

And if you've had any personal contact with any of these things, repent specifically for them. Lord, I confess that I went to that fortune teller, and I bring it to you now. Be quite specific and ask for the cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus and for his deliverance through his name, in his blood, through the victory of that finished work on the cross.

And put on the whole armor of God. Seek to stand firm. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

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