

Psychics, Mediums, and Spiritualists: How Do We Know?

By

John C. Orlando, Jr.

Introduction:

Today there has been a marked increase of interest in the spiritual world. Many people are clamoring to psychics, mediums, and spiritualists, as well as dabbling in soothsaying, necromancy, and other paranormal activities (I'll use the word "divination" or "medium" to refer to these in some cases), to see if they can get a glimpse of the future, or to communicate with a lost loved one.

Much has already been done to refute a great deal of what is supposedly being done by psychics and mediums. All of the con games and "tricks of the trade" have been exposed. But I want to examine the issue in a different light. Let's suppose that some of the psychics really are in touch with the spiritual realm, and now let's analyze their claims and practice in light of some basic questions: what is true and false, how do we know what we know, and how can we get any true knowledge?

The Issue of Knowing

Those are pretty basic questions, right? As basic as those questions are, they are some of the more controversial questions one can ask. The reason is because these questions deal with **absolutes**. With regard to what is true and what is false, if "A" is true, then "non A" cannot be true at the same time and in the same sense. For example, the universe exists. It is impossible for the universe to both exist ("A"), and not exist ("non A") at the same time. What I just stated is referred to as the "law of non-contradiction" and is the foundation of all logic and knowledge.

So, we know that "A" can't be "non A" at the same time and in the same relationship. Fine. But, how do we **know** whether "A" or "non A" is **true**? For some things, such as the question of the existence of the universe, the way we can determine the truth of the matter, believe it or not, has been one of serious philosophical speculation over the ages. Intricate philosophical systems have been developed that seek to answer that very question. With regard to the example of the universe above, the question of whether the universe exists ("A") or doesn't exist ("non A") can be answered on the basis of self-evidence. That is, it is a self-evident truth that the universe exists ("A"). In order to deny a self-evident principle, Christian philosopher Norman Geisler says you must, "assume that it is true in the process of the denial...if you have to assume that a statement is true in order to deny it, it is actually undeniable and said to be a self-evident truth." (When Skeptics Ask, p. 270).

In the case of the universe, it is a self-evident truth that the universe exists to me because I physically exist in the universe. If the universe did not exist, then I would not physically exist, and in order to deny the existence of the universe, I would have to exist! (simple, right?! ☺).

Without getting too bogged down here and belaboring the obvious (though what I have just stated is not, amazingly, that obvious to some, and I have leapt over some philosophical

objections, believe it or not), there are other matters where the issue of self-evidence is limited or not applicable. This is particularly true with those things related to what philosophers refer to as ultimate reality. Philosopher Ed. L. Miller, in his book entitled “Questions that Matter” states on page 59, “Just what is the essential nature of things? What is the underlying reality which is revealed in the many things about us? And how is this underlying, essential reality related to these many things? How are the many things about us derived from this underlying reality? This is the ancient philosophical problem of “the One and the Many,” which involves two questions:

1. What is the ultimate reality (One)?
2. How is everything else (the Many) related to it?”

Miller here touches on two questions that have puzzled man since the beginning of time. Basically, ultimate reality (The One) deals with such matters as the meaning of life, and the existence and nature of God. The “Many” deals with such concerns as living in light of “The One,” and the issue and nature of life after death.

That’s all fine and dandy. But again, how do we know? What is true and what is false? What is ultimate reality and how is everything else supposed to relate to it? I’m convinced that it is these questions, as basic as they may be, that really lay at the root of the topic of divination. And, interestingly enough, it is these questions that really are the driving force behind the motives of those who practice these things. They believe in the supernatural as opposed to naturalists, and they are deeply concerned about life after death.

The Veil of Death

People are both fascinated by, and frightened of the unknown, and this is especially true with regard to the unknown that all men **will** know one day: death. Rich or poor, king or peasant, Black, White, Red, Brown, or Yellow, death eventually comes to all those who dwell on this earth. The prospect of what lays beyond the veil of death is, to be sure, one of the more intriguing and frightening things to grip the mind of man since death was introduced to the human race by our first parents (see Genesis Chapters 1 - 3). It is death that is the primary enemy of man, and man has searched since the beginning to answer the riddle of all that is death. In seeking to find an answer (and, I might add, a cure), man has sought to somehow communicate with the other side.

If communication could somehow be established, much of the riddle of death would be solved. For starters, we would know that there was indeed something more than just this physical realm that we find ourselves in. Second, not only would we know that this physical realm was not all there was, we would also be encouraged to realize that death was not the end, but just the beginning.

So, what’s the problem then with man seeking to discover an answer to the most important question (s) of ultimate reality? What’s so wrong with trying to make contact with the other side (spirit realm)? What’s the big deal if we try to contact a loved one that has passed on to the other side?

The Ultimate Source of Knowledge

Well, the quest for knowledge, whether in the physical or spiritual realm is not wrong in itself. The problem is that we are not a law unto ourselves. In other words, man is not left to **himself** to try and discover knowledge. He is not an autonomous creature who has simply come into being through pure chance processes, and now finds himself on this tiny planet in the midst of an immense chance universe, and must, in and of himself, both decide and define what is true and what is not. The universe that man has been thrust into has laws that govern its operation. It did not pop into existence out of nothing by pure chance. If this were the case; that is, if the universe were nothing more than the chance collection of atoms, molecules, chemicals, and amino acids, then we would expect to find absolutely no natural laws. There would be no rhyme or reason in the universe. As it is though, we see rhyme and reason. We see things being directed according to certain physical laws (e.g., the law of gravity, etc.).

It is not my intention to give a detailed argument for the existence of God. I'm simply stating what is plainly obvious to any thinking person—self-evident, if you will. The universe exhibits exquisite design, order, and complexity, and the only thing that can adequately account for that is Intelligence. There is a **Mind** behind all that we see, who is the sufficient First Cause of the universe; a Cause that Himself is uncaused because He has always existed and always will exist. He is self-existent and eternal. He is the One who created the universe and the laws that govern the universe. All that I am saying is no blind leap in logic at all; rather, it could be said to be a self-evident truth. The Apostle Paul puts it like this, “From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and the sky and all that God made. They can **clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and Divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God.**” (Romans 1:20, New Living Translation, emphasis mine).

Not only has God created the physical laws that govern the universe, but He also created the earth and all of the creatures that dwell there, the pinnacle of which is human beings. Man, the crowing jewel of all of God's works, whom God created in His own image, and whom God has provided “laws” through which they are to both govern themselves and glorify God. Man alone was created a moral creature; that is, he has an innate concern for right and wrong. But man was not created to simply **reflect** on what is right and wrong, and then define, in and of himself what those things might be; rather, he was created for a specific purpose: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. As a creature created in the image of God, he is to bring God's character to bear in every sphere of his life. He is to discover what **God** says is right and wrong, not through some mystical, **subjective** experience, but through God's **objective** standard that He has given mankind, and man is to then act accordingly (recall the questions about the One and the Many above). So, how does man know what is right and wrong? Where does man go to gain the knowledge of the truth about reality?

The knowledge that man attains is not to be divorced from the ultimate source of knowledge itself, because knowledge (so called) gained apart from the source is, at best, incomplete, and frequently produces dire consequences. For example, I might have some good ideas on how to conduct a war. And I might gain a good bit of insight into the different methodologies that men have employed over the centuries. But unless I actually go to the military and study the various manuals on the art and science of war, and learn different tactics of warfare, my knowledge will be incomplete, and will most likely result in certain defeat. The same is true of man. He may be able to get a good bit of insight into the universe and ultimate

reality, however, unless he goes to the source of those things, his knowledge will be incomplete, and it will produce dire consequences, particularly as it relates to spiritual matters.

This gets me back to the point that man is not a law unto himself. He must discover the source of true knowledge, which is necessarily **outside** of himself, and then live in accordance with that knowledge. He is not free to decide, in and of himself, what is knowledge and what is not knowledge, and he is not free to gain the knowledge, in and of himself, of what is right and what is wrong. Man's knowledge of what's right and wrong is not gained through trial and error and discovering what works best! There are laws that transcend man that man must submit to.

For example, in the physical/moral realm, how do I know that murder is wrong? I don't gain the knowledge that murder is wrong by engaging in the act, and then formulating my opinion about it. There are at least three ways that I know that murder is in fact wrong, and I am not free to violate any of those ways in order to discover whether or not murder really is wrong. First, there is the law of the land that says murder is wrong and should, under no conditions, be conducted or condoned. A person who disobeys this law and engages in the act of murder is thus subject to the severest of punishments.

Secondly, while the law of the land serves to state the right and wrong of the matter and the consequences thereof (i.e., "legislates morality"), our conscience, unless already seared as with a hot iron, also serves as an internal law, that tells us that such acts are heinous and are not to be carried out. We have a built-in programming, so to speak, that tells us that it is wrong to lie, cheat, steal, murder, etc. So, we are not free to do any and anything we wish. We have boundaries that have been imposed on us both from within (our conscience) and without (the law of the land). I do not have to engage in the act of murder to know with certainty that it is truly wrong. There are clear boundaries. Now, how do we know that the law of the land, and the internal law in our conscience are indeed correct?

This brings me to the third, and most important way that we know with absolute certainty that murder, or anything else for that matter, is right or wrong--God has told us what is right and wrong. It is only by turning to the true source of all knowledge (God) that we can be sure of what is right and wrong, and all law must be based and derived from God. Now, I stated that man has a built-in programming (so to speak) that enables him to know instinctively what is right and wrong. This is true, particularly with such an obvious thing as murder. But we must also realize that this programming is not perfect, and since the fall of Adam, our programming is not only less than perfect, it is actually **defective**. Our consciences have been darkened as a result of sin, and it is only by going to the Word of the Lord where we will be given that light that will guide our steps and direct our paths (Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5, 6, Proverbs 6:23). God gives us clear guidance as to what is right and wrong. He gives us a huge floodlight, and we must be guided by that floodlight so that we can see clearly and know with **certainty** where it is we are stepping (lest we fall into a ditch).

Well, you may be saying, "that's all fine and good, but you're just talking about common sense stuff. I'm talking about things pertaining to the **spiritual** realm, where there is no clearly defined law in the land for what's right and wrong, and man has a right to search out for those things as he sees fit!" Fair enough. But this fails to account for a couple of very important factors:

1. While this country allows freedom of religion and spiritual endeavors and as such has not created laws saying what is right and wrong behavior as related to the spiritual realm, there is a law nevertheless that binds men's consciences concerning those matters. In other words, even though the laws of a human government may not address the spiritual realm, there most certainly **is** a law for the things pertaining to the spiritual realm. The Law that stands over all law (and which all law should be based on and is subject to) is that of the ultimate Law-Giver, the God of the universe. His Law most certainly does set forth what is proper and improper behavior as it relates to the spiritual realm, and we are morally accountable to obey what His Law commands with regard to those things.

2. Who says man has a right to search out for those things as he sees fit? That sounds like a good thing to say, but really it's just a statement of groundless opinion. Groundless opinion in the way I'm using it here means that a person is making an absolute truth claim without appealing to an objective, absolute source. An objective, absolute source would be one that is found outside of the individual (s) and one that has the supreme authority to dictate what is true and what is not. It is the ultimate, supreme, perfect basis for all being, thought, and knowledge. Since this person's truth claim is grounded on his own subjective opinion instead of some objective and absolute source, it is absolutely meaningless and useless. This will be an important point to remember when we begin to discuss in detail the practices of psychics and others.

A person may **think** there's no law pertaining to the spiritual realm, and they may **think** that man has a right to do something. But, unless one is omniscient (all knowing), how can one claim **absolutely** that there is no law pertaining to the spiritual realm, and unless you are omnipotent (all powerful), how can you claim that you have a **right** to anything? You see, the only type of being capable of knowing whether or not there are laws pertaining to the spiritual realm is a being that is all knowing. And the only type of being capable of claiming any absolute rights is a being that is omnipotent. Therefore, only by turning to the One (God) who is in fact omniscient and omnipotent can we ever truly discover the ultimate truth about ultimate reality.

We are to search out for those spiritual things, but not as we see fit. We search out for those things, again, with the Word of God as our guide.

False Knowledge

But man refuses to subject himself to what God says, both in the physical realm and the spiritual realm. He seeks to gain all of his knowledge completely on his own. As it pertains to the spiritual realm, man's so-called "knowledge" is really no knowledge at all. All of man's philosophies and wisdom (which is merely the application of knowledge), is, instead, utter foolishness and nonsense. The Apostle Paul writes, "As the Scripture say, '[God] will destroy human wisdom and discard their most brilliant ideas.' So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made them all look foolish and has shown their wisdom to be useless nonsense." (1 Corinthians 1:19 – 20, NLT).

Not only is the wisdom and knowledge of man utter foolishness particularly as it relates to spiritual matters, but we must not allow ourselves to be brought under the influence of such foolishness. The Apostle Paul, writing to his young protégé Timothy, puts it this way, "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and

contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge...” (1 Tim 6:20, New King James Version). An interesting note here is that the Greek word Paul uses here for knowledge is the word “gnosis,” which simply means knowledge. It would appear that Paul was speaking with reference to an early form of heresy that crept into the church called Gnosticism.

Secret Knowledge

Gnosticism was a heresy that arose in the very early Church. The gnostics prided themselves on attaining a special knowledge. Matter (the created world) was thought to be evil, and was in total opposition to the world of the spirit. The supreme God had no dealings with the world of matter (This sharp separation between the spirit world and the physical world is known as Dualism. While the Christian worldview does promote a distinction between the spiritual and the material, it does not promote an absolute separation between the two). Salvation could only be gained by a spiritual enlightenment of gnosis (knowledge) that only a few could attain. Today, the term gnostic has taken on a wider definition to include “any form of religious belief which emphasize any kind of dualism and/or the possession of secret knowledge.” (The New Bible Dictionary, 2d Edition). It is with the possession of secret knowledge that the New Age psychics and mediums wish to lay claim to that is ultimately destructive.

Popular psychic Sylvia Browne’s web site for example makes this statement, “Sylvia has formed a community of people who believe in God but reject the harsh dogma and judgment found in today’s religions. She brings us a renewed appreciation for the loving God, and Goddess, which Christ spoke of in his teachings. We seek to find the true basis for knowing God, which is a **journey of discovery and experience that is unique for each person**. Since we all seek the truth about God, we call ourselves **gnostics** (the “g” is silent), which is taken from the Greek word “gnosis” meaning knowledge. We define a gnostic as a seeker of truth, one who looks to all of the great prophets (such as Christ, Buddha, and Mohammed) for wisdom and truth.”

Many problems abound with Ms. Browne’s statement here. But, I believe we can boil it all down to this simple question: how does Ms. Browne **know** that her conception of God is correct? Again we see that the crux of the issue is knowledge, and what is so ironic is that Ms. Browne even makes mention of “gnosis” (knowledge). But, is her “gnosis” true, or is it “the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge...” Is her “gnosis” based on an objective, verifiable source, or it is based purely on groundless opinion?

Well, let’s take this “statement of faith” apart piece by piece. First, it says that she has “formed a community of people who believe in God.” It is at this point that many people would stop and say, “There now; she’s not that bad! She believes in God doesn’t she?” But the question must be asked, **what** “God” does she believe in? Is it the God of her imagination, or some other thing she is claiming to be God? And, how do we know that she has the “right” God?

Next, it states that she rejects the “harsh dogma and judgement found in today’s religions.” First, on what grounds does she reject any religion (and that religion’s “God”) at all? Ms. Browne is making an absolute truth claim. She is saying categorically that someone is right about God (her), and someone else is wrong (all the major religions in the world). I applaud Ms. Browne for having the gumption to stand up for what she believes, and is willing to say that there is an absolute truth (and, gasp, that some people are worshipping false gods!), however, she

provides no objective basis for her opinion. As a matter of fact, that is all we are presented with: groundless opinion.

Secondly, she then goes on to say she looks for truth from all the “great prophets” such as Christ, Buddha, and Mohammed. Hmm, that is a bit strange, don’t you think? I mean, did it ever occur to Ms. Browne that the very “harsh dogma and judgement found in today’s religions” have their **basis** in the teachings of the very “great prophets” she is endeavoring to look to for wisdom and truth? If you reject the very heart of the message that these people preached, how can you say that you look to them for wisdom and truth?

Next, the statement says that she “brings us a renewed appreciation for the loving God, and Goddess, which Christ spoke of in His teachings.” Not sure which Bible Ms. Browne is reading from, but there is absolutely no mention of some “Goddess” in the teachings of Christ. You see, if there is a “Goddess,” then the Goddess would be Divine; that it is, she too would be 100% God. The problem though is that there is only One God, and it was in the Name of that One God whom Jesus came to proclaim the Good News. It is that One God who Jesus in fact is--God the Son, the second “Person” of the Godhead. Ms Browne’s view here is nothing more than ancient Greek mythology repackaged in Christian terminology. She is free to believe such things, but please don’t impugn Christ as having taught such notions.

Next, we read, “we seek to find the true basis for knowing God.” Notice the words “true” “basis” and “knowing.” This is exactly my point. What is **true**? What is the **basis** for our knowledge? How can we **know** about God? Well, Ms. Browne answers this by stating, “which is **a journey of discovery and experience that is unique for each person.**” Notice the words “discovery” “experience” and “unique.” To Ms. Browne, the way we can gain the “true basis for knowing God” is through personal experience, and each person’s experience is completely unique. Sound familiar? This is what I touched on earlier. Ms. Browne’s view, as espoused here, is that man must, in and of himself, discover what the truth is, and the truth that he discovers is his **own** truth. There is no absolute truth. What if this person makes a “discovery” that is different than Ms. Browne’s? Well, according to this statement, it’s no big deal. The truth is what you think the truth is, and that serves as the basis of one’s knowledge. It is subjective experience, not objective truth. It is dependent on the individual, not on something outside of the individual. It is, once again, nothing more than groundless opinion.

Are you willing to stake eternity on that? I’m not.

So, What is True And What Is False?

I have belabored all of this because it is really at the heart of the issue. What is true, and what is false? What is right behavior, and what is wrong behavior? How do we know what is true and false, right and wrong? The answer is clear: the truth is only found in God’s Word, and it is in God’s where we find clear guidance on how we are to live our lives, both in the physical and the spiritual realm. We will either live our lives according to our **own** standards of what is right and what is wrong, or we will live in light of what is objectively true (God’s Word). To put it another way, we will either submit to God’s truth, or we will rebel against His truth. When we rebel against His truth, we will most certainly suffer negative consequences. Why? Because as the Creator, He knows what is best for us. He has set clear boundaries and guidelines, not to be a burden to us, but to keep us from harm.

The Practice of Divination

This takes me now to the actual practice of divination (which, again, for the purposes of this article will include psychics, soothsaying, necromancy, spiritualists, and other paranormal activities). All of the things I've listed under the title of divination have a couple of things in common. 1. They are all concerned with the spiritual realm. 2. They all seek communication with the spiritual realm. 3. They are all practices that are strictly forbidden and condemned by God, either explicitly or implicitly (See Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Leviticus 19:31, 20:6; I Chronicles 10:13-14; Is. 2:6; Daniel 2:27-28a).

Basically, much of what we see going on is a con game. Many have clearly documented how easy it is to con people through such things as cold reading, for example. Ray Hyman states in an article (<http://www.factsources.com/cut/coldreading.html>), "Cold reading involves the psychic reading the subject's body language, etc., and skillfully extracting information from the subject, which can then be fed back later, convincing the subject that the psychic has told them things they couldn't possibly have known!"

Travis Dacoliias states in his article (also found at the same link), "Cold reading is a technique used by tarot card readers, psychics, palm readers, astrologers, and even con men to get people to believe that the cold reader knows all about them, even though they have never met. Unlike hot reading, cold reading uses no secretly obtained or other advance knowledge about the person being read. Cold reading relies on an inventory of vague statements about the person's personality, tailored feedback, selective recall of correct impressions, and an assortment of other tricks. The most effective weapon is the stock spiel, a set of statements about the person that are vague enough to fit anyone yet deceptively seem specific."

But, let's suppose we give some psychics (and Sylvia Browne), the benefit of the doubt. Let's suppose that they are in fact in contact with spirits from the netherworld. There are still tons of questions that any thinking person should be inclined to ask. I've already touched on the most basic of those questions (what is true, and how do we know). Building on what I touched on earlier concerning knowledge (how do you know?), I'll list a few questions, then provide some responses:

1. How do you know there are spirits or an afterlife?
2. How do you know that the spirits you are in communication with are good spirits or evil spirits?
3. What makes you think that we are supposed to communicate with those spirits?
4. What objective standard do you use to determine the answers to the first 3 questions?

Let's look at each question now.

Question 1: How do you know there are spirits or an afterlife? This gets into core beliefs. The person may say they know spirits exist and that there is an afterlife because they talk to the spirits, and they talk to the spirits of dead people. But, how are we to know that the voice a person is hearing isn't just the result of an active imagination (or bad pizza!)? Maybe the person is simply hallucinating. Or, maybe they're just crazy. Now, I do believe in spirits, and I do believe in the afterlife, but I do not believe in those because of a feeling I get. I believe in those things because there is an objective source outside of myself that tells me that those things do in fact exist, and that source is God's Word as contained in the Bible. Not only does this source

describe and assure me of the existence of “spirits” and the afterlife, but it also **prescribes** what my conduct is supposed to be with regard to those things.

Question 2: How do you know that the spirits you are in communication with are good spirits or evil spirits? I find it utterly incredible that people automatically believe everything they supposedly hear a spirit telling them is true! How do you know that the spirit isn’t “lying through its teeth” (that would be a good trick!) when it even tells you its name? The answer is, you have no way of knowing. It is all based purely on **subjective** feelings. We are all familiar with the phrase, “if it feels good, do it.” Well, the motto here seems to be, “if it feels good, it must be good,” or “if it **seems** right, then it **must** be right.” Obviously though, what feels good isn’t necessarily always good, and what seems right isn’t always right. As we turn to the only reliable and infallible source concerning these matters, the Bible, we read that the devil will masquerade as an “angel of light.” That is, he will give every appearance of being beautiful and good, but in reality nothing could be further from the truth, for he is in fact the exact opposite of those things. But once the person comes into contact with Satan’s “appearance” of beauty, he is so taken and captivated by it that he is rendered defenseless against him. Satan will continue to lure the person along, showing him one “exquisite” thing after the next, until he succeeds in his mission, which is bringing about as misery as he can to human beings.

Question 3. What makes you think that we are supposed to communicate with those spirits? Since man really has no definitive knowledge in and of himself about the spirit world and the possible dangers that lurk there, why would anyone think it wise to engage these spirits? Again, we must have a guide that understands these things and can give us clear guidance. And, again, that clear guidance is to be found in the Creator of the universe as He has revealed to us in His Word.

Question 4: What objective standard do you use to determine the answers to the previous questions? Obviously, I’ve already touched on it briefly. The only infallible, objective standard that we have that tells us about reality is God’s Word. God’s Word tells us of both physical and spiritual reality, and gives us clear guidelines on how we are to conduct ourselves with regard to each realm of reality. With the physical realm, God has told us what right and wrong behavior is. If we do or don’t do certain things, it will harm us. The same applies in the spiritual realm. God has told us what is right and wrong behavior with relation to the spiritual world. If we do or don’t do certain things, it will harm us.

The Prohibition Against Divination

Why are these practices forbidden and condemned by God? There are many reasons, but I believe we can focus on two primary reasons:

1. They lead people away from the One True and Living God. In the final analysis, all of these practices are devised by man (and Satan) as a way to sort of bypass God. Why be subjected to some “Cosmic Killjoy” if you don’t have to? Why not just get in touch with the other side to get the knowledge you need, which knowledge is usually used for a selfish end. Thus, God must play second fiddle to the vain imaginations and ludicrous curiosities of sinful, self-serving creatures. The “spirits” that are contacted care nothing about the truth or God, and never lead a person to the only source of true life and joy. Instead, they give man answers to questions that only relate to the temporal.

2. They bring people into contact with evil unbeknownst to the practitioners. This is one aspect that many seem to have no thought of whatsoever, but it is one aspect that should frighten us. The scary thing here is that the “spirit” that the practitioner is in communication with may seem really beautiful, but in reality, it could be Satan himself! I alluded to this briefly above, but the Bible is more than clear that Satan and his minions masquerade as angels of light and righteousness! Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul, “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.” (2 Cor 11:14,15). People could be in direct contact with the evil one unbeknownst to them!

Test the Spirits

Well, what if someone claims to be in direct contact with God, and not just some spirit? How would we know that the person’s claims were actually true or not. The Bible, again, does provide clear guidance on how one can determine whether or not a prophet is truly from the Living God. The Apostle John tells us, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1). Here is a quote from an article entitled, “The Psychics: Can They Help You?” by Marcia Montenegro, who herself was once involved in the occult, that summarizes the point:

“God gives us the acid test in Deut. 18:21-22 to use for prophecy: If the prophecy is not 100% accurate, the prophet is not from God. This writer, who once was involved in the occult and in psychic activity, was often told by psychics that a really good psychic on their best day might be about 85% accurate. No psychic claims 100% accuracy 100% of the time. Another test: If someone gives accurate information or foretells an event from dreams or visions, but then leads you away from the Biblical God, you should reject that prophet or visionary (Deut. 13:13). There is no way around it: when psychic ability is put to the test, it falls on its face.”

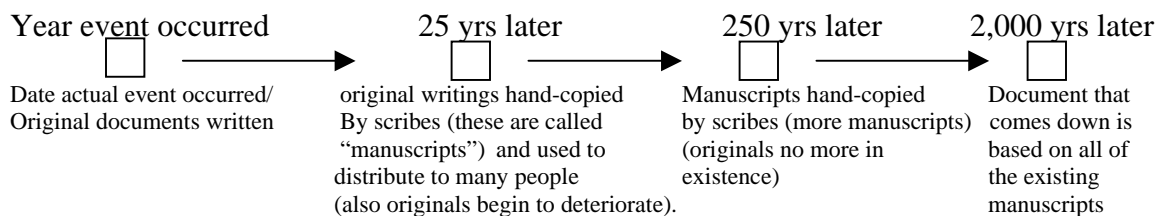
Conclusion

I know I belabored many points here, but my goal is to drive home the truth that the only true source of knowledge is the God of the universe. God has provided us with His Word, the only infallible rule or source for how we are to live our lives. If we do not take heed to His Word in our lives, we will suffer dire consequences. While there are scores of people who seek to find the answers to the ultimate questions in life, and seek to contact the spiritual realm, ultimately the meaning of our lives can **only** be found when we submit ourselves to the One who created us. The world of the occult offers no true hope and no lasting peace. It is only through Christ that true hope and peace, that will never fade, can be attained.

God has provided the only means through which we can have a relationship with Him by sending His Son into the world to die on the cross for sins. He rose from the grave and secured a place in Heaven for us, which He offers as an absolutely free gift. The way we receive this gift is by placing our faith—our complete trust, in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation, and receive Him as our Lord and Savior. Why don’t you, if you haven’t already, right where you are, reach out and receive God’s free gift of eternal life? If you would like to do that, here is a prayer that might help you:

“Dear God, I know I’m a sinner and do not deserve to go to Heaven. But I believe with all of my heart that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, that He died on the cross to pay for all my sins, and then rose from the grave. Lord Jesus, I commit my life to you. I dedicate myself completely for you. I turn from my way of living, to your way of living. I ask that you fill me with your Holy Spirit, and as that you take full control of my life. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.”

1. Manuscript Authority - Since we do not have the original copies of ancient writings, we must rely on manuscript copies. Manuscripts are copies of the original that were handed down through the years. The case for the credibility of a document then is based on the total number of manuscripts we have of a particular work, and the time interval from the date of the manuscript to the original. Here is a chart that might help in understanding this:



Hopefully that little chart helps to put this issue in perspective. For example, concerning the New Testament (NT), we know that Christ died approximately AD 30. The question now becomes, how many manuscripts do we have concerning the life of Christ and the early Church, and how close in years are those manuscripts to when Christ and the Apostles actually lived? What we discover in the case of the New Testament, in comparison to other historical works of antiquity, is truly amazing!

The textual superiority of the New Testament documents over all other ancient manuscripts is manifestly clear. In no other case is the interval of time between date of authorship and date of earliest extant manuscripts so short. Furthermore, the number of extant manuscripts is far greater for the New Testament than for any other classical work, or even any 10 pieces of classical literature combined (ref “A Ready Defense,” by Josh McDowell).

There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in existence today, as well as 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate, and 1,000 of other early versions. When we factor in different fragments of manuscripts, the sum total reaches to over 24,000, a truly staggering figure.

This doesn’t even include the over 86,000 quotations from the NT by the early church fathers and several thousand Lectionaries (church-service books containing Scripture quotations used in the early centuries of Christianity). These quotations contain a significant portion of the NT. This is significant, because we would essentially have the NT even if we didn’t have the NT manuscripts. For other ancient works, manuscript attestation is anemic in comparison. Here is a break down of the evidence:

- Of the 7 surviving plays of Sophocles, we have 4 manuscripts that are of any value, the earliest being written in the 11 Century AD, 1,400 years after the poet's death.

- For Plato, we have **11** manuscripts, the earliest being dated about **1,250** years after his death.
- The History of Thucydides has **8** manuscripts, the earliest being from the 10th Century AD, **1,300** years after his death.
- Herodotus also has **8** manuscripts, the earliest being from the 10th Century AD, again **1,300** years after his death.
- The runner up to the New Testament in manuscript authority is Homers Iliad with **643** manuscripts. The first complete text dates in the 13th Century AD, at least **1,800** years after he lived!

Pretty amazing isn't it? Listen to what some noted scholars have to say:

Dr. Ron Rhodes: "By comparing the manuscript support for the Bible with manuscript support for other ancient documents and books, it becomes overwhelmingly clear that no other ancient piece of literature can stand up to the Bible. Manuscript support for the Bible is unparalleled! There are more [New Testament] manuscripts copied with greater accuracy and earlier dating than for any secular classic from antiquity."

Dr. Norman Geisler: "No other book is even a close second to the Bible on either the number or early dating of the copies. The average secular work from antiquity survives on only a handful of manuscripts; the New Testament boasts thousands."

John W. Montgomery (lawyer) : "To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested biographically as the New Testament"

Josh McDowell (noted author): "No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers and attestation. In comparison, the Iliad by Homer is second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive" McDowell also states, "After trying to shatter the historicity and validity of the Scripture, I came to the conclusion that they are historically trustworthy. If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, he must then also disregard every other piece of literature from antiquity."

Frederic C. Kenyon (was keeper of manuscripts in the British Museum): "But besides confirming the . . . authenticity of the canonical books, the new evidence tends to confirm the general integrity of the text as it has come down to us. . . . The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

2. Archaeological Support - There have been a number of significant archaeological discoveries over the years that have gone to demonstrate the historical reliability of the Bible. This does not in itself prove that the Bible is the Word of God. It merely demonstrates that the

Bible can be regarded, again, as a reliable document as touching, at the very least, historical events. Here again are what some scholars have to say:

By 1960, in a book endorsed by an editorial board consisting of American Liberal Clergymen, John Elder had written:

“It is not too much to say that it was the rise of the science of archaeology that broke the deadlock between historians and the orthodox Christian. Little by little, one city after another, one civilization after another, one culture after another, whose memories were enshrined only in the Bible, were restored to their proper places in ancient history by the studies of archaeologists. . . Contemporary records of Biblical events have been unearthed and the uniqueness of Biblical revelation has been emphasized by contrast and comparison to newly discovered religions of ancient peoples. Nowhere has archaeological discovery refuted the Bible as history.”

Sir William Ramsey (a famous historian and archaeologist, who set out to refute the historical accuracy of the Bible) writes:

"I may fairly claim to have entered on this investigation without prejudice in favor of the conclusion which I shall now seek to justify to the reader. On the contrary, I began with a mind unfavorable to it, for the ingenuity and apparent completeness of the Tübingen theory had at one time quite convinced me. It did not then lie in my line of life to investigate the subject minutely; but more recently I found myself brought into contact with the Book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth. In fact, beginning with a fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition, and never relying on its evidence as trustworthy for first century conditions, I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations." quoted from Ramsay's book: St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen.” Ramsey also states, “Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy, he is possessed of the true historic sense...in short, this author should be placed along with the greatest of historians." His findings compelled him to make a **complete reversal** of his beliefs due to the overwhelming evidence uncovered in his research.

See this link for further info: http://www.grmi.org/renewal/Richard_Riss/evidences/

3. Predictive Prophecy - The Bible is the only “religious” writing that contains predictive prophecy. That is, some of its authors (Isaiah and Daniel, for example) write of events that did not take place until hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of years at the time of their writing. The “predictions” they make are not vague generalities, but are precise, and the “predictions” that were given were not based on “cold readings” or other sorts of chicanery as is employed by modern day “seers” whose predictions are more educated guesses based on the information they either glean or already have. The only way the detailed prophecies in the Bible could have come about was by Divine intervention. Dr D. James Kennedy states,

“These Biblical prophecies deal with almost every nation and scores of cities with which Israel had some dealings. It cannot be said that these prophecies were written after the events, for many of the events took place hundreds or even thousands of years after the prophecy was made. Nor can it be said that they are vague and obscure, because they are highly specific in

their details. Nor can it be said that they are merely lucky guesses, because there are over 2,000 of them which have infallibly come to pass. Nor can it be said that these things were likely to take place, because they were indeed extremely unlikely events.”

4. Statistical Probabilities - This can be factored a couple of different ways. The first way is related to the previous point, predictive prophecy. The Old Testament contains well over 300 prophecies relating to the Messiah. Such things as where the Messiah would be born, the type of ministry He would have, the type of death He would die, and even the fact that He would rise from the dead, were all prophesied about in the Scripture. These were to serve as signs to the people that the person fulfilling these things was in fact the Messiah. In order for a person to be the Messiah, he would actually have to fulfill every single one of these intricate prophecies.

Well, Jesus Christ didn't just fulfill 3 or 4 of those prophecies, but He fulfilled every single one of them down to the jot and the tittle! To illustrate the mathematical probabilities of this, let's just consider 7 of those prophecies. The mathematical probability that one person could fulfill just 7 of those prophecies is equivalent to the following scenario (this scenario drawn from Dr. John Ankerberg video, "Credibility for Prophecy Rests in Jesus' Deity"):

1. Fill the entire state of Texas with silver dollars 2 feet high.
2. Take one of the silver dollars, put a red "X" on it, then throw it anywhere in the pile (and, shake the pile up!).
3. Then take a person, blind fold him, and tell him that he can go anywhere in the pile he likes, and the first coin he picks up **must** be the one with the Red "X" painted on it!
4. The mathematical odds of that happening are astronomical (I won't bore you with the numbers)! And that's illustrative of the chances of one person fulfilling just 7 of the Messianic prophecies! If we factored in the remaining prophecies, which Christ fulfilled, we begin to see the undeniable fact that Jesus is **exactly** who He claimed to be. Based on the statistical and mathematical analysis alone, I'd say that the **most sure** thing in the universe is the **fact** that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. The Messiah--God in the flesh (100% God and 100% man) who came to die on the cross to pay the full price for all of our sins, and rise from the dead to secure a place in Heaven for those who receive Him as Lord and Savior of their lives.

Another way we can factor statistical probabilities is to consider the uniqueness of the Bible. In the Bible, we have a volume of 66 books written over the span of 1,600 years by 40 different authors from every walk of life and 3 different Continents, and yet it is internally consistent and maintains the same message from beginning to end! Despite all of the factors mentioned, the Bible's message is a unified whole from beginning to end. It truly is amazing. Only through Divine Providence could this be possible given all of the variables described above.

For further investigation and intriguing statistics, visit:
<http://www.reasons.org/resources/papers/prophecy.html>

5. Jesus Christ - The New Testament has been demonstrated to be the most historically reliable text from ancient history, and at the heart of the NT's historical account is the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Here we find historical events of primary significance to the writers of the NT, with the most important even in history being attested to: the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ that:

- a. Authenticates all that Jesus taught. All of Jesus' claims about who He was, and what was required of man is true, and man is now held morally accountable to obey what Jesus taught.
- b. Disqualifies all that Jesus didn't teach (and proves that every other religion is indeed false).
- c. Ultimately proves that the Bible is the Word of God. You see, Jesus Himself attested to the Divine authorship of Scripture, and since He demonstrated that He was God in the flesh by rising from the dead, then that means that all that He said was true.

So, **is** the Bible historically reliable? I'd say the proof is "in the pudding." From the manuscript authority, archaeological evidence, fulfilled prophecy, statistical probabilities, the testimony of the Bible itself (which claims Divine authorship), and the testimony of Jesus Christ, not only is it historically reliable, but I believe we can say, without question, that the Bible is Divine rather than human in origin. A person is free to stake their eternal destiny on the sinking sand of human opinion if they like. I, however, prefer the immutable, unshakable foundation of objective truth that is found only within Christianity.

The End

7/22/01

Need more info? Contact John Orlando by e-mail JOHNO576@aol.com , or visit <http://geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/9079>

Psychics

By James K. Walker

Famous Psychics: Madame Blavatsky, Arthur Ford, Jeanne Dixon, Uri Geller.

Other Names: Mediums, Necromancers, Spiritualists.

Associated Practices: Divination ([Astrology](#), [Tarot](#), I Ching, [Palmistry](#), Mind Reading, telepathy, etc.), Necromancy (Seance, [Channeling](#), Ouija Board, etc.), and telekinesis moving objects mentally or spiritually such as table-tilting, levitation).

INTRODUCTION

On January 25, 1997, America's most famous psychic, Jeanne Dixon died. During her lifetime, America experienced unparalleled growth in the interest and acceptance of psychics and paranormal phenomena. According to Larry Rosen, president of NetLive Communications, over her celebrated 50 year career Dixon was advisor to world leaders including US presidents and wrote eight books including *Reincarnation and Prayers to Live By* and *The Call to Glory*. At the time of her death, Dixon syndicated columns were featured in over 800 daily newspapers worldwide (*Business Wire*, January 28, 1997).

Shortly before her death, Dixon announced plans to join the popular and profitable 900 psychic telephone network industry with her own Jeanne Dixon's Psychic Network. She was unable to see her plans fulfilled as she died shortly after the network was announced and before it could be launched. Two months after her death, however, Watchman Fellowship received an email purportedly from Dixon herself (jeanne.dixon@psychics.net) stating, "Hello, I'm Jeanne Dixon a psychic, medium, healer, spiritualist, clairvoyant & astrologer. . . I can predict your future. . . Please call me right now!" (email dated March 21, 1997). The message provided both a 24 hour "900" number and an "800" number to use with credit cards. The message was not, of course, some weak attempt to demonstrate communication with the dead through the Internet. It did, however, demonstrate Netlive Communications' dogged determination to continue with the Jeanne Dixon Psychic Network despite her unanticipated death. The network features several \$3.99 per minute "900" lines ending in "J-E-A-N-E" and the first live, videoconferenced psychic, tarot card and astrological guidance service over the Internet (*Business Wire*, January 28, 1997; December 16, 1996).

Dixon's death will apparently not dampen the success of her psychic network or the psychic industry as a whole. Dionne Warwick's Psychic Friends Network employs approximately 1,500 psychics logging an estimated 3 million minutes a month at about \$4 per minute according to Baltimore-based Inphomation Communications, Inc. ("Who could've foretold psychic spree?" *Dallas Morning News*, March 19, 1996, pp. 1-C, 6-C). According to those estimates, Warwick's service alone would gross \$144 million annually. In addition to Warwick and Dixon, Mark Plakias, managing director of Strategic Telemedia, a New York research firm estimated nearly half of the 200,000 pay-per-call entertainment services in America are psychic hotlines (*ibid.*, p. 1-C). Richard Dworman, editor of the *Infomercial Marketing Report*, estimates Psychic Friends Network's gross annual income at a more conservative \$100 million. Still, this is remarkable for an

organization that started just seven years ago and is receiving between 7,500 to 10,000 paying calls each day. "The thing took off like a rocket, it was at the right place at the right time," said Dworman ("Seeking your fortune can cost one," *The Philadelphia Daily News*, March 19, 1997, p. C-1). The second and third largest psychic networks, Psychic Readers Network and Your Psychic Experience, annually take in about \$50 million and \$35-\$40 million, respectively (*ibid.*). Psychic hotlines are just one aspect of America's growing psychic industry. Psychic fairs are commonplace in many US cities. Dallas-based Creative Organization has sponsored monthly psychic fairs held for the past fifteen years featuring crystal balls, astrology, palmistry, clairvoyants, seers, tarot cards, and rune stones ("Mediumcool," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 1996, Guide, p. 30). Metaphysical and New Age book stores can be found easily in the Yellow Pages of many American cities, and the Internet is facilitating a cottage industry of "cyberpsychics." One psychic entrepreneur, Jonathan Katz of Encino, Calif., boasts of up to 250,000 tarot, I Ching or bioreadings a month through his web sites (*The Dallas Morning News*, March 19, 1996, p. 6-C). Yahoo, a popular web index, lists 363 on-line psychic services in five categories (www.yahoo.com).

HISTORY

While modern technology such as 900 numbers and the Internet may be partially responsible for fueling their recent popularity, psychics and mediums are not new. A simple definition of psychic is "A person who is either born with or develops many gifts or talents in the area of ESP, clairvoyance, communication with the spirit world, abilities to read the human aura and uses these special skills as a healer or reader" (*The New Age A to Z*, p. 120). Defined this broadly, the history of psychics may be traced back thousands of years ago to the seers, shamans, and soothsayers of ancient pagan religions and occult practices. Yet in North America the popularity of the psychic arts is something relatively new. What are the roots of the modern psychic revival in America?

The genealogy of the modern psychic movement can be found in certain aspects of the mesmeric and Spiritualist movements. These practices spread through Europe and America in the early and middle 19th century after followers of the controversial Austrian doctor, Franz Antoine Mesmer (1766-1815), reported "thought transference, of clairvoyance and 'eyeless vision'" in addition to other psychic phenomena in "mesmerized" subjects. ("Psychical Research," *Man, Myth, and Magic*, Vol. 17, p. 2273).

The popularity of mesmerism and especially its alleged healing properties, along with the celebrated "rappings" of the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, led directly to the sweeping acceptance of the Spiritualist movement of the latter half of the 19th century. "It accustomed the public to the idea that certain especially gifted persons might, when in a state of trance, exercise clairvoyant and other paranormal faculties, and even to the idea that some mesmeric subjects might become aware of, and perhaps communicate with, the spirits of departed persons. The mesmeric trance developed, by an easy and natural transition, into the mediumistic trance. . ." (*ibid.*, see also, "Fox Sisters," *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, Vol. 1, pp. 345-49). Thus, by the turn of the 20th century, the general public's perception of psychic manifestation was largely limited to the infamous Spiritualist churches. These featured necromancy (communication with the dead) along with an assortment of other manifestations. Critics and paranormal debunkers like famous illusionist and escape artist Harry Houdini claimed they were little more than fakery and parlor tricks ("Houdini, Harry," *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, Vol. 1, pp. 440-41).

There were, however, efforts to distance Spiritualism from a purely religious arena by attempting

to explore, research and categorize psychic phenomena as a science. In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) was founded by Sir William Barrett (1844-1925), Cambridge professor Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900), and F. W. H. Meyers (1843-1901). Prominent early members included Edmund Gurney (1847-1888) and "the St. Paul of Spiritualism," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1858-1930), author of the Sherlock Holmes stories ("Spiritualism," *An Encyclopaedia of Occultism*, p. 384; "Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan," *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, Vol. 1, p. 261).

Spiritualists attempted to collaborate with scholars to scientifically measure and prove psychic phenomena. Areas of study included thought transference and other types of telepathy, hypnotism or mesmeric trance, haunted houses, the "causes" or "laws" of Spiritualism, and the history of such manifestations. Despite their intentions, the controls and tests administered by the SPR did more to expose fraud than to prove psychic manifestations. Colin Wilson who is personally sympathetic to psychic phenomenon notes, "The results were disappointing. Gurney committed suicide in a Brighton hotel in 1888 when he discovered that certain trusted mediums were tricksters. And although the S.P.R. has had many eminent adherents . . . it has failed to make any general impact" (Wilson, Colin, *The Occult*, p. 493).

For example, SPR had intended to publish a favorable report on the famous medium, psychic and spiritualist, Madame Blavatsky (1831-1891), who founded the Theosophical Society. But Blavatsky's housekeeper, Emma Cutting-Coulomb, "blabbed" some of the psychic's techniques of fakery to the *Christian College Magazine* whose story was immediately picked up by the *London Times*. The reports of fraud were then confirmed by the SPR researcher in India when he was allowed to inspect Blavatsky's cedar wood "shrine" in which letters from the spirit world would magically appear. "For some faithful disciple, wishing to demonstrate that fraud was impossible, had slapped the rear wall of the shrine saying, 'You see, it's perfectly solid,' when, to his dismay, a panel had shot open, revealing another panel in the wall of [Blavatsky's] boudoir" (*ibid.*, p. 336). In addition to fraud, public acceptance of the SPR specifically and psychic manifestations in general were hampered by sexual scandals. Houdini reported that female mediums "often" offered him sexual favors in exchange for collusion during his investigations. Speaking of the SPR's co-founder, Colin comments, "Myers's dubious character in matters of sex or other people's correspondence does not prove that he would be capable of faking the results of a séance; but . . . his motives in forming the S.P.R. may have been highly charged and emotional rather than purely scientific" (*ibid.*, p. 494).

Failed attempts to "prove" psychic phenomena in the 19th and early 20th century did little to dampen the psychic revival of the last few decades. Waning interest in psychics was boosted in the mid 20th century by Disciples of Christ minister, Arthur Ford (1897- 1971), who functioned as a medium for the spirit "Flecher." Ford founded the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF) in 1955 and received national prominence in 1967 when he allegedly contacted the dead son of Bishop James Pike on network television through trance mediumship ("Ford, Arthur A.," *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, Vol. 1, p. 341). Despite occasional interest, no one, including the psychics themselves, may have been able to predict the degree of popularity of the current psychic revival.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE

Much of the mystique and lure of modern psychics is the "proof" of their claims and information through various alleged supernatural manifestations. People often trust psychics because of their persuasive demonstrations. The history of psychics is littered with cases of proven fraud. Faked psychic phenomena may involve stage magic or "sleight-of-hand." It is possible that Pharaoh's

magicians used common magic tricks to "duplicate" the first three plagues God gave as signs through Moses (Exodus 7-8).

Professional magician James Randi, whose stage name is "The Amazing Randi," has publicly exposed a number of psychics, spiritualists, channelers, and charlatans. One of Randi's first targets was Israeli psychic Uri Geller, tested by Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) for his powers to bend spoons and levitate objects. Randi successfully demonstrated "The tricks were very simple. . . There was nothing you couldn't get off the back of a cornflakes box so to speak" (Time, June 13, 1988, p. 72). Dan Korem, a Christian illusionist, has also used his talents in stage magic to debunk a number of fake psychics (see: Powers: Testing the Psychic & Supernatural). The likelihood of fraud and fakery is one reason the Bible warns against relying on "signs and wonders" as evidence for truth-claims or proof of supernatural powers. Also, Satan can work through "all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Jesus warned, "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect" (Mark 13:22).

Some psychics will claim that their powers are consistent with the Bible and come from God, even offering convincing demonstrations as proof of their supernatural abilities. Jesus, however, warned his followers not to seek signs, explaining that His resurrection, the "sign of Jonah," would be the only verifying miracle upon which believers can rely (Matthew 12:39-40).

For proof that their "gift" is of God, some psychics may point to colorful examples of accurate predictions. Much of the accuracy of psychics may be attributed to their use of the law of averages, "cold reading" techniques, and even the use of private investigators. Rather than celebrated random examples of some accurate predictions, the biblical requirement for a prophecy is 100% accuracy (Deuteronomy 18: 20-22). The Bible also condemns necromancy (communication with the dead) which is the modus operandi of many psychics and spiritualists. Deuteronomy 18: 10-12 states, "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. . ."

Christians also recognize that even real examples of spiritual manifestations would not prove the phenomena is harmless or from God. The Bible warns of demons, "seducing spirits" and "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). Believers are warned, "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). Faith in psychics can be not only spiritually but emotionally dangerous as well. Followers can become totally dependent on their psychics for making even simple decisions. Psychics, in turn, can easily use their influence to control and take advantage of their clients (see: Powers, pp. 25-29).

RESOURCES

- 1) Powers: Testing the Psychic & Supernatural. Dan Korem. A professional stage illusionist and popular Christian speaker, Korem exposes the fraudulent techniques used by many psychics. Included are sections on alleged telekinesis, psychic crime solving, and the art of "cold reading." Korem includes a biblical perspective of psychics and a section discussing why the resurrection of Christ was not a magic illusion. 232 pages. **\$10**
- 2) Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs. John Ankerberg and John Weldon. This comprehensive work on New Age spirituality includes sections on psychic phenomena such as spirit communication (channeling and mediums), divination (astrology, palm reading, etc.), psychic

healing, etc. Extensive biblical response also included. 670 pages. \$20

Profile is a regular feature of the Watchman Expositor published by Watchman Fellowship, Inc. Readers are encouraged to begin their own religious research notebooks using these articles. Back issues of **Profile** are made available at a nominal fee. Resource items are subject to changes in availability and price. **Free subscriptions** may be ordered from the [subscription page](#).

<http://rd1.hitbox.com/rd?acct=WQ500208MJAD89EN0&p=http://rd1.hitbox.com/rd?acct=WQ500208M>

The New Age Movement

Craig Branch

Founder: Being an eclectic blend of many ancient and modern religions and philosophies, there is no single human founder.

Founding Date: Many attribute the rise of the current New Age Movement (NAM) to evolving occult movements, such as [New Thought](#) and [Theosophy](#) in the late 1800's, and the counter-culture movement of the 1960's. Its root forms, however, actually are expressed in Satan's temptation of man in Genesis 3, and in the beliefs of many pagan and eastern religions, thousands of years old.

Official Publications: Due to the lack of a central organization and the diversity of emphasis adhered to by the various New Age groups there are literally hundreds of publications. Some popular publications and journals are New Age Journal, Body Mind Spirit, Yoga Journal, Gnosis, East West, Noetic Sciences, and Omega.

Other Names: Higher Consciousness Movement, Occultism, Eastern Mysticism, Eastern Spirituality, Ancient or Perennial Wisdom, Age of Aquarius, Holistic Health Movement.

INTRODUCTION

The New Age Movement is both a religious and a social movement. In fact, Western culture is currently experiencing a phenomenal, spiritual, ideological, and sociological shift. It is a religious world-view that is alien and hostile to [Christianity](#). It's a multi-focused, multi-faceted synthesis, in varying degrees, of the Far Eastern, mystical religions, mainly [Hinduism](#), [Buddhism](#), [Taoism](#), and Western [Occultism](#), adapted to and influenced by Western, materialistic culture. It sometimes appears in secularized forms.

It is comprised of hundreds of groups and individuals who have gained significant influence, affecting almost every area of the culture - sociology, psychology, medicine, the government, ecology, science, arts, education, the business community, the media, entertainment, sports, and even the church. The movement expresses itself in widely divergent and various mutated forms, from the blatantly obvious to the subtle. It is expressed in organized religious forms such as [Christian Science](#), [Unity](#), and even forms of [Witchcraft](#). Yet, it shows up in secular forms as well,

in various human potential seminars, and much in between, i.e., transcendental meditation, some alternative [holistic health](#) practices, and certain curriculum in public (and private) schools. The most central and commonly shared beliefs among New Agers are various combinations of gnosticism and occultism. Gnosticism is an ancient world-view stating that Divine essence is the only true or highest reality, and that the unconscious Self of man is actually this essence. It is through intuitional discovery, "visionary experience or initiation into secret doctrine" (not the plenary revelation of propositional truth in the Bible), that man becomes conscious of this true Self (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 10, 1968, p. 506; J.D. Douglas, ed., New Bible Dictionary, pp. 473-4).

Occultism is a "general designation for various theories, practices, and rituals based on esoteric knowledge, especially alleged knowledge about the world of spirits and unknown forces of the universe" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 7, p. 469).

The term "New Age" is an informal term derived from astrology, which indicates that this earth, if not the cosmos, is on the verge of an evolutionary transition from the Picean Age (rationality) to the Aquarian Age of spirituality, bliss, and harmony of all things. Even though it is undergoing a significant revival, the "New Age" is hardly new. In fact, it is very old.

HISTORY

The New Age Movement is a modern revival of very ancient, divergent, religious traditions and practices. The actual original root is squarely centered in Genesis 3:1-5, and reverberates throughout the movement's continued historical expressions. In the original lie, [Satan](#) questions God's word, His authority and benevolent rule (v. 1), disputes that death results from disobedience (v. 4), and claims that through the acquisition of secret or Gnostic wisdom man can be enlightened and can be "like God" (v. 5).

Many of the [occult](#) practices and beliefs revived by the modern NAM were a part of very early pagan cultures. Many practices common to the NAM such as [witchcraft/sorcery](#), [spiritism](#), [divination](#), (clairvoyance; seeing the future), [necromancy](#) (consulting the dead), and [astrology](#) are clearly and strongly condemned in Scripture (Deuteronomy 18: 9-17; Isaiah 47: 9-15). These and other occultic practices were spread through the ancient magic and mystery religions of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and most notably the Assyrian-Babylonian culture (Ancient Empires of the New Age, pp. 15-62). Noting the scope of its continuing presence, the [Bible](#) informs [Christians](#) of Babylon's eschatological implications. The lie of Genesis 3 is significantly developed in Babylon (Isaiah 47) and continues to its ultimate state of development, revealed as Satan's one-world system at the end of the age (Revelation 17-18).

Three major world religions whose beliefs and practices are entwined with the NAM are [Hinduism](#), a product of 5,000 years of development, [Buddhism](#), circa 560 B.C., and [Taoism](#), circa 500 B.C. (Eerdman's Handbook to the World's Religions, pp. 170, 221, 252). Another prominent occultic influence in Europe was [Druidism](#), the religion of the Celts, which extended from 300 B.C. into the middle ages (Ibid., pp. 114-19).

Prominent expressions of the NAM were carried on into more modern times in Europe and America by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), transcendentalists like Thoreau, Emerson, and Wordsworth (early 1800's), and [Theosophy](#) introduced by Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) (The New Age Rage, pp. 22-4). The decade of the sixties witnessed a revival of Eastern mysticism as traditional values were being challenged. [Zen](#), Carlos Castañeda, the Beatles, [Transcendental](#)

[Meditation](#), and [yoga](#) all became popular.

In the eighties, Shirley MacLaine's autobiographical books and television mini-series gave the NAM more popular exposure and momentum. Today, various research polls are consistently demonstrating that a significant shift has been occurring in the West, both in the beliefs and practices of the New Age world-view. For example, 36% of Americans believe that astrology is scientific, and 25% now believe in reincarnation (Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age*, pp. 20, 130-133).

It is important for [Christians](#) to recognize even the most disguised forms of the New Age Movement. The following is a list of some of the organizations, beliefs and practices associated with the NAM: [astrology](#), aura, black and white magic, bioenergy, Brahman, [Buddhism](#), [chakras](#), [chi](#) energy, [Christ-consciousness](#), [Christian Science](#), [Church Universal & Triumphant](#), [crystals](#), [Druidism](#), Eastern mysticism, [ESP](#), [est](#), extraterrestrials, the [Forum](#), firewalking, [Gaia](#), [gnosticism](#), [Hare Krishna](#), higher consciousness, [Hinduism](#), human potential movement, [Kaballah](#), karma, Magick, [Mind Science](#), [Native American spirituality](#), near-death experiences, [neo-paganism](#), nirvana, parapsychology, prana, psi, psychic, [reflexology](#), [reiki](#), reincarnation, [Religious Science](#), [shamanism](#), Silva Mind Control, [spiritism](#), Tai Chi, [Taoism](#), [tarot cards](#), [Theosophy](#), [therapeutic touch](#), [trance-channeling](#), [Transcendental Meditation](#), transpersonal psychology, [UFOs](#), [Unity School of Christianity](#), [Witchcraft](#), [yin-yang](#), [Yoga](#), and [Zen](#).

DOCTRINE

Keeping in mind that the myriads of New Age groups are quite eclectic, drawing from several religious traditions mentioned earlier, the following is a general description of the more prominent unifying themes of the NAM.

God

Even though many New Age adherents describe "God" in personal terms, ultimately, "God" is an impersonal life force, consciousness or energy (M. Ferguson, *Aquarian Conspiracy*, p. 382; S. Gawain, *Living In the Light*, pp. 7-8). The cosmology (nature of the world and universe) of the NAM is monistic and pantheistic, which means that everything that exists is of One essence, and that One essence is God. Everything is a different form of that essence (energy, consciousness, power, love, force). The state of God is called by various terms among different New Age groups, i.e., God-consciousness, Universal Love, Self-Realization, the I AM, Higher Self, Brahman, Nirvana, etc.

Jesus Christ

[Jesus](#) was a man who evolved spiritually to the state of "the [Christ](#)" being. "The Christ" is an actual state of ultimate essence. Everyone's true being is "the Christ:" and each person's goal is to come to that self-realization (*A Course in Miracles*, Vol. 3, pp. 83-4). So to the New Ager, Jesus, the Christ, is one of many ascended masters - a way-shower, whose function is to awaken humanity and illumine the path. Many even reinvent the historical Jesus by claiming that He traveled to India and learned the New Age doctrines there during His "silent years" (Shirley MacLaine, *Out on a Limb*, pp. 233-34).

Man

Man is not sinful since his true essence is divine and perfect. The only discontinuity between man and "God" is man's ignorance of his unlimited potential. Man is divine. He creates his own reality. Absolute truth is replaced by relativistic, subjective experience.

Man's Destiny

Since man is intrinsically divine and perfect, his only real problem is ignorance of that fact. Man has a perception of finiteness which is in reality an illusion (Ken Keyes, Jr., Handbook to Higher Consciousness, pp. 125-29). Salvation in the New Age is for man to become enlightened through experiential knowledge (gnosis). New Age groups offer various occultic techniques to enable individuals, and ultimately the world, to evolve into this oneness (unitive) consciousness (James Redfield, The Celestine Prophecy: An Experimental Guide, pp. 243-60). These techniques may include altered states of consciousness (often transcendental meditation), yoga, crystals, channeling (spirit guides), psychics, past life therapy, acupuncture, etc.

An almost universal belief among New Agers is an adaptation of the [Hindu](#) concept of reincarnation which teaches that after death the soul, or essence comes back in another form to continue spiritual evolution. New Agers misrepresent church history, the doctrines of [Christianity](#), and often twist Scripture to support the idea that original Christianity taught reincarnation. They wrongly argue that the early church suppressed the doctrine and censored its teaching (Kenneth Ring, Heading Toward Omega, p. 158).

CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

Individual New Age followers are at various stages of transition and assimilation of its teachings. In addition, since the NAM teaches that truth is relative and individualistic, Christians must approach New Agers as individuals. Ask New Agers questions. What spiritual background do they have? What happened in their lives that precipitated this path? What books, experiences, or ideas are most influential, most important to them? The answer should give Christians good direction as to where to focus their attention.

The fundamental issues that need to be addressed with New Agers are epistemology (the source of truth), the irrationality of relativism, factual and historical errors, the fallacies and inconsistencies of living out their world-view, and finally, a clarification of the real God, Jesus, and gospel, contrasted to those of the New Age. New Ager must see that there is a choice to be made instead of blurring the distinctions.

Christians should be able to demonstrate that the Bible does not teach reincarnation. When Jesus calls John the Baptist "Elijah," He is clearly speaking metaphorically. Luke 1:17 demonstrates that John was filling the office of Elijah, fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. In fact, Elijah was seen with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-3. The meaning of the resurrection is the opposite of reincarnation (Hebrews 9:27; 1 Cor. 15:12-28). Point out that if God is an impersonal force, then love and forgiveness are not possible. These are personal attributes as opposed to impersonal karmic law. Fundamentally, intercessory prayer is absolutely necessary. The battle for the souls of men is won through God's grace, intervening and drawing them to Himself.

RESOURCES

Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs, John Ankerberg and John Weldon. This well researched work covers a wide range of New Age beliefs, practices, and leaders, providing a Christian analysis. 670 pages with index, \$17.

A Crash Course on the New Age Movement, Elliot Miller. One of the best overall analysis and critiques of New Age ideology and trends. 260 pages with index, \$13.

Thieves of Innocence, John Ankerberg, John Weldon, Craig Branch. Covers the beliefs of NAM and uncovers its strategy to infiltrate schools to capture the minds and souls of children. Offers practical steps to eliminate it. 345 pages with index, \$10.

The Counterfeit Christ of the New Age Movement, Ron Rhodes. Reveals the false history and deception of the reconstructed "Jesus" presented by the New Agers, and contrasts it with the authentic Jesus. 255 pages, \$12.

New Age Movement: Space Age Heresy, James Walker. This 90 minute cassette tape and manual provide an overview of New Age theology and history, \$8.

Profile is a regular feature of the Watchman Expositor published by Watchman Fellowship, Inc. Readers are encouraged to begin their own religious research notebooks using these articles. Back issues of **Profile** are made available at a nominal fee. Resource items are subject to changes in availability and price. **Free subscriptions** may be ordered from the [subscription page](#).

To Astrologers and Psychics - Just Say No!

By Bob Anderson

Former U.S. president Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy, who was the spokesperson for the much maligned "Just Say No" anti-drug program, were often the centers of debate regarding the controversial topic [Astrology](#). According to a former White House source, the Reagans, said to be very superstitious, consulted horoscopes and a particular California astrologer prior to making major decisions affecting both their private and political lives. The former president maintained that he did not make major decisions based on astrology, but Mrs. Reagan admitted to dabbling in stargazing ("Just Say No to Astrology," Expression, June 1988).

>A TV network reported that occultism in the White House is nothing new. Mary Todd Lincoln is said to have held seances in one of the upstairs rooms — a practice President Lincoln apparently tolerated with amusement.

More recently, first lady Hilary Rodham Clinton used [New Age](#) psychic Jean Houston, codirector of the Foundation for Mind Research, to talk to the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt. Reports say that Mrs. Clinton had talks with Roosevelt and Mohandas Gandhi. From the [Bible's](#) point of view, of course, if there was contact with any spirits, they were not the spirits of the dead, but demons. Mrs. Clinton said, "Now I'm sure that there will be a talk show host somewhere who will point out with great glee that I have gone over the edge and am talking to myself and to Mrs. Roosevelt on a regular basis, but I believe that the world, and particularly our country, would be better off if we all spent a little time talking with Mrs. Roosevelt . . ." (Hilliary Rodham Clinton, "Keynote Address at the Dedication of Eleanor Roosevelt College, San Diego," CA, January 26, 1995). Interestingly, when Houston suggested that Mrs. Clinton have a conversation with [Jesus Christ](#), the first lady declined saying that it would be "too personal" ("Methodist Bishop defends Mrs. Clinton's talks with deceased leaders," Expression, August 1996, p. 8). Incredibly, the United Methodist Bishop of Arkansas, Richard Wilke, endorsed Mrs. Clinton's involvement with necromancy, saying, "I think it's marvelous that she's having experiences like this, " adding that Mrs. Clinton is "one of the most profound lay theologians in the United Methodist Church" (Ibid., p.6). This is simply evidence which shows how deficient in biblical discernment and godly wisdom many church leaders are today.

Spiritual Frauds

What position should Christians take when discussions of astrology, psychics and other forms of divination arise? Do the stars shape human destiny? Are there unseen influences in the unconscious mind related to the position of the planets in their orbits? Can psychics see the future? Does the Bible say anything about these subjects? Yes, of course it does! God branded these practices as detestable. Listen to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:9–12:

"When thou art come into the land the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shalt not be found among you anyone 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 necromancer, for all that do these things, are an abomination unto the Lord."

God branded the practices of the Canaanites an "abomination." In other words, these were things that were particularly offensive to Him. When Israel desired to know God's divine will, they were

commanded to avoid the magic, sorcery and superstitious practices of the Canaanites. Instead, they were to wait upon the Lord, who would raise up a prophet from among them. God's prophets were not primarily to foretell the future, but to instruct and reprove the people in God's name. Prophecies and miracles were only intended as a sign to establish the prophet's credentials. And God's prophets were always accurate 100 per cent of the time when they prophesied (Deuteronomy 18:21–22). Anything less than 100 percent accuracy resulted in death by stoning for the false prophet.

>Checking the records of modern-day astrologers or psychics, even the late Jeanne Dixon, will demonstrate that unlike God's prophets, they are extremely inaccurate. Incidentally, Mrs. Dixon failed to prophesy her own death.

One reads further about the enchanters in Daniel 2:1–2. King Nebuchadnezzar believed that he had received an important Divine communication. He summoned all of his magicians, sorcerers and Chaldeans. He admonished them to tell him, both his dream and the interpretation, pretending to have forgotten the dream so he could test their skills.

The astrologers failed the test and the King ordered them all executed. God, however, revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel who after revealing it and the interpretation with Nebuchadnezzar was made the ruler over the whole province of Babylon. God rewarded obedience but chastised disobedience.

The Scriptures indicate that both Israel and Judah were often contaminated with astrology, sorcery or witchcraft. This contamination always brought the judgement of God upon them. Will America be judged by a different standard? Again and again the Lord sent prophets to warn Israel and Judah, but the people would not heed His warnings. (e.g., 2 Kings 17:15–17; 23:5; Isaiah 47:10–15). Much of Israel and Judah's problems can be traced to their involvement with [occult](#) practices.

Purveyors of Delusion

Occult techniques are now attracting millions in America through the New Age Movement. Psychics have become commonplace. Hollywood actors and entertainers star in television programs urging people to call their "top professional [psychics](#)."

A popular New Age magazine, *Body, Mind & Spirit*, recently proclaimed that "now with a single phone call, you can choose for yourself from among the country's leading Master Psychics including: ASTROLOGERS...NUMEROLOGISTS...DREAM INTERPRETERS ... TAROT CARD READERS...CHANNELERS...PAST LIFE THERAPISTS ... CLAIRVOYANTS ... AURA READERS ... and HEALERS." All of this for a mere \$3.95 per minute on a convenient 900 number (Paul Zurmoski, ed., *Body, Mind & Spirit*, 1993 issues coverflap; cited in Ron Rhodes, *The Culting of America*, p. 84).

Psychic Friends Network Declares Bankruptcy

Interestingly, the most prominent of the psychic "hotlines," The Psychic Friends Network hosted by Dionne Warwick, recently filed for bankruptcy. The Network had employed approximately 1,500 psychics who, as in the case of Jeanne Dixon, were not able to foresee the coming demise. At its peak, the network had logged an estimated three million minutes a month at about \$4 per minute. That would have amounted to a gross income of \$144 million annually (see "[Psychics](#)")

[Profile](#), The Watchman Expositor, [Vol. 14, No. 2, 1997](#)).

The seeming flood of psychic programs, many of them literally giving away up to twenty minutes of free time to attract callers, may have eventually caused the collapse of The Psychic Friends Network. Hopefully, for the good of society, this will not be the last of these insolvencies.

Ancient Occult Roots

Many of today's astrologers frankly admit that ancient Babylonians developed their craft, just as they invented just about every other type of divination known to man. Just as many people once believed that the stars were gods, many today believe that the positions of the stars and planets at the time of one's birth determine one's character, abilities and destiny. More than 80 percent of all newspapers in America now carry horoscope columns.

All occult practices are an affront to God. Christians are to put faith and trust in Him alone. God wants His people to consult Him — not phoney substitutes. Through the Scripture and through the Holy Spirit, God reveals what He's doing and what He wants people to know. "To the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). "Howbeit when the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth ...and He will show you things to come. (John 16:13).

The Lord, through the Word and the Holy Spirit, will guide His people into all truth and will show them that His promises are true. That's something that the psychics and astrologers can never do.

CANA

Christian Answers for the New Age
by Marcia Montenegro

THE PSYCHICS: CAN THEY HELP YOU?

Television psychic hotlines and shows featuring psychics have become more popular. Psychics (sometimes called clairvoyants) will tell you that everyone has psychic ability which can be developed. Just who are these psychics to tell us what is normal? Shouldn't we examine their practices, ideas, and claims, and see what God has to say about all this first?

How They Do It

Psychic ability is developed by learning to get into an altered state of consciousness (a light trance) and opening one's mind and self to supernatural forces. The most common way one learns to do this is through certain forms of meditation or visualization (normally preceded by relaxation and/or breathing exercises) or through the use of occultic tools such as an

astrology chart, a crystal ball, a numerology chart, etc., which seem to spontaneously trigger such altered mind states. In psychic development classes in which the writer once participated, students are taught to practice various techniques of meditation, focus and visualization; sometimes this includes contacting a 'spirit guide' from another dimension. Some go deeper into this state and become a medium or channeler. They lose conscious awareness and allow a supernatural entity to take over their body and speak through them (a medium thinks the spirit is a dead person; a channeler believes it is a being from another realm, or possibly a space alien). A psychic normally maintains awareness while receiving the information. Once these techniques are mastered, it becomes very easy to 'slip' in and out of such a state at will. Visiting the county library, this writer found several books on the occult that give instructions on how to use a crystal ball, read tarot cards, etc. The instructions emphasize going into a meditative or trance-like state in order to more effectively use these tools. Where do psychics think the information comes from? Not all psychics agree, but generally they believe one or more of the following:

- They are tapping into an energy field which contains the information.
- They are accessing a type of psychic central records division called the Akashic Record which contains all information about the past, present and future.
- They are receiving the information from the client's 'higher self' which has access to information pertinent to that client.
- The information is coming from the psychic's spirit guide or from God.

There are psychics, such as the late Jeanne Dixon, who discover this ability as a young child. Interestingly enough, these discoveries are often made after visits to psychics, palm readers, or perhaps playing with a Ouija Board. Or there are family members who have been involved in the occult and introduce the child to it. It is rare that such discoveries are made in complete isolation from other occult activity.

A Warning

Well, if the information is correct, what is wrong with consulting a psychic? After all, don't we hear about the police using psychics in investigations? God tells us very clearly to seek Him, not psychics, mediums or channelers for advice. "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God?" (Is. 8:19a) The apostle Paul, in Acts 16, casts out a fortuneteller's demonic spirit who was giving her this power. Having correct or helpful information does not justify disobedience to God. We do not know the true success rate of the police use of psychics; usually only the successes are publicized by the psychic herself/himself. The police are obligated to listen to clues from anyone, even psychics. If psychic ability is a gift, it is not a gift from God; God does not give gifts he also condemns ("Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows," James 1:17).

The White Light Barrier

When one takes steps to develop telepathy, ESP, or other psychic abilities, one is opening the door to dangerous forces. As this writer's psychic abilities expanded, so did the frightening experiences. Many of this writer's friends and associates in the occult often had similar experiences. In fact, it is common practice for a psychic to call on benevolent protective forces or to visualize 'white light' (supposedly for protection) before practicing a psychic technique, doing a reading or spirit contact. What do they think they are protecting themselves from? By doing this, the psychics acknowledge the existence of evil or harmful beings, but how do they know these beings are not disguising themselves as benevolent spirits or guides? What law says a white light is a barrier to evil entities? Why would such a light keep out any spirits? Maybe the evil entities have been laughing all these years at this flimsy 'protection' as they fed false information to the psychics and pretended to be helpful. And why shouldn't they? What would they have to lose? God already called this one when He wrote that Satan disguises himself as an "angel of light," (2 Corinthians. 11:14).

Prophecy and the Acid Test

What about Biblical prophecy? God's prophets were not using psychic ability, but were given the information directly by the Holy Spirit or in God-given visions. The prophets did not use techniques or seek out ways to develop supernatural powers. Most importantly, Biblical prophecy glorified God and proclaimed His words and messages. Psychic power is Satan's counterfeit of God-given prophetic ability and does not lead those involved towards Christ, but rather further away, often denying Christian doctrine.

Psychic power in the Bible is described as having a familiar spirit, being a medium, being a soothsayer, or being a fortune-teller, among other terms.

The Hebrew and Greek words for these terms are different from the Hebrew and Greek words used to describe prophecy or speaking in the power of the Holy Spirit. Divination, the art of retrieving hidden information with occult methods or paranormal powers, is linked with psychic ability and strongly condemned throughout the Bible. (See Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Leviticus 19:31, 20:6; I Chronicles 10:13-14; Is. 2:6; Daniel 2:27-28a).

God gives us the acid test in Deut. 18:21-22 to use for prophecy: If the prophecy is not 100% accurate, the prophet is not from God. This writer, who once was involved in the occult and in psychic activity, was often told by psychics that a really good psychic on their best day might be about 85% accurate. No psychic claims 100% accuracy 100% of the time. Another test: If someone gives accurate information or foretells an event from dreams or visions, but then leads you away from the Biblical God, you should reject that prophet or visionary (Deut. 13:13). There is no way around it: when psychic ability is put to the test, it falls on its face.

Who Really Knows?

Consulting a psychic, in person or by phone, for 'fun' or out of curiosity, according to the

principles God gives us, should be avoided. You may discover that, in the long run, the information seems helpful only temporarily, and you will start using the psychic to make up for your own inability to cope and make decisions. You may also start relying on the psychic as a counselor to listen to your problems. The prophet Daniel said it best, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries," (Daniel 2:27), for it is God who "alone has all wisdom and power," who "reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies hidden in darkness, though he himself is surrounded by light," (Daniel 2: 20, 22). And Jesus, the God-man, who is "the wonderful wisdom of God," (I Corinthians 1:24b), said, "I am the bread of life....I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," (John 6:48,51). Jesus has wisdom that encompasses the universe, which he sustains (Hebrews 1:3). What psychic ability compares to this?

The writer previously participated in psychic development & similar classes which taught spirit contact, meditation, seeing auras, communication with the dead, psychic healing, & telepathy, among other things.

http://cana.userworld.com/cana_home.html

STATEMENT DN117

Rescued from 20 Years in the New Age Movement

The Personal Testimony of Cathy Fowler

I was a trueblue New Ager for 20 years. Over those years I had many experiences with spiritual powers — or “forces,” as they say. And I know they exist and are extremely powerful. If someone had told me at that time that I was tampering with Satan’s kingdom, I would have laughed in their face!

In fact, the reason I moved to Sedona, Arizona, was because it is such a strong metaphysical area and community. Sedona is advertised widely in metaphysical and occult circles as one of the few “vortex areas” in the United States. (A “vortex area” is an area where the veil between this world and the spiritual world is allegedly very thin, so to speak. New Agers believe there is a higher concentration of psychic or cosmic energy in such areas.) I thought I could really find and experience “higher consciousness” in Sedona. And guess what! I did. But through a totally unexpected source — the Lord Jesus Christ!

The funny thing is that I grew up attending a Baptist church and spent the first 18 years of my life going to church at least three times a week. I was even baptized. But I never had a personal relationship with Jesus. How do I know? Because I have one now — and I know I've never had this before.

Many Christians ask me how I ever could have left the church for “New Age” thinking. Didn't I realize what I was mixed up in? The answer to that is a big NO! I was always the curious sort and even when I was very young, I sensed the spiritual side of life. However, when I asked too many (or “wrong”) questions in Bible studies or at home — or asked for genuine, credible reasons for the Christian faith — I was always hushed with blanket answers like, “Because the Bible says so, that's why!”; no further explanations were ever given. What all this really sounded like to me was, “Shut up and don't ask questions.”

So I started looking for answers elsewhere. And I thought I had found answers too — in astrology, eastern religion, yoga, reincarnation, crystals, channeled information, and meditation. I had arrived in the New Age.

As I look back over these years, I can say that channeling is probably the most dangerous of the New Age practices from my experience. New Agers take every word that comes out of the channeler's mouth as the “New Gospel.” I was no exception to this.

It took me 20 years to build up a New Age belief system, with new ideas being added all the time. Would you like to know how long it took the Lord to knock this belief system down? Just three months! I was led to books written by Christians about the New Age movement, and I also had a very close Christian friend who prayed for me on a regular basis. The books quoted Bible verses and led me back to God's Word which I hadn't looked at a single time in 20 years.

My Bible was on the bookshelf along with my more than 180 New Age books. And guess what I found inside it when I opened it up for the first time? A little daily devotional book opened to a page entitled, “Test the Spirits.” All those 20 years, the warning was there waiting for me to see it.

I could go on and on, but let me just wrap this up by saying that I praise God every day for loving me enough to rescue me — even though I had turned my back on Him by my involvement in the occult. How gracious the Lord is! My life has totally changed since a year ago last summer.

My daughter, who is now 16, was also interested in some of the occult activities I was involved in and showed some genuine ESP-type abilities. But now she's deeply involved in a youth ministry here which is an extension of the Bible church we now attend. She has accepted Jesus Christ and can see the evil deception going on under the guise of the New Age movement.

One last thing. Many church-going Christians either ignore or are afraid of people involved in the New Age movement. Many Christians are so wrapped up doing their

church activities that they rarely attempt to tackle the “outside world.” But New Agers are easier to convert than most people might think. Why? Because unlike the average person, they already have a strong belief in the spiritual world; they just don’t realize exactly what spiritual world they are mixed up in.

So please don’t ignore New Agers or laugh at them or give up on them. Give them one of the many fine books on the New Age movement written from a Christian perspective as well as a pocket Bible. Miracles happen every hour of every day through Jesus.

CRI, P.O. Box 7000, Rancho Santa Margarita,
CA 92688
Phone (949) 858-6100 and Fax (949) 858-6111

<http://www.watchman.org/na/index.htm>

<http://www.watchman.org/occult/index.htm>