

## 46. The Book of 1Samuel—28:1-20

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### *“Christian Divination” Pt.2*

(5/8/16)

In our study in 1Samuel we came to chapter 28 a couple of weeks ago where Saul sought out a medium to conduct a séance for him since God had ceased speaking to him.

He wanted her to call up Samuel the prophet from the dead so he could counsel Saul about what to do in his upcoming battle with the Philistines. (Get the study from two weeks ago—lesson 44)

When Saul used a medium to contact the dead he engaged in what is known as ‘*divination*’.

Divination generally refers to attempts to learn "*hidden things*" that cannot be known by normal means.

Divination falls into two main categories—mechanical and mental (internal).

**Mechanical divination** uses *physical* means to acquire hidden knowledge.

Examples of this include such things as gazing into crystal balls, reading Tarot cards and tea leaves or using Ouija Boards.

**Internal divination**, sometimes called "soothsaying," involves conjuring up a spiritual entity during a trance or an altered state of consciousness.

Why am I talking about this, what does divination have to do with Christians—unfortunately more than you may realize?

**1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the [Holy] Spirit expressly says that in latter times [Last Days] some will depart from the faith [but not necessarily from the church], giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

I think we would all agree that *divination* is a doctrine of demons.

In the O.T. God forbid Israel from practicing divination or soothsaying or sorcery or calling up the dead—these were all demonic, occult practices that the pagan Canaanites (and many others) were involved in.

**Deuteronomy 18:12-14 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. <sup>13</sup> You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. <sup>14</sup> For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

However, as Paul the apostle and the other N.T. writers warned, doctrines of demons would come into the Church in the Last Days through gullible Christians and undiscerning pastors.

They wouldn't be labeled “doctrines of demons” of course—they would be sanitized from their pagan roots and Christianized with brand new labels.

One of these doctrines of demons that has come into the Church is a Christianized form of Transcendental Meditation known as “contemplative prayer”.

## What is Contemplative Prayer?

Contemplative prayer is an eastern meditation technique that helps a person enter into an altered state conscience known as ‘the silence’ (the emptying of all thought to make contact with the spirit realm possible).

There are three basic ways to enter the silence:

By using breathing exercises (that’s why it’s sometimes referred to as ‘breath prayers’).

By focusing on an object.

But by far the most common way to reach the silence is by using a mantra (a word or phrase repeated over and over) which is why contemplative prayer is sometimes called ‘*mantra meditation*’.

The word ‘mantra’ comes from a couple of Sanskrit words that mean “*to be liberated from*”—thus mantra meditation literally means “*to escape or to be liberated from thought*”.

One expert on this subject said,

*“By repeating the mantra over and over, either aloud or silently, the word or phrase begins to lose any meaning it once had. The conscious thinking process is gradually tuned out until an altered state of consciousness is achieved”.*

This kind of meditation has been practiced for centuries by those in Eastern religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islamic Sufism; and also by those in the New Age and occult.

## How Did Contemplative Prayer a.k.a Mantra Meditation Infiltrate the Church?

Contemplative prayer got its start in the Church through a group of Catholic monks known as the *“Desert Fathers.”*

These were a group of men who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. and wanted to live lives of total separation from the world so as to experience God in a deeper way.

So they left their towns and villages and moved out into the desert to live a monastic kind of life.

(The word ‘hermit’ comes from the Greek word for ‘desert’)

Later they built monasteries and lived together but initially they were individual hermits sprinkled throughout the desert seeking a deeper knowledge of God.

At some point they came in contact with religious travelers and wise men from the East who taught them forms of eastern meditation that they believed would help them experience God in a new and more powerful way.

In the Bible the word ‘meditation’ means to *“think deeply about something”*.

However Eastern meditation means to *“empty the mind”* in order to open it to the spirit world.

These Catholic hermits thought that if they could learn to practice mantra meditation techniques like contemplative prayer and learn to visualize Christ in their imagination (another eastern practice that we talked about last week)—they could connect with God in a deeper way than ever before.

You say, “*How could these supposed Christians think they could use Eastern pagan practices to help them get closer to the God of the Bible?*”—the same way Christians are being sucked into these practices today.

You see the Desert Fathers believed as long as the desire to draw close to God was sincere—anything could be utilized to reach God.

Therefore, if mantra meditation worked for the Hindus and Buddhists and Islamic Sufi’s to reach their gods—then Christian’s could use mantras (using only Christian terms of course) to reach and connect with the God of the Bible.

In other words, everything back then and still today with those practicing these things in the Church is based on intent.

Yes, Hindus and Buddhists and others practice these things to make contact with *their* gods but as long as *our* intent is good, i.e. to make contact with the true and living God—it becomes sanctified and God honors it.

Well by that logic we could justify using crystal balls, Tarot Cards and Ouija Boards to make contact with God and come into a deeper relationship with Him—

I mean it’s okay because our intentions are good—right?!

Wanting to draw near to God is a good thing—but it must be gone about in the right way—*good intentions* are not enough—the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

*“So what happened with these Eastern meditation techniques among these Catholic hermits?”*

Roger Oakland in his book “Faith Undone” writes,

*“This practice remained obscure for many centuries and didn’t become mainstream until about fifty years ago when a Catholic monk who was also a world-renowned Trappist monk named Thomas Merton brought it out of the convents and monasteries and presented it to a much larger audience. Catholic priest and mystic Henri Nouwen further expanded this interest to Protestant and even Evangelical circles. Others who played a vital role in the propagation of mystical prayer were: Matthew Fox, Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating. Pennington’s book alone, Centering Prayer, sold over a million copies.”*

Thomas Merton eventually came to believe and taught that the realm reached during mantra meditation is the same no matter what religion you belong to.

Just like spokes on a wheel all leading to a central hub—all religions lead to the same place and connect all of us with the same “God”.

This is the foundational belief that *Panentheism* is built upon (God is in all) which almost everyone who practices contemplative prayer for any length of time eventually comes to believe in.

These practices are preparing people for the one world religion under the false prophet and Antichrist.

In his foreword to Ray Yungen’s book, *A Time of Departing*, Ron Comer says:

*“By using Eastern mystical techniques such as the repetition of words (mantras) and the emptying of the mind, professing Christians are testifying to powerful experiences in the spiritual realms. In Christian circles these techniques are being called: the silence, breath prayer, centering prayer, or contemplative prayer.*

*Through these mystical prayer practices the church today has opened its door to a subtle abandonment of the gospel... Like two rivers merging together, Eastern and Western religious thought are joining together, thus gaining momentum towards a one world religion in which all paths lead to God.”*

## What are the Consequences of Practicing Contemplative Prayer?

Cassandra Batya, who as a Christian, decided to practice contemplative meditation because she wanted to experience a closer relationship with God.

However, the more she got into contemplative spirituality, the worse things got.

Listen to excerpts of her candid and compelling testimony as recorded by one author:

*“My spiritual focus and prayer became less about Jesus, and more about mystical spiritual highs and insights. Contemplative spirituality became my drug. During prayer, a voice in the back of my head would tell me I was a witch. One night, my thumb/hand began to shake on its own during prayer. By nature, I am a kind and loving person and have been told such, but I started to have hateful and venomous mood swings and became at moments verbally abusive to my loved ones. I was surprised at my own behavior and language.”*

Eventually, she realized she had entered a dangerous demonic realm. After conducting her own research, she discovered the symptoms she experienced were the same as the Kundalini effect (yoga). Immediately, she began praying for guidance:

*“I repented and renounced all contemplative practices, inner/esoteric spirituality, and mysticism. Actually, I wept aloud, fell on my knees, and begged God’s forgiveness. I threw out all books and music that dealt with mystics, mysticism, and esoteric/inner/contemplative spirituality and anything else related to it. I immediately knew I had done the right thing. The atmosphere in my home changed, and for the first time in a long time, when I prayed to God I felt a peace and joy in my heart, and not great fear or terror.”*

This is all part of the Last Days deception that the New Testament writers warned us would be coming into the church just prior to Jesus’ return—the Great Apostasy.

Well mantra-meditation and visualization are not the only methods for entering an altered state of consciousness so as to open the door to the spirit realm (divination)—there are other methods being used today.

## Lectio Divina

What is Lectio Divina? (pronounced lex-ee-o di-veen-a)

The term is Latin for “*divine reading*”—and because of it many believe it simply means reading a passage of the Bible slowly, meditatively and prayerfully.

But whereas reading Scripture in that manner can be beneficial and a blessing in normal Christian devotions—this is not what contemplatives and mystics mean who advocate this practice.

Contemplative mysticism pioneer Thomas Keating explains what Lectio Divina is *not*—  
“*It is not traditional Bible study, not reading the Scriptures for understanding and edification, and not praying the Scriptures...Keating says that Lectio Divina is an introduction into the more intense practices such as contemplative prayer and centering prayer*”.

One Christian author writes,

*“It always includes taking a passage of Scripture (or other writings), reading it slowly, then working your way down until you have just a word or small phrase from the passage that you are meditating on (repeating over and over). Basically, you are coming up with a mantra-like word or phrase that has been extracted from a passage of Scripture, which, according to contemplatives, if repeated for several minutes will help you get rid of thoughts and distractions, so then, they say, you can hear the voice of God and feel His presence.”*

## Labyrinths

Labyrinths have been around for thousands of years and have their roots in ancient Greek mythology.



Originally a labyrinth was a complex maze consisting of halls and chambers with a single path that led to the center.

In modern times a typical labyrinth consists of a single winding path that leads to a central location—which represents each person’s winding and difficult journey in life until they reach the place of peace, fulfillment and unity with all mankind.

Many churches today have built labyrinths on their property and have promoted them as “prayer walks” or “prayer journeys” that will help people connect with God.

The idea is to walk the labyrinth slowly, meditatively and prayerfully— *“what’s wrong with that?”*

The problem is that it has been used for thousands of years as a pathway to ‘godhood’ or enlightenment (Christians simply replace *‘a pathway to godhood’* with *‘a pathway to the God of the Bible’* and voila! —it’s okay for Christians).

Kimberly Lowelle Seward, the past president of The Labyrinth Society (a network of labyrinth scholars and enthusiasts) recognizes this basic function: *“The labyrinth is an archetype of transformation... [It] serves as a bridge from the mundane to the divine.”*

In discussing the labyrinth as a religious tool, *The Penguin Dictionary* associates the maze (labyrinth) with the Buddhist Mandala (hold on to that, we’ll come back to it in a minute).

In his article entitled, *“The Labyrinth Journey: Walking the Path to Fulfillment?”* Christian author Carl Teichrib says,

*“Hundreds of Christians have taken part in labyrinth prayer walks, and many churches across North America and Europe are embracing this tool as a means to expand their spiritual experience...Beyond [the fact that] walking the labyrinth is used for initiation in cults, it serves as a catalyst to draw people into more serious forms of New Age or eastern-style meditation cloaked under terms like “the silence,” “centering prayer,” or “contemplative prayer.”*

*Yes, the majority of Christians would affirm that their labyrinth prayer walk is completely focused on Jesus Christ. That may be true, but it doesn't excuse the fact that the labyrinth is, by its theological nature, an inter-religious and deeply mystical device. If God is going to bless the labyrinth experience, how is He going to deal with 2 Corinthians 6:14-16?*

**2 Corinthians 6:14-16 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: *"I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

*Paradoxically, while the evangelical Christian community talks about "spiritual warfare" and "putting on the full armor of God," many of these same churches can be found embracing that which they claim to counter. In seeking relevancy, we have become dangerously "experiential," and old forms of mysticism are becoming centerpieces in "experiences of faith."*

## **Mandala Coloring Books**

Do you realize that 3 of the top 10 books being marketed to Christians are adult coloring books?

Actually there are roughly 75 adult coloring books targeted at Christians for sale at Sam's Club, Walmart, Hobby Lobby and through Amazon and other online retailers.

Now here's the thing—right alongside the 'Christian' coloring books at Sam's Club, Hobby Lobby, Barnes and Noble etc. are other adult coloring books—like one I saw that had the title:

*"The Art of Mandala—Enjoy the Ancient Art of Meditation Through Colour".*

If you compare the two, you'll immediately notice that the patterns you color in the Mandala coloring books are the same as the ones in the "Christian" coloring books—they both have the same 'paisley' and geometric patterns.

Why? Because that's where the Christian coloring books took them from, and then simply "Christianized" them—just like many in the church did with yoga.

*"Let's Christianize it and then use it to draw close to God."*—Sound familiar?

What exactly is a mandala?

*"A mandala is a spiritual and ritual symbol in Indian religions, representing the universe. In common use, mandala has become a generic term for any diagram, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically; a microcosm of the universe."*

One author said,

*"A mandala is used in tantric Buddhism as an aid to meditation. They meditate on the image until they are saturated by it. They believe that you can merge with the deity by meditating on the mandala."*

So focusing on mandalas is a spiritual practice where you merge with "deities"—which means it's a divination device that opens the door to the spirit realm and to the demonic.

In an article entitled, *"Ritual Objects of Buddhism and Hinduism"* the author said, *"A mandala is a tool, an aid to meditation or trance induction."*

You say, *"Christians would never stare at a mandala as a meditation tool to reach an altered state of consciousness"*—I agree, not deliberately, but as one author put it:

*"If the enemy can get a Christian to stare at a mandala because they are coloring it, he can have them absentmindedly focus their attention on the image and they will unknowingly open up their subconscious to this image in almost the same way."*

On the website ‘ReligionFacts.com’ it says,

*“When completed, a mandala becomes a sacred area that serves as a receptacle for deities and a collection point of universal forces. By mentally entering a mandala and proceeding to its center, a person is symbolically guided through the cosmos to the essence of reality. By constructing a mandala, a monk ritually participates in the Buddha’s teachings.”*

In an article by Stephen Vrancken called, *“Your Introduction to the Healing Powers of Mandala Coloring”* he said,

*“You can think of the mandala as being energetically alive, a means of creating a pathway to a desired state of being. What state of being do you desire to create? Maybe you want to experience inner peace or maybe you simply want to use the circular pattern to express your artistry. For whatever purpose you choose to work with the mandala, know that you can achieve it through mandala coloring. Imagine yourself with your mandala coloring pages in front of you. All you have to do is set your intention and awaken your mandalas by infusing them with color. It’s that simple and that powerful.”*

He says that *“just by using your coloring book you are expressing your interest in the mandala magic, therefore opening yourself up to spiritual outcomes.”*

Again, I know that any Christians involved in contemplative prayer, lectio divina, labyrinths or adult coloring books containing mandalas will defend themselves by saying *“I’m doing these things to draw close to God or to help me relax—not in a metaphysical way.”*

I understand but you need to understand that you cannot *“Christianize”* the devil’s practices and expect God to honor your good intentions and keep you safe.

He has forbidden the use of divination techniques and devices—even if you’re only using them to draw closer to Him.

As a Christian you wouldn’t think of using a crystal ball or Tarot Cards to connect with God—so why use labyrinths or mandala coloring books?

Wanting to draw near to God is a good thing—but it must be done about in the right way—God’s way as found in His Word.

*“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1John 4:1)*

*“If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Is.8:20)*