

The Dangers of Harry Potter

Since the release of her first novel in 1997, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, (retitled *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the United States), the author's books have gained immense popularity, critical acclaim, and commercial success worldwide through spawning films, video games and merchandise. "The seven books published to date have collectively sold more than 325 million copies and have been translated into more than 64 languages. The seventh and last book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was released on 21, July 2007. Publishers announced a record breaking 12 million copies for the first print run in the U.S. alone."¹

The basic plots are centered around a young boy wizard, Harry Potter, and his best friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, who attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a school for young wizards and witches. Notwithstanding that the books themselves carry blatant themes and titles that treat on magic (white vs. black) and the occult, many innocently devour the materials, dismissing any reservations under the guise that it is "children's fiction."

With the global success of the Potter series, debate has begun in many theological circles as bewildered Christians look to a divided clergy to give them meaningful answers to determine whether or not these books can harmlessly be enjoyed by themselves and their children. Prominent Evangelical leaders have assured the masses of the innocence of the materials and the values and positive morals one can receive from reading them.

In a recent report in *Christianity Today*, author Ted Nelson writes, "As far as I can tell while no major Christian leader has come out to condemn J.K. Rowling's series, many have given it the thumbs-up. If our readers know of any major Christian leader who has actually told Christians not to read the books, I'd be happy to know about it; but in my research, even those Christians known for criticizing all that is popular culture have been pretty positive about Potter."

"Chuck Colson, in his *Breakpoint* radio broadcast (11-2-1999), commended Harry and his friends for their "courage, loyalty, and a willingness to sacrifice for one another—even at the risk of their lives." Colson dismissed the pagan practices as "purely mechanical, as opposed to occultic. That is, Harry and his friends cast spells, read crystal balls, and turn themselves into animals—but they don't make contact with a supernatural world.... [It's not] the kind of real-life witchcraft the Bible condemns."

He further writes, "if your kids do enjoy Harry's magical world, you should give them copies of C.S. Lewis's *Narnia* books and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. These books also feature wizards and witches and magic, but in addition, they inspire the imagination within a Christian framework—and prepare the hearts of readers for the real-life story of Jesus Christ."²

Pastor Colson's view is not isolated as is evinced by other writers. "Mark Greene, Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, wrote a note of regret for not giving it to his god-daughter earlier: "I wish I'd been the one to introduce her to Harry—fine lad you know, courageous, resourceful, humble, fun, good mind. Comes from good stock, you know. She could do worse, far worse. And, as far as literary companions go, frankly, not much better."³

Lastly, Owen Smith, a youth worker at St. Margaret's Church (Church of England) in the United Kingdom has released a guide which provides tools to use in discussing different challenges that you people are facing. "From theological concepts such as sacrifice and mercy, to everyday issues such as fears and boasting, each of the guide's 12 sessions reportedly provides a basis for an hour's discussions and activities. The sessions include Bible verses that present the Christian perspective on the theme, and prayer activities drawing on the topic."⁴

Regrettably, the guide that is being used on how to evangelize is based on the "Harry Potter" phenomenon illustrating how "Christianity is relevant to life through issues tackled in the popular U.S. cartoon series (The Simpsons)." Mr. Smith adds, "The magic in the books is simply part of the magic that J. K. Rowling has created, in the same way that magic is part of the world of Christian writers such as C. S. Lewis."⁵

As many Christian parents and leaders react to the series with an indifferent, lackadaisical attitude, the youth of their homes, schools, and churches are forming their own opinions regarding the occult, sorcery, and witchcraft. Tragically, adolescents are not reading it as harmless material but are being led unwittingly down the road to spiritualism and Devil worship. "The Pagan Federation has appointed a youth officer to deal with a flood of inquiries following the success of the Harry Potter books which describe magic and wizardry."⁶

Contemplate two of many such testimonies of avid fans of the Potter books:

"I was eager to get to Hogwarts first because I like what they learned there and **I want to be a witch.**" Gioia Bishop, age 10.⁷

"I like the third book because here [Harry] meets his godfather and Professor Lupin, a really cool guy [*This really "cool guy" is a werewolf as well as wizard, and Harry's godfather is a "shape shifter" who turns himself into a scary black dog*]...." Harry Libarle, age 7.⁸

Although many readers have not been warned of the dangers of Harry Potter, author J.K. Rowling candidly admits, "I get letters from children addressed to Professor Dumbledore [headmaster at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the books' setting], and it's not a joke, begging to be let into Hogwarts, and some of them are really sad. Because they want it to be true so badly they've convinced themselves it's true."⁹

"Two British reports on this phenomenon show us the obvious: popular forms of occult entertainment "have fueled a rapidly growing interest in witchcraft among children." Naturally, the island's Pagan Federation is pleased. Though it refuses to admit new members under age 18, "it deals with an average of 100 inquiries a month from youngsters who want to become witches, and claims it has occasionally been 'swamped' with calls."¹⁰

"It is quite probably linked to things like Harry Potter, Sabrina The Teenage Witch and Buffy The Vampire Slayer," explains the Federation's media officer, Andy Norfolk. "Every time an article on witchcraft or paganism appears, we had a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls."¹¹

Satan is clearly operating under a cleverly crafted disguise that few, if any, are giving any serious

consideration to. “None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than are those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 516)

Let us review five facts regarding the occult, spiritualism, witchcraft, and end-time deceptions that the Scriptures warn of:

1. Man is mortal and if faithful to Jesus will not receive immortality at death but rather when Jesus comes again.

“Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?”
“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”
“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”
(Job 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:52-55; 1 Tim. 6:16)

2. When man (righteous or wicked, saint or sinner, rich or poor, etc.) dies, he sleeps in the grave until Jesus comes the second time in the clouds of heaven.

“The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”
“These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” (Ps. 115:17; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; John 11:11-14)

3. Satan and his wicked angels have the power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” “Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away

those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.” “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.” (2 Cor. 11:14, 15; 1 Sam. 28:3-15; 1 Chron. 10:13, 14)

4. Satanic deception will intensify as we continue to approach the end of time.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” The apostle John, describing the miracle-working power that will be manifested in the last days, declares: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8-10; Revelation 13:13, 14; Matt. 24:24)

5. God forbids man from dabbling into the occult or attempting to contact the dead and condemns wizards and the like.

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.” “And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.” “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. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. (Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:10-14)

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4, 5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs; . . . they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13, 14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 561)

God is concerned and very much interested in the material that we read, watch, or listen to as He gave His Son to save our souls from eternal ruin, and He wants us to be prepared for His coming that we may spend eternity with Him. The power that Satan gains over his unsuspecting prey can only be broken by confession, forsaking, and repentance. God not only stands ready to forgive us, but He will also break the strongholds of Satan in our lives and even remove the relish for Satanic media. Every time we come across material that shares these demonic themes that invite us to “seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter”; should not we as a people seek unto our God, especially as we see his soon approach? (Isa. 8:19)

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter
2. <http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/Harry&Witchcraft.htm>
3. <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=6778>
4. <http://ctlibrary.com/2039>
5. Ibid.

6. http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/dynamic/news/story.html?in_review_id=306029&in_review_text_id=250010
7. "What Readers Think About Goblet?" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7-26.
8. "Harry's Biggest Fans," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7-26
9. <http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/Harry&Witchcraft.htm>
10. <http://www.anavoia.com>pfafja
11. http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/dynamic/news/story.html?in_review_id=306029&in_review_text_id=250010