

NEWSLINE

Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

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Witchcraft In The Bible

"Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:31)

This is the season for ghosts and goblins. Children and adults dress up and pretend to be scary creatures including witches, walking dead people, and all kinds of altered states to frighten others. It is a playful time of harmless make-believe.

But there is a sizeable portion of our world's population who go far beyond make-believe to engage in occult activities which attempt to connect them to the spirit world. They consult psychics, mediums, fortune tellers, witches, and others who claim to have connections with the supernatural. Many consult horoscopes on a daily basis before making major decisions. Some go even further to engage in satanic worship and other practices.

We would do well to ask if the Bible addresses these issues and practices. What is wrong with engaging in some of these activities? Scripture is filled with warnings about practicing witchcraft or sorcery, or any similar activity. Israel was an embryonic nation when God gave a clear warning: *"You shall not permit a sorceress to live"* (Exodus 22:18). There is no doubt where God stood.

Even before Israel became a nation, God spoke through Joseph regarding the interpreting of dreams: *"Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please"* (Genesis 40:8, NKJV). Throughout the Old Testament godless mediums were used to interpret dreams and predict futures. King Saul was condemned because of his foolish decisions: *"So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse"* (1 Chronicles 10:13-14).

Other Old Testament Scriptures give a similar warning: *"Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God"* (Leviticus 19:31). *And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? (Isaiah 8:19).*

Unless we mistake this practice as only being condemned in the Old Testament era, God sounds a similar warning to us. Galatians 5:20 lists *"sorcery (witchcraft)"* as a work of the flesh and warns that individuals who practice such cannot enter the kingdom of God. The book of Revelation rolls back the curtain of heaven and repeatedly warns that those who practice sorcery or witchcraft will be excluded from the holy city of God (Revelation 9:21; 18:23; 21:8; 22:15). Their fate is listed with those who practice some of the most despicable of sin, *"in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone"* (21:8)

Clearly, God does not approve of any practice which does not recognize Him as the only Source of spiritual power. He alone is our strength and our salvation. To turn to other sources which claim supernatural powers or insights displaces Him from His sovereign position as the Almighty King. All who engage in these activities are said to be an *"abomination (detestable) to the Lord"* (Deuteronomy 19:9-12).

— Al Behel

Ladies Bible Study—1st and 3rd Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall

Elder Contact for Month: Dan Elkins at 865-548-9852

Sunday Sermon Topics: A.M.—*"Did Your Baptism Take?"* P.M.—*"Talking To Others About Jesus"*

Interpreter for deaf and hearing impaired available for AM and PM worship

Our Known Sick

Dez Anderson—multiple health issues, including MS

Jan Messick—new scan shows no return of cancer!

Andrea Weddington—reports show her cancer free!

Bill England—still battling cancer and artery problems in his leg.

Debby Bryan—Cancer; **Johnny Bryan**—health issues.

Clara Mayberry—broken arm suffered in a recent fall.

Kathy May recovering at home in Baxter. You can send her a card at P.O. Box 465, Baxter, TN 38544-0463.

Larry Valentine—good to see him back with us. Recovering from a broken ankle.

Linda Valentine has health issues and seeing a hematologist.

Heather Cox—unborn child-heart issues. Surgery will be required.

Jean Compton recovering at home from a recent heart attack.

Howard Yates—recovering from broken knee cap and sprained ankle.

Brenda Scott—now in NHC rehab in Farragut after knee surgery.

Ryan Wilson—recovering from auto accident.

Friends and Family

Christopher Howell (grandson of the Littletons-spinal cord injuries suffered in automobile accident), **Arania Blount** (Brenda Scott's sister)—cancer markers have increased, **Betty Langdon** (Ginny Cliett's sister—mental confusion issues), **Robin McCollum** and **Peggy McCollum** (Al's nieces—both battling cancer), **Shelby Daniels** (medical technologist in clinic with Al—recovering from brain surgery), **Libby and Larry Gilley** (friends of Dwight Grizzell—she has breast cancer); Sue Mercer's sister, **Connie Browning**, is being treated for breast cancer; Beverly Finnell's grandson, **Liam Finnell**, is having health issues; **Sara Teel**, daughter of Robin Roberts, is dealing with several health issues; Rick Cliett's 90 year old aunt **Doris Chambers** is recovering from multiple broken bones in her in Texas; Michael Cliett's girlfriend's mother, **Paula Ramos**, suffering from breast cancer; Tom Elkins' sister-in-law, **Joyce Elkins**, cancer surgery & auto accident. **Roy Lafollette**, father of Scott, Seth, and Sonja, recovering from triple bypass surgery; **Bradley Rand**, friend of Steven Bryant, seriously injured in auto accident. **Mark Baker**, Coleen Thomason's brother-in-law, has been moved from ICU in Florida. Issues involve brain blood vessels.

Adult Bible Class

"Rejoicing In The Lord"

A Study in Philipians

Rise & Shine: Sundays, 9:15

School Clothing Drive

Mark checks "School Clothing" & leave at sound booth.

Times of Services

Sunday A.M.

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Sunday P.M. 6:00 PM

Wednesday 7:00 PM

Building Fund

Loan balance as of 10/01/13 is **\$1,184,923.82**. Extra contributions to reduce the loan debt are needed and appreciated. Envelopes are available in the pew.

Nursery

Located across main foyer. Closed circuit TV allows viewing and participation in worship.

CDs and DVDs of Sermons are available free at sound booth. Also available on the website at: www.greatsmokymountainschurchofchrist.com.