

CHAPTER TEN

RELIGIOUS ENSLAVEMENT: SORCERY

At the very core of hyper-authoritarian doctrines and practices of the Discipleship/Shepherding sort we have been examining in this volume is a type of psychological predomination that could be rightly termed—*religious enslavement*. Now right from the start as we develop this aspect, let us be clear that religious enslavement is **WITCHCRAFT!** Thus, it follows then that hyper-authoritarian; Discipleship/Shepherding-type doctrines and practices are, at bottom, **WITCHCRAFT!** And, that assessment is not at all an extrapolation, but is based on the intrinsic nature of the teachings. Moreover, it is quite obvious on its face that *witchcraft* is something of the devil's domain and not God's. It is this reality that makes these teachings and the practices they promote so decidedly aberrant as well as profoundly repugnant to those who realize that reality.

Though it is so that these doctrines and practices amount to witchcraft, the problem, as stated previously, is that they have already been infused into and become an integral part of the doctrinal system of a large portion of the Pentecostal/Neo-Pentecostal Body of Christ. Thus, the majority of believers of that category who have been deluded into accepting the validity of these fallacious teachings would have extreme difficulty in understanding and accepting that these doctrines are Scripturally-invalid and amount to witchcraft, despite the absolute veracity of both of those assessments. Indeed, the very fact that it has been in otherwise doctrinally orthodox Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal (Charismatic, "Faith Movement," "Third Wave" ["Evangel-costals"], et al.) churches that these occult doctrines and practices have been taught and instituted has further augmented their obscurity and proliferation.

The undeniable fact is that a substantial percentage of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches, especially those of the Oneness, Jesus-Only, or Latter Rain persuasion, *do* espouse and employ these teachings and tactics in some form and degree—a percentage much higher than what the average believer would surmise. Of course, not *all* Pentecostal or Neo-Pentecostal churches employ them, however.

Nevertheless, in all fairness, there are leaders who have accepted and instituted these doctrines and practices in their churches in sincere naivety and ignorance without totally comprehending their full import and impact. Many of those cases are the result of those leaders having blithely “cloned” their ministry structure after someone else’s with whom they were associated, affiliated, or impressed. Notwithstanding, a significant portion of the leaders who have instituted these errant doctrines and practices have done so with deliberation, knowing fully and precisely what they were doing, having perceived in them a convenient, well-camouflaged, covert, highly effective, and widely-accepted mechanism affording both license and means to predominate and prevail over a group of congregants in order to enlist and mobilize them as the implementers of their personal kingdom-building. Once wiled, thoroughly indoctrinated, subdued, and subjugated, these indentured adherents then become the willful implementers, agents, collaborators, and operatives for the designs of these errant, self-aggrandizing, and self-enriching ecclesiastical autocrats.

The True Nature of Sorcery

To understand the assertion that these hyper-authoritarian doctrines and practices amount to *witchcraft* requires that we understand the true nature of witchcraft, or sorcery. We will thus devote ourselves to that quest in this chapter.

“Witchcraft” and “sorcery” are synonymous terms. Some Bible translations use one term, some the other, but both refer to the same thing. The root Greek word for “sorcery” is “*pharmakeia*,” which literally means *to administer drugs*. From this Greek word are derived various English words having to do with medicinal drugs, or narcotics, such as “pharmaceuticals” and “pharmacy.”

However, there is a common misconception concerning the nature of witchcraft and sorcery resulting primarily from the etymology of this Greek word translated “sorcery” or “witchcraft” in the New Testament. This word “*pharmakeia*” was originally coined to allude to the use of narcotics as “mind-altering” and “trance-inducing” intoxicants in pagan religious ceremonies and ministrations throughout the ancient history of paganism.

Notwithstanding, while the original meaning of the word had to do with administering drugs to aid in the casting of spells and inducing trances in pagan occult worship, in the passage of time, it came to have a broader connotation than just that in the Greek language. It came to be what is known as a “metonymn,” a figure of speech or kind of colloquialism evoking an idea related to but greater than the literal meaning of the

word's components. For example, in the colloquial phrase "under one roof," it is not really a literal roof only that is being alluded to, but rather the word "roof" is a metonym referring to an entire building consisting of walls and a roof. Similarly, both the Greek word "pharmakeia" as well as its English equivalent "sorcery" connote something more than the parochial matter of the use of narcotics in the occult. Rather, it is kind of a "catch-all" phrase evoking the broader concept of interpersonal predominance and self-imposition as achieved by various means and methods.

Hence, the Biblical, and thus true spiritual, connotation of sorcery or witchcraft, it is imperative to understand, transcends the use of drugs as intoxicants or trance-inducers in pagan and occult witchcraft. Biblical sorcery and witchcraft centers more on the specter of people manipulating, dominating, controlling, and captivating other people, whether by supernatural (i.e., demonic) or simply natural (human) means.

To put it another way, while the original meaning of "sorcery" or "witchcraft" had to do with the casting of "spells" or the inducement of "trances" in paganism and the occult, the Biblical usage of these words includes psychological means and methods of usurpation and imposition over others as well. For the truth of the matter is that the "drug" that is used to "cast a spell" over someone is not always a narcotic; there are also a host of psychological means and methods that, especially with the assistance of demons, are just as trance-inducing, compelling, and effective. A "spell" is not just a state of intoxication induced by a narcotic. Rather, a "spell" is any induced condition in which a person's natural and normal self-control over his own thinking and actions is usurped, counteracted, controlled, or simply influenced, by some unnatural, non-indigenous, exterior force. However, the ultimate force behind spells and trances, regardless of the agent, means, or method by which they are induced, is demons and the devil.

Simply stated, the true Spiritual definition and application of "sorcery" or "witchcraft" is using any form of persuasion, influence, intrigue, or inducement, delusion, predominance, or outright coercion, whether of natural (human; psychological) or spiritual (i.e., evil spirits) origin, to unduly and improperly influence, manipulate, dominate, or control someone else, in order to gain ascendancy or advantage for selfish gain. To put it in even simpler terms, sorcery or witchcraft is endeavoring to get someone else to do what *you* want him or her to do. It is prevailing upon others in order to get them to yield their will to your will. It is volition (will) captivity. It is self-imposition and usurpation. It is being an interloper. It is dominating and controlling others.

God revealed through the prophet Samuel's rebuke of the disobedient King of Israel, Saul, that witchcraft or sorcery is essentially synonymous

with “rebellion,” and that “disobedience” (which, in essence, is rebellion) is synonymous with “iniquity” (acts of specific trespass and offense against God) and “idolatry” (the imposition of false gods in God’s place): “*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness (disobedience) is as iniquity and idolatry*” (1 Sam. 15:23). What this means, in other words, is that witchcraft is rebellion, and rebellion is witchcraft; moreover, disobedience (stubbornness) is defiance, disregard, and displacement of God in one’s mind and heart.

The Means and Methods of Sorcery

Now that is the nature of sorcery and witchcraft. But, let’s examine now the various means and methods by which sorcery and witchcraft can be effected. Sorcery can be effected either by natural (human) means or by supernatural (demonic) means.

Supernatural means are those means and media involving explicit inducement and abetment by demons. It entails any and all of the manifold satanically-perpetrated occult methods and modes that exist, which range from sensual or sexual seduction to voodoo, from seemingly innocent child’s play with a Ouija™ board or an 8-Ball™ to séances and consulting mediums, from casual and supposedly for-amusement-only reading of newspaper horoscopes to overt, bona fide Satan worship. All of this kind of sorcery and witchcraft is included in the Biblical attribution of “divination.” Satan has thoroughly infiltrated this kind of divinatory influences and devices into virtually every segment and element of human society and life.

Though this interpersonal predomination is sometimes effected through these supernatural means, and witchcraft and sorcery is generally associated with satanic activities, it is vital to understand, however, that to engage in sorcery and witchcraft does not **require** the involvement of supernatural power from demons. Rather, it can also be effected merely through natural, human means emanating out of the human spirit. The unregenerate *human* spirit, permeated as it is with the carnal, sin nature of Satan, intrinsically, is certainly sufficiently evil-prone and evil-proficient in itself to devise and implement devices of unauthorized control over others on its own without any assistance of *demon*-spirits. In the Creational Order, only the Divine Spirit (Nature) of God transcends the human spirit, and being made in the Image of God, the human spirit has some capacity for creativity, though it is limited specifically to the **natural** realm. Interpersonal predomination emanating from the human spirit is the natural, human means of sorcery that employs various means of seduction created in the mind of its perpetrators.

Natural, human means would include a wide variety of interpersonal machinations and mechanisms operated in the psychological realm. At one end of that spectrum is an entire range of such machinations and mechanisms falling under the category of what is generally referred to by such terms as “the power of persuasion,” which is commonly considered a benign, relatively harmless, fair, and appropriate “art form.” Somewhere in the middle of the spectrum is a range of Machiavellian “intrigue,” it could be called, that has permeated virtually every segment of life and society from politics to the ministry, wherein the means, no matter how immoral, improper, or unethical, is considered to be justified by the end. At the opposite end of the spectrum, is the more sinister and guileful realm of overt predomination by means of a host of psychological mechanisms aimed toward mind-control or psychological preconditioning.

Now, of course, not all “persuasion” is intrinsically evil. There is the genuinely benign type of “persuasion” in which one person presents information to another in an attempt to convince that person of the validity of his own perspectives or convictions. However, what makes that kind of inducement benign is that there is no coercion or usurpation of the other person’s will involved. The first person is merely presenting to the other person his personal perspective along with supposed corroborative information for the second person’s consideration. In the case of illegitimate interpersonal predomination, however, some sort of influence is being covertly interjected in order to short-circuit the normal consideration process and to usurp the victim’s natural volition (will) for the purpose of subjugation and psychological enslavement.

As an aside, within the foregoing also is manifest the somewhat subtle difference between legitimate *preaching* and *teaching* verses unauthorized *indoctrination* aimed at psychological predomination. Ministers have a responsibility to preach the Truth and teach people how to apply the Truth in practical living, but we must never be guilty in any way of compelling or coercing our listeners into ostensible obedience. God desires that we be *obedient* to Him not out of coercion or compulsion but out of *willingness* (Is. 1:19; 1 Pet. 5:2). Like any human parent, God wants willing obedience from the heart from His children. Willing obedience is what brings God pleasure. Coerced conformity really is not *obedience* at all but *compulsion*. The approach of ministers toward their adherents should be the same as God’s toward us—we can enjoin, exhort, and evangelize, that is, *call* people to God, but we must never *coerce* or *compel* through some means of authoritarian force.

In essence, what this speaks of is what, indeed, is the very heart of sorcery: the matter of *volition*. The matter of Volitional Authority, or “personal authority,” was addressed in some detail in Chapter Four. It may be

helpful to review the commentary on that subject, in that it is related to the topic of this chapter. As indicated there, Volitional Authority is the third highest level of authority God has established in His Creational Order. Only two other types of authority supersede it: God's own sovereignty, and the veracious authority of God's Word.

This personal authority entails the human will, or "free moral agency," as theologians refer to it, with which God has endowed every human being. Essentially, it is the inherent prerogative of personal sovereignty or autocracy, that is, the right to self-government and free-choice. This right, as I stated in Chapter Four, is absolutely inviolable within the restraints of lawfulness. This means that no one but no one has been consigned by God the right to violate or in any way encroach upon the right to self-government vested in each human, as long as that person engages in righteous and lawful conduct, and refrains from engaging in any iniquitous conduct or acts of material offense against any other person.

Illustrating the sanctity and absolute inviolability of the human free-will is the fact that, though He certainly is sovereign over all, God Himself will never usurp or in any way forcibly infringe upon the free will of any human being, even when our actions and their consequences are not in our own best interest. Now when we have willingly subjected ourselves unto His Lordship and Fatherhood, as a part of His great Fatherly love for us, He will indeed chasten and discipline us (Heb. 12:5-11). Nevertheless, though He invites "*whosoever will*" affirmatively respond, to be adopted into the Heavenly Family, and though He loves us ever so immensely, and deeply desires that all be saved, He will not force Himself, His Sovereignty, nor His Fatherhood, upon any individual, to the point that He will allow us to choose the abyss and agonies of hell over the bliss and blessings of Heaven.

Thus, since the Creator has Himself chosen to grant to every human-being such enormous and unrestrained free agency, in imitating God, as we are enjoined to do by the Word of God (Eph. 5:1, et al.), we the created certainly then are compelled to deal with our fellows in like manner, neither coercing nor in any way imposing our own will upon anyone else. Indeed, to impose our will upon anyone else is the antithesis of the holy and beneficent Divine Nature, and in fact is the very essence of sorcery, which is the essence of the thoroughly unholy, rebellious, and self-seeking nature of Satan.

The Origin of Sorcery

Of course, Satan is the ultimate though unseen source behind every kind and genre of sorcery and witchcraft, and there is an innumerable company of his diabolical cohorts, evil spirits, whose sole function it is to

perpetrate and propagate witchcraft all throughout the world and among all human beings. However, Satan and his imps can only intervene and invoke their devices in human affairs where and when they are given opportunity, license, and agency by cooperative human-beings. Since God has given authority on the Earth unto the sons of men (Ps. 115:16), Satan is powerless to implement his devices except through human cooperatives.

Sorcery originated with Satan. It is a part of his nature—the spirit of disobedience, *“the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”* (Eph. 2:2). Through the Prophet Isaiah, God revealed by the Spirit what took place when Lucifer fell into apostasy and perdition. His account delineates the precise rebellious ruminations of Lucifer that precipitated his abrupt descent into unrighteousness and spiritual ruin. Clearly, the source of his rebellion is *self-will*, evidenced by the fact that he says to himself five times **“I WILL”**:

“But you said in your heart, ‘I WILL ascend to heaven; I WILL raise my throne above the stars of God, and I WILL sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL make myself like the Most High.’” (Is. 14:13,14)

This passage makes it clear that rebellion against God (sin) is predicated on self-will or self-imposition. In essence, rebellion is self-imposition, following after one’s own will and wants instead of God’s. Consequently, it is not hard to understand the meaning of the Spirit’s statement: *“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”* In fact, in a broad sense, witchcraft is following after the rebellious nature of Satan, *“the spirit...of disobedience.”*

Furthermore, when you put all this together, it becomes clear that Satan’s nature is the *Antichrist Spirit*, because it is opposed and antithetical to the Lordship of Christ, and that therefore sorcery and witchcraft is operating in the Antichrist Spirit. And, indeed that is precisely what sorcery or witchcraft is, endeavoring to be someone’s *lord, master, and savior* in place of Jesus Christ. That is also why I say sorcery is self-imposition and usurpation. It is also self-deification, that is, posing and interposing oneself as God over others, which was precisely what made Lucifer fall into perdition and disenfranchisement from God. Ever since that day when unrighteousness was found in the heart of Lucifer, he has been totally consumed with trying to take Jesus’ place as *lord*. He is the ultimate usurper and interloper. He is literally **dying to be god**.

Sorcery Within

If all this concerning sorcery being rooted in the nature of Satan is so, and it is, we must take it a step further. As I mentioned before, no matter how unpalatable to the average believer, the truth is that the nature of the

devil, *the spirit of disobedience*, with all its attributes of rebellion and evil, is the carnal nature which pervades the soul of every human being ever born. Which means that within us all is the propensity to rebellion, including operating in sorcery and witchcraft. This Truth is corroborated by the Holy Spirit's Words conveyed through the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians, wherein he included "*sorcery*" or "*witchcraft*" (depending on which Bible translation you read) among the attributes of the carnal nature:

Now the deeds of the flesh (carnal nature) are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, SORCERY, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)

Thus, sorcery, from the spiritual perspective, is not merely an assortment of occult ritual and practices. Rather, sorcery is an attribute of the carnal nature common to us all. To put it another way, sorcery is a natural tendency lurking within the unredeemed soul of every human being that we all are quite capable of operating on our own without any assistance from evil spirits.

Within every one of us mere mortals is the raw desire to in some way and degree predominate and impose our will upon others for our own self-aggrandizing and self-exalting purposes. This propensity is just as much a part of the inherent carnal nature (the source of our temptation to sin) as immorality, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, or a plethora of other, just as damning, iniquitous attitudes and actions, with which we all, saved or unsaved, are constantly tempted. (In the case of many people, the urge to control others is stronger than their urge to control themselves, as demonstrated by their undisciplined behavior.) The *proclivity*, or in some people, *passion*, to control others is a basic urge of "the roaring lion within" that must be resisted and mastered in the same way as any other evil temptation, else it will surely master and eventually utterly destroy *you*.

Predomination and Control—Common Element of Religion

Predomination and control has always been a common element of religion. The reason for that is simple. Satan is the ultimate usurper and the real Antichrist. He is absolutely consumed with the notion of supplanting Jesus as Lord and establishing himself as lord. He is a million times more crazed by this dastardly fantasy of supreme grandeur than any megalomaniac in human history. Religion is the device he uses to deceive people into believing they are right with God, so that he can be lord by default. In actuality, the true though unseen object of religion's homage