

NEW AGE RELIGION
Text: Isaiah 2:6

INTRO: One of the challenges N.T. churches must meet today is that of the New Age Religion, also known as the New Thought Movement, the Human Consciousness Movement, etc.

New Age Religion is a hodgepodge mixture of Eastern religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Astrology, Pantheism, Spiritism & numerous other isms with a few misapplied Bible verses thrown in for good measure.

New Ageism involves TM, ESP, UFOs & other paranormal phenomena. It finds expression in health foods, holistic medicines, ecology, animal rights & numerous other movements dedicated to producing what the New Agers visualize as a utopian society on earth.

In this lesson we will scarcely touch the hem of the garment of New Ageism, but before we begin, we must be warned that not every New Ager has embraced all the aspects of New Ageism, and that some of its more vocal adherents such as actress Shirley McClain are probably an embarrassment to many of the more serious New Agers.

We will deal with 4 of the more visible approaches of New Ageism, with the realization that some New Agers would not embrace all four of these aspects.

I. THE KEY NOTE OF NEW AGEISM CENTERS AROUND THE
CONCEPT OF HUMAN POTENTIAL.

- A. New Ageism denies the existence of a Creator-God with traits of personality. God is viewed as an impersonal force--"May the Force be with you."
- B. New Ageism borrows from Pantheism a concept of God as synonymous with the universe--& since each of us is a part of the universe, each of us is "god."
 1. S. McClain: "If you don't see me as God it is because you don't see yourself as God. Everyone is God. Everyone."
 2. Whole Earth Catalogue: "We are as gods & might as well get good at it."
 3. Spokesmen for the New Age philosophy insist that Jesus & Buddha "became" gods by realizing that they already

were. As soon as we realize our godhood, we too will be gods. Indeed, we already are.

C. Of course, it follows, that since all humans are gods, there is Unlimited Human Potential. "Visualize World Peace" "Name it & claim it." "Possibility Thinking." "Expect a Miracle."

D. This aspect of New Ageism is based on the devil's first lie, Gen. 3:5, "You shall be like God."

1. Man is not God & never will be. EZEK 28:1-2, 9

Now the Egyptians are men & not God: & their horses are flesh not spirit. When the Lord stretches out His hand, both he who helps & he who is helped will fall down; they all will perish together. (Isaiah 31:3).

2. God is not man & never was. God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent... (Num. 23:19).

1 Sam. 15:29

II. REINCARNATION. We could preach an entire sermon on this subject.

A. Reincarnation is the theory that after death the human soul returns to earth in a different body, as an entirely new person & lives again & again & again.

B. Numerous Bible passages refute this Hindu theory. Heb 9:27; 2 Cor 5:10; MT 17:3; LK 16:23

III. CHANNELING IS THE NEW NAME FOR SPIRITISM--SEEKING TO CONTACT THE SPIRIT WORLD VIA A MEDIUM OR PSYCHIC.

A. The Bible seems to indicate that at certain times & under certain circumstances, demons

exercised the power to operate thru mediums & impart messages to human inquirers.

1. Such mediums were known in the O.T. as those who had familiar spirits. In the N.T. one such person was identified as having a "spirit of divination," Acts 16:16.
2. In addition to those who acted as mediums under the influence of demons, others have done so thru self-deceit or outright fakery, using sleight of hand, lights, vapors, mirrors, mechanical devices, smoke, darkness & emotional manipulations to deceive unwary victims.
3. Ehrich Weiss, better known by his stage name, Harry Houdini, was the greatest escape artist & one of the greatest sleight of hand artists who ever lived. Tho skeptical, he was intensely interested in claims of psychic mediums to contact the spirit world. He attended hundreds of seances in Europe & America, & one by one explained the techniques by which their feats were performed. Before he died, he assured his wife & friends that if it were possible for the dead to contact the living, he would do so. For many years on the anniversary of his death, his wife sat by an "eternal light" & sought frantically to receive such a message, but no message ever came.

B. Tho for God's own reasons, He sent Samuel back to earth to pronounce a judgment against King Saul, 1 Sam 28:19, & sent Moses & Elijah to appear to Peter, James & John in MT 17, the Bible indicates that under normal circumstances, the dead know nothing about the things taking place on earth after their demise, have no information to impart to the living & are not permitted to return to earth even if they did have. ECCL. 9:5-6

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums, who whisper & mutter," should

not a people seek their God? Should they
seek the dead on behalf of the living?
(Isaiah 8:19). LUKE 16:27-31

C. Whether their power was demonic, imaginary or
fake, God's attitude toward it was clear.

READ DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14. Rev. 21:8

IV. ASTROLOGY. The theory of astrology developed in
ancient Babylon about 2,000 years ago. It is based
on the Zodiac, "an imaginary belt in the heavens,
16 degrees broad, including the paths of the moon
& all the principle planets, & its middle line
the... sun's path." As viewed from earth, the sun
seems to move from one constellation to the next
throughout the year, corresponding to the 12
"signs" of the Zodiac. Each person's birthday
falls within one of these 12 divisions & according
to Astrology, that person is strongly influenced
by the stars & planets of his zodiacal sign.

Since the Zodiac was drawn up 2,000 years
ago by Babylonian "holy men," the relative posit-
ion of the sun, the earth, & the other planets has
changed. Prof. Owen S. Rachleff of NY Univ. ex-
plains that the shifting of the earth's equinoxes
has caused each sun sign to fall back about 30
days in the last 2,000 years, so that everyone who
thinks he's an Aries is really an Aquarius, etc.
Thus, even if there were any truth to the the-
ory--which there is not--astrological predictions
& suppositions would be inaccurate because of
these shiftings of relative positions.

A. Aside from the scientific inaccuracies of the
theories of Astrology, the expressed will of
God thru His prophets should dissuade
Christians from spending their energies &
wasting their time delving into horoscopes
and related forms of deception.

Thus says the Lord: "Do not learn the way of
the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the
signs of heaven, for the Gentiles [heathen]
are dismayed at them. (Jer 10:2).

[God describes Himself as the One] who
frustrates the signs of the babblers, &
drives diviners mad; Who turns the wise men

backward & makes their knowledge foolishness. (Isaiah 44:25).

[To Babylon, mother-land of Astrology]
READ ISAIAH 47:13-15

CONCLUSION: As perhaps you have detected, the New Age philosophy is not really new. It is as old as human sin & as thread-bare as ancient idolatry. The old philosophies have been given recent grooming & dressed up in new terminology & they have great appeal to many who think that in our enlightened age, we must set aside all that is old & embrace all that is new. Hear the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the way & see, & ask for the old paths, where the good way is, & walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.' But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" (Jer. 6:16).

New Age religion is not new. It's just an updated way of stating the devil's lie in Gen. 3:5. But old as it is, I offer something older. The truth that the wages of sin is death, as old as the command of God to Adam in Gen. 2:17. And, yet presented with new hope in the gospel, that altho the wages of sin have not changed, they are off-set by a gift from God--"eternal life thru Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23).

Exton, PA, November 4, 1990
Wrightsville, PA, March 17, 1991
Tri-state, Ashland, KY, June 24, 1992 (meeting)
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, February 2, 1992 (1 baptized)
Washington, NJ, April 7, 1992 (meeting)
La Porte, TX, May 5, 1992 (meeting)