

## **The Foolish and the Bewitched**

When we hear about witchcraft and evil spirits the atmosphere gets spooky and it is as if we are ten years old again telling ghost stories under the covers in a dark room that is lit only with a flashlight. This is a funny scene because many of us remember thoughts of ghost and zombies and even how we thought that the mean old lady at the corner with the fifty cats was really a witch. Witchcraft is not about women riding on brooms or even people who have made a pact with the devil. Witchcraft is a spirit that can possess and rule people of all ages who are careless, curious, unbelieving and willing to enter into this pit of darkness. Paul asked this amazing question in **Galatians 3:1 "O foolish Galatians, who hath BEWITCHED you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"** Paul spoke as if the Galatian community of believers had been under a spell or that they had been lulled into a trance where they were able to be reprogrammed from the truth. This was not done by violence or persecution but by the words of men who were themselves anti-christ.

These Galatians were people who made a most common but costly error. They wanted to be Christians their own way. They had not totally disavowed all of Paul's teaching but they decided to mix a little carnality and law with the Gospel and liberty. They got comfortable in their good start and decided to take the wheel and drive to eternal life with their own directions. Many of us begin learning and growing and get around people who seem to want Jesus just like us, but have found a new way to His way. They tell you that it doesn't take the church to get you where you need to go in **CHRIST**. They explain that because you have the spirit of God, that **YOU DON'T** need teaching. They say, "*the Holy Ghost can lead me without some 'man's' sermon or some 'human' teaching every week. I know how to pray and seek God for myself*".

**1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15:23 says rebellion is as the sin of WITCHCRAFT, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** Before you know it, a new religion will spring up in the mind that has such a wonderful free sounding name but is nothing more than a cult of bondage. History has proven it and our news stations are telling us about these cults daily. Mothers are freely giving their daughters to be raped by so-called prophets and are willingly handing their children over to be abused by pedophiles living under the name "elder" or "brother". Seemingly wise and experienced people make themselves poor and isolate themselves from family and loved ones under the guise of finding a 'true' way. That declaration simply means that what these people formerly believed and cherished as true and even witnessed with their own eyes is now a lie and they even deny their own experience of salvation. Just like THE GALATIANS, they began to seek the hardness and rigidity of the law over love and freedom in the spirit. Witchcraft is geared to make the truth appear to be bondage and lies to be liberating. This isn't about bad witches or good witches or white magic versus black magic. **All witchcraft is evil, in any form and is forbidden by God.**

A good example of bewitching can be seen in the animal kingdom. You see this in observing birds or lizards being hunted by a serpent. Have you ever wondered how the snake can literally climb and stare inches away from the face of the animal it intends to devour and yet the prey does not react to save or protect itself. The prey becomes a willing participant in its own demise. The prey is either too confident about its camouflage or is simply paralyzed with fear and almost willingly enters into the mouth of the serpent. Keep in mind that prey is not as weak and feeble as it appears. It is made by divine design and has been given everything by God, including training, instinct and experience for times such as these. Remember, the bird has wings to fly and the lizard has legs to run but these thoughts do not seem to enter into a frozen mind. When a person is bewitched they have been ministered to and intimidated by the spirit of rebellion.

This spirit can dwell and rule whole areas and even cities. **Acts 8:9-11 says "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and BEWITCHED the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had BEWITCHED them with sorceries."** The only way to avoid witchcraft is by following the only anti-evil manual that works, it is called the **Bible**. God has built for us a wonderful institution; the church, that is run under the protection of His Word and His Spirit. Our cities are under siege and the answer is not more churches or deeper revelation, it is about building up the churches that we have and living and holding fast to the revelation that we have in the simplicity of the gospel.

**Only the truth will make a person free.**