



A Closer Look at Occultic Games

When you hear the word “game,” you probably think of something that is fun, harmless, entertaining, or even educational. But what if the content of the game is from the realm of the occult, or what if the game is not really a game at all? Can a game be dangerous? This article will evaluate various popular games in light of their occult connections and from a biblical perspective.

Ouija Board

The Ouija Board was purchased and mass marketed by Parker Brothers in 1966. It is sold in toy stores and rests on the shelves of thousands of homes. The rectangular board is imprinted with the alphabet, numbers, and the words “yes” and “no”. The players ask questions which are answered when the triangular pointer moves to letters or numbers on the board. It is sold as a game, but if it is a game, what is the objective? The objective is to receive answers from the board itself, even though few people believe that a piece of cardboard can give an answer.

Precursors of today’s board were used in ancient Greece and Rome as a tool to contact departed spirits. The triangular device, called a “planchette,” came to use in Europe in the 1800s. It originally had a pencil attached as a way to receive messages from the dead. The current Ouija Board was developed in the late 1800’s by Elijah J. Bond. William Fuld later bought the patent from Bond, and his name still appears on the board. “Ouija” is the modern name based on the combination of the French word oui and the German word ja, both meaning “yes.”

The board has been used to contact any type of spirit that the players may believe in, whether an angel, a spirit guide, a being from another dimension or planet, or the “Spirit of the Board.” The use of the Ouija Board was responsible for the supposed contact of writer Jane Roberts with an entity calling himself Seth, which resulted in several books of Seth’s occultic and New

Age teachings being channeled by the late Roberts.

Many other examples of contact with unseen entities have been reported by users of the board. Since we are forbidden by the Bible to contact the dead or any spirits, the only spirit one might contact through the Board would be an evil spirit, a demon. If Satan disguises himself as an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14, NIV), then it is not hard to believe that his demons may do the same. Why would it be difficult for a demon to disguise itself as a dead person, a helpful guide, or an angel? In fact, this would be an ideal way to deceive someone; we know that Satan is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44, NIV).

Harper’s Encyclopedia of Mystical & Paranormal Experience, by Rosemary Ellen Guiley (Castle Books, 1991), defines the Ouija Board as a device “used for divination and by some as a means to contact spirits or entities,” and as a way “to discover insight, wisdom, and self-truths and to communicate with discarnate beings” (p. 418). Although there are many instances when the players are moving the pointer or when nothing happens, it should be remembered that the Ouija Board was invented and designed specifically for spirit contact, not as a game. If you know that a piece of cardboard cannot answer questions, who are you expecting to answer you when you play this “game?” The Bible forbids contact with spirits or with the dead and divination: Leviticus 19:26,31; 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:11; 14; 1 Samuel 28:11; 2 Kings 23:24; Isaiah 8:19; 19:1– 4; Zechariah 10:2.

Fantasy Role-Playing Games

A fantasy role-playing game (FRPG) requires the player to take on the role of an imaginary character. The character moves through a fantasy adventure involving various activities, such as battles, casting spells, finding treasure, and killing off opponents.

Dungeons & Dragons™

The most popular game in this genre is Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), a game which can be played over a long period of time with endless variations and characters, eventually leading into Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D). The game is supervised and directed by an experienced player known as the Dungeon Master. Compared to other such games, D&D is perhaps the most complex and challenging strategy game and attracts highly intelligent players.

The main characteristic of AD&D is the element of sorcery, also called magic. This fantasy game uses terms common to the occult, such as: conjure, spell casting, divination, channeling, invocation, evocation, and summon. One form of sorcery allows the character to practice a spell called the death spell or finger of death. Some characters are required to perform rituals that call upon evil spirits.

An article in the February 1999 issue of "Dragon," a D&D magazine, lists a series of spells with names like "Chant of Dark Summons," "Chorus of Wrath," "Danse Macabre," "Melody of Madness," and "Nightmare Lullaby." The description of one spell concludes that "[U]se of this spell is unequivocally evil" (pp. 84-88).

Characters who make mistakes can suffer punishments such as insanity, which includes being possessed by an outside entity or being seized by the desire to kill those closest to you. This role-playing by the emotionally immature or unstable can lead to the player's total identification with his character and to difficulty in distinguishing fantasy from reality. In some cases, teens who have killed friends or family members have been heavily involved in D&D.

This game's scenarios and occult terms desensitize players to that which is bizarre and morbid, creating an acceptance of the deviant as the norm. At the very least, D&D and AD&D expose players to occult terms and concepts.

Vampire: The Masquerade™

This more recent role-playing game involving the world of vampires has already spawned many imitations. This world is chillingly dark; all the players are vampires, called the "Kindred," belonging to various clans which form the vampiric society. The term "feeding," meaning sucking the blood of your victim, is used liberally. The vampires are described in one rule book as predators and killing machines who must constantly struggle against their baser instincts, known as the "Beast." If they lose this struggle, they descend into a mindless frenzy in a hunt for blood, and they will do anything to get it, including murder.

Various characteristics can be chosen for a vampire character including: telepathy, psychic projection, and possession of another's body. Many characters have occult powers and the occult is exalted in this game, along with power and murderous strength.

This game is supposed to be played as a fantasy in a controlled environment so that no one is harmed. However, this game and its variations have long since spilled into the streets, played out by groups of people who consider themselves true vampires. One player used his role to sexually molest eight teenage girls as a form of initiation, a crime for which he was later convicted (The Washington Post, 5/8/96, p. B1, and 1/7/97, p. B5). In Florida, this game was cited as the springboard for the activities of a group of teens which led to the murder of one of the teen's parents and the death penalty for the 17-year-old leader of the vampire group, Rod Ferrell. Ferrell, whose group practiced blood-drinking and group sex, believed that murder would "open the gates to hell," and that he was immortal (The Washington Post, 2/6/98, p. A12, and 2/28/98, p. A3; USA Today, 12/9/96, p. 3A, and 2/24/98, p. 4A). In some cities, players have formed gang-like clans involving drugs, sorcery, and murder. Many teens who have been influenced by the vampire subculture admire and imitate the morbid and death-oriented traits of the vampiric lifestyle, including fake fangs and blood-drinking.

Like D&D, the vampire game/cult desensitizes one to violence, death, and the occult. It is a risky world for emotionally damaged or immature players. The Bible not only tells us to think on what is lovely and pure (see Phil. 4:8), but forbids all forms of the occult mentioned in these two role-playing games: divination, sorcery, and spiritism.

Magic: The Gathering

Invented in 1993 by Richard Garfield, a veteran Dungeons & Dragons player, this card game has sold billions and has become an industry in itself. Players are considered to be wizards or sorcerers, and the cards are color-coded into five kinds of magic: red, blue, green, white, and black.

As in D&D, terms from the occult appear on various cards. Many cards also have images that are frightening, gruesome, violent, and bizarre, such as one with a warrior licking blood off a sword. Names of some of the cards and/or characters include: "Lord of the Pit," "Abomination," "Hell's Caretaker," "Psychic Venom," "Sorceress Queen," "Zombie Master," "Fallen Angel," "Sadistic Glee," "Soul Drinker," "Evil Presence," "Dark Ritual," and "Demonic Torment."

Unlike D&D, Magic is not a role-playing game, perhaps making it appear more innocent. It is a complex strategy game that attracts teenage boys and young men. However, many images are grisly and death-oriented, and occult terms and concepts are used on some cards. Playing the game introduces players to these images and concepts, desensitizing them to things that are dark and repulsive. The Bible forbids sorcery, but all players automatically assume the role of sorcerer using the five kinds of magic.

The Tarot

Although the Tarot is a deck of cards, it is not played as a card game. Instead, Tarot cards are used for divination, a method of obtaining information through supernatural means and interpretation of hidden meanings. Divination is often interpreted as fortune-telling; however, contemporary occultism no longer emphasizes predicting the future, but draws in people through spiritual and psychological advice by talking about the person's past and personality.

The origin of these cards is unknown, although many believe they originated in France in the fourteenth century. The deck of 78 cards consists of 22 cards called the Major Arcana, and the 56 cards of the Minor Arcana, which resemble the four suits of playing cards today. The Major Arcana have pictures and names on them such as "The Tower," "The Hanged Man," "The Chariot," "The Devil," "The High Priestess," "The Empress," and "Death."

An English occultist, Arthur E. Waite, published an interpretation of the Tarot in 1910, relying on symbolic meanings he derived from his occult studies. The reader lays out the cards in various patterns for the client and interprets them as guides for one's spiritual journey, as well as for more mundane things like jobs and relationships. The cards are also used as personal meditation tools.

Several contemporary variations of these cards have appeared, including decks with Native American themes, goddess themes, witchcraft themes, sorcery themes, and others. The images on the cards vary according to these themes, and many large bookstore chains feature these cards in their New Age or Alternative Religion sections.

The Tarot cards are an integral part of the occult and are linked to numerology, astrology, sorcery, and the mystical, occultic Kabbalah. The cards are large and colorful with artistic images, which makes them appealing. Books on interpreting the Tarot are also sold, enabling those who wish to learn this form of divination to do so easily.

Other Popular Games of Divination

Runes, or nine stones, are stones (or sometimes cards) with letters of the Norse alphabet. These are used for divination. The **I-Ching** is a divinatory tool in which special sticks or coins are tossed. The resulting patterns are interpreted in the light of Taoism, an ancient Chinese philosophy and religion. Both the runes and the I-Ching are readily available; the rune symbols and the I-Ching patterns have appeared as decoration on costume jewelry. Rune stones (or cards) and the I-Ching are not games, but are strictly tools of divination.

Divination is clearly forbidden in God's Word in passages such as Leviticus 19:26, Deuteronomy 18:14, and 2 Kings 17:17. Seeking meaning through the occult interpretation of Tarot cards is disobedience to God and a rejection of seeking Him through prayer and the

Scriptures.

The games mentioned above cannot cover the many games that exist which contain occult themes or derive from the occult. A Christian needs to be prudent in selecting games, examining the contents carefully, and checking to see if a particular unbiblical philosophy or worldview is being presented through the game. Games which highlight or require occult activities such as sorcery, psychic powers, or divination, or games which use a lot of occult terms or are teaching occult world views should be avoided.

We need to remember 2 Corinthians 11:14, which tells us that Satan masquerades as an angel of light. An occult game's appearance as harmless fun is part of its appeal and its deception. Let us, therefore, be discerning!

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*A Southern Baptist Convention agency supported by the
Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering®*

P000297/03-02