

Christiana's Progress - Part 2 of the Book "Pilgrim's Progress"

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Stage 8 - Part 2 (pages 87-91)

This valiant group of Pilgrims, led by Mr. Great-Heart, come to the Enchanted Ground, where as we read, as many as twenty to one will fall. It's a place where Christians become weary in well-doing, they become lackadaisical in using the word of God as their sword and fall prey to the seductions of the god of this world. The portion we read today has many nuggets of truth to meditate on, but we're going to focus on; what is enchantment and the witchcraft that is associated with it.

What does enchanted mean; it means to fill someone with great delight or charm. Synonyms are captivate, delight, enrapture, enthrall, beguile, bewitch, spellbind, fascinate, hypnotize, mesmerize, rivet, grip and transfix. It means to put someone or something under a spell. So this is what these pilgrims are entering into.

The author in the script says this; *“By this time, they arrived at the Enchanted Ground, where the air naturally tended to make one drowsy. And the place was all grown over with briars and thorns, except here and there. There was an enchanted arbour there, where, if a man sits, or if he sleeps, it is a question, some say, whether he will ever rise or wake again in this world.”*

Let's look at the prophet Samuel in the Old Testament who gave a prophetic word to King Saul, and how God had rejected him as king because of his sin of witchcraft, which as we'll read about is the same as rebellion, stubbornness and idolatry.

Let's read about it in **1 Samuel 15:22-24**; *“So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.” Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.”*

God specifically told King Saul to destroy ALL of the Amalakites and ALL that they owned. But Saul, disobeyed this order and in essence became a rebel to God's authority and please the people he governed. You can read about it from the beginning of I Samuel 15. Just as a lot of voices coaxed King Saul to disobey, you too will have a lot of voices enticing you to come up with an alternative plan, sidestepping God's clear directive for your life as a Christian. God's punishment toward this rebellion was swift and King Saul was rejected by God. Any time that you stubbornly rebel against the word of God found in the Bible, you're opening a door for witchcraft , iniquity and idolatry to operate in your life.

Adding to King Saul's rebellion, only a short time later we read how when after the prophet Samuel dies, Saul consults a medium, the witch of Endor, to talk with Samuel. It shows how far iniquity had taken root in his heart.

Let's read the story in **I Samuel 28: 3-25**; *“Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor.” So Saul*

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disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you." Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, "As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!" And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." So he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming 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 down. Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? And the Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night. And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way." But he refused and said, "I will not eat." So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread from it. So she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night."

Everything that King Saul did here was evil. He delved into witchcraft, he disguised himself, he put his army into a battle which saw many killed, including himself...and the list goes on. Many when reading this account of Samuel being brought up from the dead, believe it was actually Samuel. But that's erroneous. The witch brought up a demon, or another word would be familiar spirit disguised as the prophet.

A familiar spirit (demon) is a spirit who is very aware of what people look like, act like, think like etc. They impersonate the real person as they've seen how they've lived while alive on the earth. We know it was a demon, because the Bible is very clear that it's appointed unto man to die once, and then judgment. Jesus in the parable of the rich ruler and Lazarus, shows clearly that once a person dies, he cannot be conjured back up again to give council. That's different though than a person actually being raised from the dead to continue to live on earth - which we read accounts of in the Bible.

When this demon said, "you'll be with me", that was another lie as Saul wasn't going to heaven. He had entered into witchcraft from his rebellious action against God. This demon was actually saying you're coming down to hell to be with me, in torment for eternity. But Saul, so blinded already from his sin, actually thought he'd be going to Paradise (as it then was) to be with Samuel and father Abraham. He believed a lie. Saul was in this witches house all day and night! There's something terribly wrong with that picture isn't there.

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So this witch, who remember, is operating in rebellion against God, brings up another demon to do the devils work. God was not speaking through this familiar spirit. As we read earlier, God had taken his hand off of King Saul.

Is it not interesting that the very sin of witchcraft operating in the spiritists and mediums that Saul had been cutting off from the land, ends up deceiving Saul when he consults the witch of Endor, and she uses a familiar spirit masquerading as the prophet Samuel to speak to him.

That is such a sobering story, but it shows how the demonic can take over a person's life who is in blatant rebellion against God. Again, going back to the script, this is what enchantment is related to and does. It's a spiritual door that opens a person up to the demonic.

We read a similar New Testament account in **Acts 8:9-23**; *"But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.'"*

What does this story show? It reveals Simons heart in spite of his conversion. Like King Saul, his heart was not right and was full of bitterness and iniquity. Iniquity means immoral or grossly unfair behaviour. Synonyms are vice, evil, sin, villainy, atrocity, monstrosity, obscenity and more. These all have their root in rebellion which is equal to witchcraft.

How many Christians today are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity, and like Simon have a heart that is not right in the sight of God?

Here's another story in **Acts 16:16-19** that underscore what witchcraft does. *"Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.' And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And he came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities."*

You would think in the natural that this woman was being used of God to help promote the ministry because she wasn't speaking anything negative, but it was not the Spirit of the Lord speaking through her but a spirit of divination. Had Paul not discerned that she had a spirit of divination who knows how she may have affected their ministry.

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This teaching today is about how to avoid the snares of witchcraft. Rebellion against God is something that each Christian has to be aware of, because the masquerading of it is subtle, clever, crafty, ingenious and sly. Just do what you think is better and easier than what God has told you to do, because you'll probably arrive at the end. But that's the deception of rebellion because you're putting yourself in the driver's seat, not the Holy Spirit.

The script continues with this; "*STANDBFAST. As I was thus musing, as I said, there was one in very pleasant clothing, but old, who presented herself to me, and offered me three things: that is, her body, her purse, and her bed. Now the truth is, I was both weary and sleepy. I am also as poor as an owlet, and perhaps the witch knew that. Well, I repulsed her once and again, but she ignored my repulses, and smiled. Then I began to get angry; but it mattered nothing at all to her. Then she made offers again, and said that if I would be ruled by her, she would make me great and happy. 'For', said she, 'I am the mistress of the world, and men are made happy by me.' Then I asked her name, and she told me it was Madam Bubble.*

MR. HONEST. "Madam Bubble! Is she not a tall, comely dame, with something of a swarthy complexion?"

STANDBFAST. "Right, you've hit it: she is just such a one."

MR. HONEST. "Does she not speak very smoothly, and give you a smile at the end of a sentence?"

STANDBFAST. "You fall right on it again, for these are her very actions."

MR. HONEST. "Does she not wear a great purse by her side, and is not her hand often in it, fingering her money as if it was her heart's delight?"

Who comes to your mind in the Bible who describes Madam Bubble? Jezebel is probably the number one choice. I'm going to share here from www.BibleGateway.com and there is an expose and description on Jezebel.

"The Woman Who Was a She-Devil

Scripture References—1 Kings 16:31; 18:4-19; 19:1, 2; 21:5-25; 2 Kings 9

Name Meaning—This heartless woman with a bloody history belied the name she bore, for Jezebel means, "chaste, free from carnal connection"; but by nature she was a most licentious woman. She was a voluptuary, with all the tawdry arts of a wanton woman. Thus no name could have been more inappropriate for such a despised female.

Ahab, captivated by Jezebel, "took her to wife, and went and served Baal and worshipped him." All the other sins of Ahab were light compared with his marriage with Jezebel and the serving of Baal that followed (1 Kings 16:31, see Micah 6:16). For over 60 years idolatry had made terrible inroads upon the life and ways of the Hebrews and meant more to them than the breaking of the first two commandments of the law; it produced spiritual and moral disintegration which was accentuated by Jezebel's determined effort to destroy the worship of Jehovah. Let us try to delineate the character of Jezebel—a name which has come to mean in all ages a striking proverb for seductive power, worldly subtlety and wickedness of the worst type.

A gifted woman, she prostituted all her gifts for the furtherance of evil, and her misdirected talents became a curse. Persuasive, her influence was wrongly directed. Resolute above other women, she used her strength of character to destroy a king and her own offspring, as well as pollute the life of a nation. 2 Kings 9:21-23

She Was an Ardent Idolater

Baal had no more dedicated devotee than Jezebel. None could match her zeal for the worship of Ashtarothe the famous goddess of the Zidonians, as zealous and liberal maintenance of hundreds of idolatrous priests clearly proves.

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She Was a Dominating Wife

Ahab was like a puppet in the hands of his overpowering wife. Because he was pliant and weak, Jezebel found it easy to achieve her murderous designs. How could worthless and spineless Ahab resist the evil scheming of his unscrupulous partner?

She Was a Treacherous Schemer

The tragedy of Naboth and his vineyard reveals how despicable a woman Jezebel was. Life was cheap to such a female who had murder in her veins. Her father, Ethbaal, murdered his predecessor, Phelles. Brought up in such a home of intrigue and massacre what else could we expect but a she-devil as Jezebel became?

She Loved Personal Adornment

The death of the one whom Jezebel had “stirred up to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord” revealed her to be as incapable of remorse as of fear. There was no sign of repentance in her, as she went out proudly to meet her prophesied doom. Jehu had been appointed and anointed as the avenger of Jehovah, and he set about his grim task of meting out justice to those who had polluted the land. Jezebel’s son and grandson met Jehu in the blood-stained vineyard Naboth had once possessed. Jehu slew Jezebel’s son, the king of Israel, and her grandson was overtaken in flight and was slain. The still proud, defiant queen-mother knew her last hour was not far away, and great-grandmother though she was, she took time to arrange her hair and paint her face, and looked out at a window to greet Jehu as he passed by.

She Died a Horrible Death

The climax came as Jehu entered the city gate. Reaching the palace, he looked up to the window from which came the taunting voice of Jezebel: “Is it peace, thou Zimri, thou murderer of thy master?” Such a taunt maddened her victorious enemy, and seeing the two eunuchs standing at the window with the defiant queen he shouted up to them, “Who is on my side? Who? Throw her down!”

*They obeyed and threw her out of the window, and as she fell the walls were sprinkled with her blood. Below her were the soldiers with their spears, the horses to tread her underfoot and the hungry dogs waiting for her flesh. The triumphant Jehu entered the palace over Jezebel’s dead body. As he ate and drank, he remembered that the one who had just died as prophesied had been a queen and a mother of kings, so he ordered—
Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her. And they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.”*

Jezebel may be dead but the demon that ruled Jezebel is alive and in operation on earth today. We need to have the attitude of Jehu towards the sins of harlotry, idolatry, iniquity and witchcraft . Were not fighting flesh and blood, but the spirit of Jezebel that is behind individuals and what they do.

Mr. Great-Heart says the following in the script; *“Where? No, none but God knows where. But in general, to be sure, she would have drawn you into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Tim. 6:9) It was she that set Absalom against his father, and Jeroboam against his master. It was she that persuaded Judas to sell his Lord; and prevailed with Demas to forsake the godly pilgrim’s life. None can tell of the mischief she has done. She puts a variance between rulers and subjects, between parents and children, between neighbour and neighbour, between a man and his wife, between a man and himself, between the flesh and the spirit. Wherefore, good Mr. Standfast, be like your name; and when you have done all, stand.”*

So once again it's important to search your lives and see where you are rebelling against Gods word found in the Holy Bible. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. We know that when we sin, but confess and repent of it, God will forgive us. This whole teaching today is about knowingly,

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willingly, whole-heartedly being stubborn and a rebel against what God has both said in the Bible and what's he has specifically told you to do.

From a different perspective, you would be considered being in rebellion if you did an act of violent or open resistance to an established government or ruler, right. You would be resisting authority. As a matter of fact, we probably shake our finger at someone or people who do such blatant insubordination in their town, city or country for defying their authority. How much worse is it defying God's authority? Well, when we are in open rebellion against God, we're resisting his holy and supreme authority in our life.

To break it down to the lowest common denominator, Lucifer was thrown out of heaven because he was rebellious to God's authority. That's why this sin is of the worst kind and you tap into the demonic which is witchcraft by following after satan's rebellion.

To recap **I Samuel 15: 22-24** "... *“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams...”* You may try to sacrifice all kinds of things to the Lord to try to compensate what he's really asked of you just like Saul did thinking that he'll be pleased with you. Not so. If all your 'sacrifices' are not what God has asked you to do, it's in vain to think God's approval is on it...he knows your heart and that's always what he's looking at. God wants OBEDIENCE to him.

In closing, let's read **Revelation 22:14-16** in the Amplified Bible; *“Blessed (happy, prosperous, to be admired) are those who wash their robes [in the blood of Christ by believing and trusting in Him—the righteous who do His commandments], so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs [the godless, the impure, those of low moral character] and the sorcerers [with their intoxicating drugs, and magic arts], and the immoral persons [the perverted, the molesters, and the adulterers], and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying (deception, cheating). “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you and to give you assurance of these things for the churches. I am the Root (the Source, the Life) and the Offspring of David, the radiant and bright Morning Star.”*

Operating in unashamed, deliberate and obvious rebellion against Gods word is witchcraft, being stubborn towards Gods word is iniquity and idolatry, and it needs to be repented of wholeheartedly. Don't let the little bit of sin, as leaven, spread throughout your whole life. If you'll deal with the little things in your heart that Holy Spirit has been showing you today, as rebellion and witchcraft, you'll be more inclined to change and repent of the sin. God has his eyes on your heart and thoughts, he knows everything and he's giving you the opportunity to change and repent today.