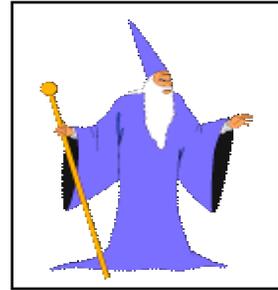


POWERS & FALSE WONDERS

2 Thessalonians 2:9 -- that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.



Introduction

1. Without doubt, magic has been a force in the world taking part in the set up and rule of kingdoms, even, surprisingly, as part of modern events. In 1856, the conjurer Robert Houdin was sent by the French government to use his magician's tricks and knowledge of electricity to combat the Algerian Marabouts. Trained magician-spies were used by T. E. Lawrence in his campaigns in Arabia in the 1920s. During WWII Jasper Maskelyne was commissioned by the British government to bring magic into the ETO. He was able to hide the Suez Canal, move Alexandria Harbor, launch a phantom fleet of submarines and even send Rommel's Afrika Corps into confused retreat.
2. The same kinds of illusions have been used to subvert nations, control kings, promote the black arts, and bilk billions of dollars from modern man in the guise of faith healers, mediums, psychics and astrologers.
3. What is worse, even some Christians believe the devil actually has divine powers and that witchcraft and magic are real. They are not!

A. Some Ancient Demonstrations

1. *Exodus 7:8-12 -- Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Work a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'" So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents.*



2. *1 Samuel 28:6-7,11 -- When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor." ...Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."*



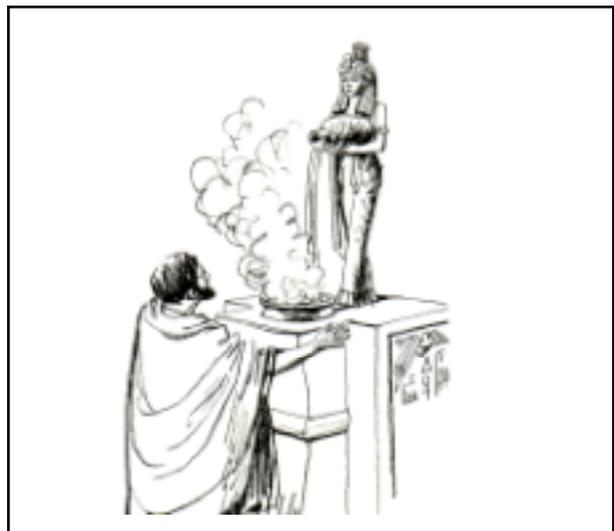
3. **The Statue of Memnon** -- Every morning, at sunrise, one of the two massive stone statues, 70 feet high, across the river Nile from Karnak, would utter a strange, unexplainable cry as a greeting to the rising sun. The statue was identified as representing Memnon, the son of Eos, goddess of the dawn. The phenomenon continued until A.D. 200 and was witnessed by the historians Strabo and Pliny, the renowned traveler Pausanias, and the emperor Hadrian.

4. *Daniel 2:2* -- *Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.*

5. **Bel and the Dragon** -- Now the Babylonians had an idol, called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine. And the king worshipped it, and went daily to adore it; but Daniel worshipped his own God. And the king said unto him, "Why dost not thou worship Bel?... Thinkest thou not that Bel is a living god? Seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day?"



6. **The Mysterious Altars** -- There were a few Greek and Roman altars that consisted of a heavy pedestal, surmounted by the statue of a goddess. Worshipers would kindle a fire on the altar to pay tribute to the goddess. Although it was customary to pour wine upon such a sacrificial fire as a libation to the gods, in this case the worshippers were told to desist. Then, after a breathless wait, the statue itself poured the libation from a vase held in its extended hands.





7. **The Sibylline Temple** – According to Roman legend, when Aeneas went to consult the Sibyl -- or prophetess -- at Cumae, he lit the fire to the altar at the entrance, the doors of the temple opened of their own accord, as though controlled by some invisible power, so that the oracle could speak for all to hear.

8. **Acts 8:9-11** -- Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts.

B. Biblical Warnings

Galatians 5:19-20 -- Now the deeds of the flesh are evident... idolatry, sorcery,... [Note that the deeds are not attributed to supernatural powers]

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 -- There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritualist, or one who calls up the dead.

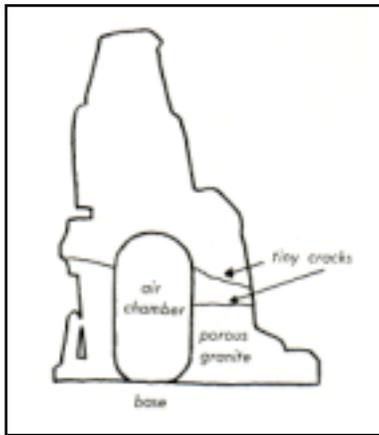
1 John 4:1 -- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- It is not so much that these are legitimate powers. In truth they are not powers at all, but more an understanding of science, illusion, and psychology the average person does not possess.
- Rather, the big problem is that people turn to these false indicators instead of trusting in God and working out their problems properly.

C. Explanations

1. **Pharaoh's Magicians & Moses** -- Although the ability of the magicians at Pharaoh's court seems incredible, the "trick" is still being done today. There are several species of cobra, one being the *naja haje*, that can be made motionless by either pinching the nerves at its neck or just swinging it around your head. It goes into a form of paralysis that makes it appear stick-like. One has merely to throw it upon the ground and the paralysis goes away
 - There are two things in the Biblical context that insure us that Moses was not just performing a trick also. The first is that God commanded him to pick his snake up by the tail (Exodus 4:3-4).
 - The second is that by the third plague (Exodus 8:18-19), when the magicians were no longer able to duplicate Moses' miracles, they began to warn Pharaoh that it was indeed the "finger of God."
2. **The Medium of En-dor** -- Although many believe this woman actually had the power to bring one back from the dead, there is no indication that she was the one that did it. By the context it seemed she was more surprised than Saul that Samuel appeared and she didn't know him.

1 Samuel 28:12-13 -- 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; but what do you see? And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up out of the earth."



3. The Statue of Memnon -- An explanation for the crying phenomenon of the statue was offered by a Frenchman named Dussault. He claimed that since the statue was hollow, the heat of the rising sun probably warmed the air which it contained; and the air, issuing through cracks in the granite, produced the occasional sounds which were variously interpreted as the twang of a harp-string or the clang of a hammer. Sir David Brewster cites cases where similar sounds were heard from rock formations, both in Egypt and elsewhere, also caused by the heat of the sun.

4. Daniel and the Chaldeans -- As for the ability of the wisemen of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar decided to follow John's advise (1 John 4:1) and test the spirits. He simply asked the Chaldeans to tell him his dream also (Daniel 2:5-6). They could not and their reason is notable...

Daniel 2:11 - "Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one who could declare it to the king except gods..."

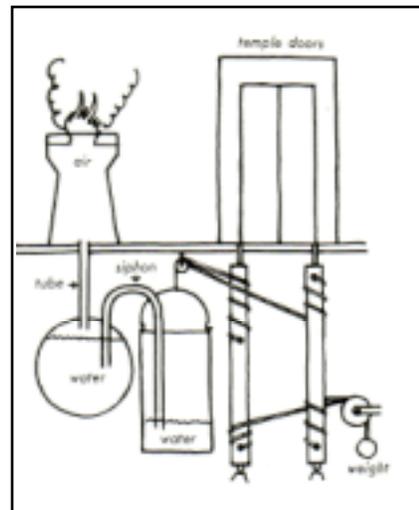
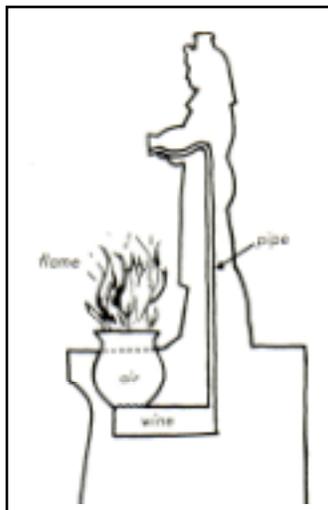
Daniel made sure he gave God the glory for his success (Daniel 2:28).

5. Bel -- Daniel also did a simple test for the king concerning his idol. "Now Daniel had commanded his servants to bring ashes, and those they strewed throughout all the temple in the presence of the king alone...and in the morning [Daniel said], 'Whose footsteps are these?' And then the king was angry, and took the priests with their wives and children, who shewed him the private doors, where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the table."

6. Mysterious Altars &

7. Sibylline Temple --

Across are two cut away drawings showing how the wonders worked. Simply, air under the altars expands when heated to either force wine from the statue of the goddess, or to add water to a weigh that opened the temple doors.



8. Simon the Sorcerer -- While what Simon was doing is identified by Luke as magic, what Peter and John were doing were definitely miracles.

Acts 8:13 -- And even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip; and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.