

Up The Ladder of Holiness/Set Apartness

Part 4 of 4

Magic in the Cinema Part 1: Defining Magic

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"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." Psalms 101:3 (KJV)

What do you set before your eyes?

In my last three articles I talked about my pursuit of set apartness for YHVH (God) and how my journey up that ladder included scrutinizing my movie collection for sexual, violent and profane content. My next step up the ladder led me to explore the magical content of my movie choices.

In my effort to define magic, I first consulted my Webster's dictionary. It defined magic as the feigned art of influencing nature or future events by occult means. Black magic is defined as magic by aid of evil spirits.

When I checked my Webster's Thesaurus and Zodiates Complete Word Study Dictionary I found related words such as; Pharmacia (use of medicine, poisons, potions or spells), sorcery, occult art and black art (study or practice of magik), witchcraft (sorcery), necromancy (predicting future through contact with the dead), theurgy (working miracles by supernatural means), conjuration (spells, curses), psychics (forecasting), soothsaying (forecasting), enchantment (ceremonies and rituals), divination (forecast by supernatural means), charms (amulets, stones, crystals), incantations (spells or ritual movements), whisper or mutter (spells, curses), augury (interpreting omens), astrology (dividing the heavens, fortune telling), horoscope (fortune telling), mysticism (seeking direct contact with spirits), geomancy (divining by use of geographic features, figures or lines) and spiritism (belief that the dead communicate with the living) (among others)^{1, 2}.

¹ New Webster's Dictionary and Roget's Thesaurus, 1992, Book Essentials, Inc., Ottenheimer Publishers Inc., USA, Page 232, 992, 994, 175, 513,

² Zodiates, Spiros. "The Complete Word study Dictionary, New Testament. Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993

My next stop was the Scriptures to see what YHVH has to say about magic. In *Exodus 22: 18* He says that people who practice sorcery are to be put to death, and in *Leviticus 19: 31* He says that witchcraft defiles. *Galatians 5: 19-21* tells us that those who do the work of the flesh, which includes witchcraft, will not inherit the kingdom. In *Deuteronomy 18: 10-14* we are told that those who practice divination, magic, sorcery, necromancy, interpret omens, conger spells, or act as mediums or spiritists (people who the spirits of the dead communicate with or through) are an abomination and *2 Kings 17: 17, 18* tells us that YHVH drove Israel into captivity because they practiced witchcraft. So, I think it's safe to say that YHVH is apposed to magic, in any form.

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word *qacam* is defined as divination in some versions, while it is rendered as witchcraft in others. There are also several other words, which can be used to derive sorcerer, witch, diviner, or magician. Though they may all come from the same roots these words themselves have different meanings. All the practices are considered occult arts but the translations of the words into English depended upon what the particular occultist practiced.

For instance, *magic*, also referred to as *sorcery*, is defined as the act of manipulating supernatural forces to achieve a specific end, by using ceremonies or rituals such as incantations, curses or spells (a special formula of words or actions), using drugs or potions, or by use of magic charms that have been spiritually empowered by demonic forces, and through contact with spiritual and psychic realms. White magic, was believed to be used for good ends while black magic was believed to be used for evil.

A magician could be defined as one who had occult knowledge as a diviner or an astrologer and was able to bring about results that were beyond man's normal ability. In Egypt and Babylon, these men were educated and wise in science and they were priests. They were thought to possess special knowledge and were used by rulers to interpret dreams³ (omens).

Today magik or magick, spelled with a "k" or "ck" refers to occult magic, the study or practice of the manipulation of events by supernatural means. This should not be confused with slight of hand as in card tricks or pulling a rabbit out of a hat. These tricks contain no real magic but are merely illusion. The intent of this magic is to entertain not to manipulate demonic forces. Though this magic in itself is not bad, if we involve our children and we don't distinguish this from

³ Tenney, Merrill C. and Steven Barabas, eds. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. 5 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

demonic magick, are we opening up a door for future involvement in magick?

So, who is it that these prognosticators of "magik" are appealing to? The spirits they seek to commune with are not of YHVH, but are demonic forces. When I say demonic forces, I am referring to Satan and his angels that were cast down to the earth in Revelation 12:9. The Scriptures call him the serpent, the devil, the deceiver, Lucifer, Beelzebub, Ba'al, prince of darkness, the enemy, prince of the power of the air, the evil one, author of evil, wicked one, and his minions are referred to as demons, fallen angels, unclean spirits, rulers, powers, principalities and maleficent spirits.

We have read that YHVH condemns magic and the associated occult arts. Why? Because magic is the occult substitute for miracles through contact with supernatural forces other than YHVH and divination is the occult substitute for prophecy through contact with supernatural forces other than YHVH. Both seek to replace YHVH's authority. This impugns YHVH's majesty and glory and diminishes His sovereignty in the hearts and minds of men. Magik is as real as Satan himself and it is part of his plan to deceive the world and lead us away from a path of righteousness. It is rebelliousness to seek an authority that belongs only to our Lord, yet in this day and age so many have fallen to the deception of Satan and have chosen this path over the path of set apartness.

Next month, in Part 2: Movie Magic, I will be discussing magic as it pertains to the cinema and how it affected my journey up the ladder of set apartness to YHVH.