

Theology Seminar: Cults and Sects

Session No. 5: Cults and the Occult

CULTS/SECTS

NOTABLE MARKS OF CULTS/SECTS

- Usually Claim to Be Christian
- Usually Deny Core Doctrine
- Usually Take the Bible Out of Context
- Usually Claim to Be Led by Divinely Inspired Leaders
- Usually Add or Subtract from the Bible
- Usually Claimed to be the Only True (or Most True) Church

NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF CULTS/SECTS

- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Mormonism
- Christian Science



- Oneness Pentecostalism
- Seventh Day Adventism
- Unity School of Christianity

NOTABLE WARNINGS CONCERNING CULTS/SECTS

- **Jesus** Warned Against Them (Matthew 7:15-23).
- **Paul** Warned Against Them (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
- **John** Warned Against Them (1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:7-11).
- **Peter** Warned Against Them (2 Peter 2:1)
- **Ezekiel** Warned Against Them (Ezekiel 13:17-23)
- **Jude** Warned Against Them (Jude 3-4).

OCCULT

NOTABLE MARKS OF THE OCCULT¹

- Pursues Secret Knowledge
- Explores Powers Other than God
- Equates the Truth with Mythology
- Denies Jesus Christ

NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF THE OCCULT²

- **Divination:** Foretelling future events or revealing occult knowledge by means of alleged supernatural means. Examples include:
 - **Astrology:** Interpreting the influence of the stars and planets on people, particularly using a horoscope to predict the future.

¹Walter Martin, Kingdom of the Occult

²<https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/occult-overview/>



- **Crystal Gazing:** The use of a crystal ball (occasionally a mirror or pool of water) to predict the future. Sometimes called scrying.
- **Ouija Board:** A game invented in 1892 by William Fuld that involves players asking questions with answers given by séance.
- **Palm Reading:** Diving a person's future by examining the lines of their hands. Claims to provide understanding into a person's character, personality, abilities, and relationships.
- **Tarot Cards:** Foretelling that involves a special deck of 78 cards, each with a symbol that has meaning to be interpreted.
- **Tea Leaves:** Also called tasseography, it's a fortune-telling method that interprets the pattern of tea leaves left at the bottom of a cup.

- **Spiritualism:** The belief that the dead communicate with the living, as through a medium.
- **Sorcery/Magick:** The art that purports to control or forecast natural events, effects, or forces by invoking the supernatural. Often involves the use of charms, spells, rituals. Practitioners often distinguish from magic tricks (sleight of hand) by adding a “k.”
- **Witchcraft:** A nature religion, similar to fertility religions of the Old Testament. Often identify as neo-pagans, Wiccans, or “the Craft.” Typically meet 2x a month during the full and new moon.
- **Satanism:** The darkest side of the occult, typically falling into two camps. On the one hand, self-styled Satanists are often young people influenced by heavy metal music and films or books that glamorize it.. On the other hand, religious Satanists (founded by Anton LaVey) see Satan as a symbol of humanity’s ego, lust, and greed and reject the existence of sin, heaven, hell, life after death, and anything supernatural.
- **Paranormal:**



NOTABLE WARNINGS CONCERNING THE OCCULT

- **Samuel** Warned Against Them (1 Samuel 15:23)
- **Ezra** Warned Against Them (2 Chronicles 33:6)
- **Moses** Warned Against Them (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27, Deuteronomy 18:10-14)
- **John** Warned Against Them (Revelation 18:23, 21:8)
- **Paul** Warned Against Them (Galatians 5:20)
- **Micah** Warned Against Them (Micah 5:10-12)
- **Luke** Warned Against Them (Acts 13:6-10; 19:17-20)
- **Isaiah** Warned Against Them (Isaiah 8:19-22)
- **Nahum** Warned Against Them (Nahum 3:4)