

Harry Potter

HIDDEN DANGERS



GHOSTS

SPELLS

POTIONS

DIVINATION

WITCHCRAFT

SORCERY

BY STEVE WOHLBERG

HIDDEN DANGERS
IN
Harry Potter

BY STEVE WOHLBERG

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An Amazing Fact: The Japanese word for it is, “tsunami.” Phonetic breakdown: “Tsu,” meaning, “harbor or port,” and “nami,” meaning, “wave.” Often translated: “Ocean wave,” but most commonly, *tidal wave*.

One of the largest tsunamis swept into history May 22, 1960. Off the coast of Chile—on the western edge of South America—a 9.5 earthquake jolted earth’s crust far below unsuspecting fishing boats. That deadly seismic shift resulted in a massive tsunami, with waves rising up to 100 feet, which within 15 minutes caused devastation for miles along the South American coast. That wasn’t all. A gigantic, swirling ripple began rolling its way across the entire Pacific Ocean. Fifteen hours later it smashed into Hawaii. Within 22 hours, the tsunami struck Japan. The whole Pacific basin was affected, resulting in over 2,000 fatalities, half a billion dollars in damage, and over two million homeless.

1 Like A Rolling Tidal Wave

Within the realm of books, another tsunami of gigantic proportions is now rolling across the entire surface of Planet Earth. The name of this incredibly powerful current is composed of two simple words, *Harry Potter*. The facts are unbelievable!

Written by Scottish author, Joanne Kathleen Rowling—who currently is the richest woman¹ in England—*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* first splashed into bookstores in September, 1998, with an impressive first print run of 50,000 copies. The next volume (number two in a seven-part series), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, broke out in June, 1999, with an initial printing of 250,000. A mere three months later (September, 1999), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* swept across Earth’s surface with 500,000 copies. Yet the tsunami had just begun.

The fourth title, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (July, 2000), became “the fastest selling book in history.”² Its initial run was 3.8 million copies, with the majority entering eager hands in only *one week-end*, an all-time publishing record. Believe it or not, this was easily topped by the fifth installment, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (June, 2003), which the publisher cranked out to the profitable tune of 8.5 million books. At the date of this writing, over 200 million copies have been sold worldwide (with

translations in over 55 languages), with two more books still looming on the horizon. How big will this tidal wave get? Only God knows.

2 Pottermania

Here's a few more fast facts:

- The legendary Warner Brothers, Inc. has committed to producing a full-length *Harry Potter* movie to coincide with each of the seven books. Two have been released so far, grossing about \$3.8 billion (including DVD and video sales), with the next film slated to air June 2004.
- Amazon.com sold over one million DVDs of the second movie in only one day. Before the release of the fifth book, it received advance payments for 1.3 million copies. The world's largest online bookseller, Amazon has made more money from Potter products than from any other line, ever.
- In June of 1999, *Sorcerer's Stone* became #1 on *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* bestsellers lists—at the same time. By September, book three was not only #1 on *The Wall Street Journal* list, but books one and two carried the #2 and #3 slots, a first in U.S. publishing history.
- *Harry Potter* books have not only been incorporated into the U.S. public school curriculum (with teachers manuals and discussion guides), but they have also

spawned a vast, multi-million dollar line of Potter merchandise, which includes games, puzzles, posters, toys, clocks, shirts, hats, costumes, eye-glasses, towels, blankets, playing cards, markers, pens, lunch boxes, bookmarks, jelly beans, etc. etc. etc.

Get the picture? Potter Power—as a retail phenomenon and cultural force in the 21st century—is staggering.

What's it all about anyway? Why has *Harry Potter* become “as addicting as chocolate” (*The Denver Post*), especially to kids? Is it all harmless fun, or is there legitimate cause for concern among parents and educators? Beyond this, from a spiritual perspective, can humanity's all-time bestselling volume – not *Harry Potter*, but the Holy Bible – provide any penetrating insights into Pottermania? Let's find out.

3 The *Harry Potter* Story

It all began on an apparently uneventful day as Rowling was traveling by train. Suddenly—like a revelation out of nowhere—she saw “very, very clearly” the crystal clear image of Harry as it popped into her mind. “The character of Harry just strolled into my head... I really did feel he was someone who walked up and introduced himself in my mind's eye.”³ She saw an odd-looking black-haired boy, on the homely side, with big spectacles. Somehow she understood he

was a wizard who didn't know he was wizard. After pondering the idea, Rowling soon began writing what was destined to become "the most popular children's series ever written."⁴

Harry Potter books are a highly imaginative, can't-put-it-down sequence of fantasy novels chronicling the adventures of an orphan boy named Harry whose parents (a wizard and a witch) were brutally murdered by "the greatest dark sorcerer of all time, Lord Voldemort,"⁵ when Harry was one year old. The King of the Dark Arts tried to kill baby Harry, too, but somehow the toddler survived as a result of his mother's love. His only wound was a lightning-shaped scar on his forehead. The death-curse Voldemort cast upon Harry unexplainably rebounded back on himself, stripping him of his powers, before he vanished into thin air.

Shortly after the horrible death of Harry's parents (who were much-loved in the wizard world), Albus Dumbledore, the Headmaster of the prestigious 1000-year-old Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, leaves baby Harry inside a basket on the doorstep of his non-magical relatives – the Dursley family – with a note in the child's hand explaining what happened. Reluctantly, the Dursleys raise the boy but withhold the contents of the letter.

On Harry's eleventh birthday (after a simply awful childhood during which he was forced to sleep in a cupboard under the stairs), the Dursley family is

unexpectedly visited by Hagrid, the Keeper of the Keys at Hogwarts, who is sent by Headmaster Dumbledore to prepare the boy for his first semester at wizard school. To Harry's utter amazement, Hagrid tells him he is a wizard and is even famous throughout the world of witches and sorcerers because he is the only one to have ever survived an assault from "He-Who-Cannot-Be-Named." Happily packing his bags, Harry heads to Hogwarts.

Thus the plot is laid, and it intensifies with each sequential book and high-budget film. Around the globe, on every continent, millions of young readers can hardly wait for the next book as the captivating drama not only follows the development of Harry's magical abilities but moves steadily toward some sort of on-the-edge-of-your-seat, blood-curdling showdown between Harry Potter and Mr. Blackness himself who is determined to regain his power, finish Harry off, and rule over the entire wizard world.

4 Many Parents are Concerned

Harry Potter supporters praise the series for its ability to get a generation of 21st century, MTV kids to actually *read books*, and for its supposedly timeless insights into the classic struggle between "good and evil." The fact that witchcraft and wizardry form the framework for the entire drama is simply seen as a benign teaching device used to capture the active imag-

inations of children, leading to moral lessons. This is why the novels are being introduced into the U.S. public school system and why some teachers are even decorating their classrooms Hogwarts-style. Beyond this, the series is touted as “good ol’, harmless fun.”

But is it all really harmless? If so, then why has the American Library Association ranked *Harry Potter* books as “the most challenged in the country,” and why is it that “more parents have requested that Harry be banished from bookshelves” than any other book in U.S. history?⁶ Here’s the reason: Many parents are concerned about a dark side behind the craze. The purpose of this little book is not only to explore those concerns, but also to uncover a hidden menace behind the magic.

5 Problems and Muggle Messages

First of all, the very beginning of the Potter drama blurs the line between fantasy and reality. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* opens with the Dursley family living in England and refers to actual places like Kent, Yorkshire, the Isle of Wight and the famous King’s Cross subway station in London (from which Harry later catches a train to Hogwarts). The Dursleys are also portrayed as real people who fight traffic jams, watch the nightly news, own computers and VCRs and are incorrigibly prejudiced against anyone who practices magic.

In contrast to the stick-in-the-mud Dursley family is Albus Dumbledore, “the greatest wizard in the world,”⁷ whose “blue eyes were light, bright, and sparkling behind half-moon spectacles.”⁸ Albus first appears out of nowhere—by using supernatural power—as a representative of a vast and adventuresome underworld filled with hidden knowledge. Harry’s life also blazes with adventure and intrigue, except when he returns from a semester at Hogwarts to spend the summer with the unimaginative Dursleys.

Here’s a key point: Throughout the Potter drama there is a definite contrast made between friendly, exciting and intelligent wizards who have access to supernatural power—like Dumbledore, Harry, and his friends—and stuffy, boring, unintelligent “members of the non-magical community”⁹ whom all wizards refer to as *Muggles*. The idea being communicated to kids is: Being a wizard like Albus Dumbledore or Harry Potter is fun, cool and exciting, while being part of “the dark Muggle world”¹⁰ and seeing through “Muggle eyes”¹¹ is the pits.

Are children being confused by this mingling of facts with fiction? *Yes they are*. Rowling herself confessed to *Newsweek*:

“I get letters from children addressed to Professor Dumbledore, and it’s not a joke, begging to be let into Hogwarts, and some of them are really sad. Because they want it to be true so badly they’ve convinced themselves its true.”¹²

How about *Harry Potter's* Wizards vs. Muggles message? “The ordinary person is typified as being bad because they have no (magic) powers, and heroes are the people who are using the occult. [This] is an inversion of morality...”¹³

Thus children are not only being confused by *Harry Potter*, but they are also reading books that turn moral standards upside down by portraying witches as wise and all non-wizards (Muggles) as stupid.

6 Real Witchcraft

Next point: Witchcraft. It's true, Rowling's series is filled with fantastic things kids know don't exist, like fire-breathing dragons, goblins, elves and even a sporting event called Quidditch where wizard teams compete on flying broomsticks. Yet beyond the obvious fantasy, Potter books are also jam-packed with mysterious information about witches, warlocks, sorcerers, crystal balls, spells, curses, potions, charms, numerology, divination, astrology, palmistry, out-of-body travel, and communication with spirits—all of which reflect actual beliefs and practices in the real world of both ancient and modern occultism.

In fact, much of the occult information inside the Potter novels is so real that during one call-in radio interview Rowling was asked by an eager inquirer if she herself was a member of the “Craft.” When she said

no, the caller replied, “. . . you've done your homework quite well.” This man then expressed his deep love for *Harry Potter* because it not only portrayed his own beliefs positively but also made his daughter more comfortable with his involvement in real witchcraft.¹⁴

This cannot be overemphasized: Many of the occult practices so tantalizingly depicted in *Harry Potter* are actually performed by living members of the black arts throughout the world. Potter books are also speckled with the names of real historical people, like Nicholas Flamel,¹⁵ a French alchemist who lived in the 1300s,¹⁶ and Adalbert Waffling, whose book, *Magical Theory*, is on Harry's list of required reading at Hogwarts.¹⁷ Adalbert Waffling was a real person convicted of practicing real sorcery in A. D. 744-745 and was imprisoned in the monastery of Fulda.¹⁸ Thus Rowling, a graduate of mythology studies from Exeter University in England, is not only an imaginative writer, but a thorough researcher, with “an extremely well-developed and sophisticated knowledge of the occult world, its legends, history and nuances.”¹⁹ In another interview on *The Diane Rehm Show*, Rowling admitted that fully one-third of her material is based on actual occultism.²⁰

The most popular form of real occultism now spreading rapidly around the globe is Wicca witchcraft, or simply, the “Craft.” Its adherents literally call themselves “wiccans,” “witches,” or “wizards.” Countless books such as *The Wicca Source Book: A*

Complete Guide for the Modern Witch by well-known witch Gerina Dunwich (1988), or *Witchcraft: Exploring the World of Wicca* by Craig Hawkins (1996), explain this mysterious, real-life, growing movement. In the U.S. alone, the sale of occult books (in bookstores or online) has become a multi-million dollar industry.

What makes real witchcraft so appealing today—especially to young people from broken homes who are searching for guidance—is its claim to offer a degree of personal power, strength-to-cope, adventure, and inner fulfillment not accessible to the average Joe (the uninitiated). Wicca says all of these perks come through access—via occult techniques—to supernatural powers which trained witches can “tap into.” Such power supposedly comes from three primary sources: From within oneself, from nature, or from contact with the spirits of dead people. *That’s what Harry Potter’s life is all about.* He’s a young wizard-in-training studying occult techniques at Hogwarts who becomes increasingly powerful through learning the arts of the “Craft.”

7 Fiction Affects Children

I know, *Harry Potter* is mostly fiction, but does this mean it has *no effect* on its readers? The truth is: *Fiction is a powerful communicator of ideas which can affect human behavior.* One need only think

of John Bunyan’s immortal classic, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1684). Bunyan’s book is an imaginative allegory about a young man named Christian who leaves the City of Destruction and embarks on a dangerous journey toward the Celestial City (representing Heaven). Along the way he encounters friends—like Prudence, Piety, Hopeful, and Faithful—and subtle foes—such as Worldly Wise Man, Ignorance, Flatterer, Vain Confidence, and Giant Despair who lives in Doubting Castle.

As Christian meanders along the Narrow Way, he eventually meets a hideous, scaly fiend named Apollyon (who represents the Devil). After a fierce fight, Christian finally pierces the fiend’s heart with his Sword (representing the Bible), delivering the death blow. Of course, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is also entirely fiction, yet for over 300 years it has inspired young people to turn from sin and to live upright, righteous lives by the grace of God.

8 Potter Fans Turning to Witchcraft

How does *Harry Potter* affect young people? Obviously, its impact is varied, and it’s true, there are positive lessons within its pages about the struggle between good and evil, yet Robert Night of The Family Research Council warns that in the midst of the fun and magic, *Harry Potter* also “gives children an appetite for the occult.”²¹

Here's proof: The Pagan Federation, a well-organized promoter of Wicca in England,²² finally decided to appoint a special youth officer to deal with the "flood of inquiries following the success of the *Harry Potter* books."²³ A British publication, *This is London*, reported the phenomenon in an article titled, "Potter Fans Turning to Witchcraft," in which the Federation's official media officer, Andy Norfolk, explained:

"In response to increased inquiries coming from youngsters we established a youth officer... It is quite probably linked to things like *Harry Potter*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Every time an article on witchcraft or paganism appears, we have a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls."²⁴

Kids themselves have testified how *Harry Potter* has drawn them toward witchcraft:

"I thought the story really made you feel like you could be a witch or a wizard." –Lily, eleven years old.²⁵

"I like what they learned there [at Hogwarts] and I want to be a witch." –Gioia Bishop, ten years old.²⁶

9 From Fantasy to Dangerous Reality

Here's one way a young person can transition from Harry's world into real witchcraft: Joe Teenager loves *Sorcerer's Stone*, *Chamber of Secrets*, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, and all the other *Potter* books. As Joe is

increasingly hooked by Rowling's intensely dramatic story-telling abilities, the magical world of Harry Potter seems awesome compared to his unhappy, boring life in a single-parent home with an alcoholic mother and mean brother. One dark night (after another bout with Math and English), Joe quietly sits down before his refurbished Sony computer, boots up, logs onto the Net through an inexpensive dial-up connection, and goes to a search engine. In the blank field he pecks, **HARRY POTTER** and clicks, "Find." As the search engine instantaneously scours the vast world of internet cyber space, it quickly registers 4,240,000 (I just did it) Potter-related web sites to surf around in.

Of course, Joe finds Warner Brother's official site filled with fantastic images of Hogwarts and the magical world of the homely, dark-haired, orphaned wizard-boy with big spectacles (whom he can relate to). Yet in the midst of apparently harmless fun, Joe becomes curious to learn about real witches and the actual things his spell-casting hero is into. Returning to the search, he types in, **WITCH**, which quickly registers 2,310,000 web site options. The very first site reads, "We are the right place for all your Witchcraft, Wiccan, Pagan, Occult, and ritual supplies... receive our free catalog." With a click he enters an online store with 4,000 fascinating occult products easily shipped UPS Ground Services and paid for by Visa, MasterCard or Pay Pal.

After a bit more surfing, Joe discovers other witchcraft books that specifically target his age group, such as *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation* by Silver Ravenwolf (Llewellyn Publications, 1998), or *Spellbound: The Teenage Witch's Wiccan Handbook* (Ulysses Press, 2002). One reviewer commented, “*Spellbound* is a great book for teens who are still unsure of the religious path they want to follow. It gives a good background of where Wicca originated, tells of ancient traditions and then gives suggestions on how teens can incorporate these ideas into their lives in the 21st century.”

Hmm, Joe ponders. After thinking for a few moments, he logs onto one of many online book-sellers and orders a copy of *Teen Witch* which he can informatively read along side of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. After finishing *Teen Witch*, Joe surfs a bit more. Soon he discovers one of many online “Simple Steps to Becoming a Witch” study courses claiming to offer him supernatural power to cope with his unhappy life, deal with his mother’s alcoholism, cast a spell on his nasty brother, and even entice a girl he may like. He chooses one, zips through it, and soon becomes a real initiate, thus joining thousands of other curious and unhappy teenagers intrigued by the idea of becoming powerful wizards-in-training, *just like their hero, Harry Potter*.

Richard Abanes, author of *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace behind the Magick*, warns:

“Ultimately, only a short distance needs to be covered in order to cross over from Harry’s world into the realm of real occultism.”²⁷

Linda Beam with Focus on the Family echoes a similar concern:

“Any time the dark side of the supernatural world is presented as harmless or even imaginary, there is the danger that children will become curious and find out too late that witchcraft is neither harmless nor imaginary.”²⁸

10 What Does the Bible Say?

It’s time to shift into the sobering reality of what the Bible literally says about “wizards,” “witchcraft,” and “sorcery.” Unlike the Potter series, it describes no battle between good and bad wizards; between practitioners of “white magic” (Albus Dumbledore or Harry Potter) and those who have yielded to the “dark side” (Lord Voldemort). And all “non-magical folks” are certainly not classified as “Muggles.” Yet there is a real dark side created by a non-fictitious Sinister One – a being vastly more wicked than “He-Who-Cannot-Be-Named.”

The exact word, “Wicca,” is not in the Bible, but there are many references to “witches,” “wizards,” “witchcraft,” and “sorcery.” It seems the “Craft” has

been around for centuries, and even in Bible days there were witches and wizards living near the Israelites. Are any of these occult practitioners presented as wise, insightful adventurers like Albus Dumbledore whose “blue eyes were light, bright, and sparkling behind half-moon spectacles?” Far from it!

Here’s a brief survey of just a few Old Testament passages:

- “You shall not permit a sorcerer to live” (Exodus 22:18).
- “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:31, KJV).
- “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:27, KJV).

Now for the New Testament:

- “Now the works of the flesh are evident ... sorcery ... those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

These are from “Revelation,” God’s last book at the end of the Bible:

- “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

- “But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie” (Revelation 22:15).

There’s no getting around it. God’s Word categorically condemns sorcery and witchcraft in the strongest language possible. In the Old Testament, *all* witches were to suffer the death penalty. The New Testament says they will “not inherit the kingdom of God.” In Revelation, sorcery does not lead to an exciting life of fantastic adventures through accessing supernatural powers unavailable to Muggles, but to an infernal place in “the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” And again, the Bible doesn’t differentiate between white and dark magic. In Scripture, even Hogwarts itself leads to hell.

Why are sorcery and witchcraft so bad anyway? Is God the ultimate Muggle-in-the-Sky who enjoys preventing us from learning the secrets of the universe and from having fun? Not at all! Rather, He is the Supreme Lover of our souls who sees hidden dangers beneath the magic. The Bible condemns sorcery because God wants to protect us from real dark forces led by a very real—yet invisible—being whose power, cunning and expertise in deception make Lord Voldemort look like a mini-action figure on a Toys “R” Us shelf (which is all he is anyway).

11 A Cosmic Conflict

It's important to understand the big picture. Billions of eons ago, the Creator of the Universe decided to make a group of highly-intelligent and powerful beings called Angels. One angel's name was Lucifer, meaning "Light Bearer," who was the highest of them all. Lucifer and his angel friends were holy, good, gentle, happy, and filled with love for each other and for their Maker. The Bible says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and each angel was content to reflect His love like sunlight throughout illimitable space.

That is, for a while. Mysteriously—no one can explain it—Lucifer became dissatisfied with his angelic position. The Lord later said of him, "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (Ezekiel 28:17). Inside the secret chambers of his heart, the Shiny One became proud. He yielded to the never-before-experienced phenomenon of *self-exaltation* in contrast to *humble God-exaltation*. Lucifer wanted power—the Power of God Himself. The Word says, "For you have said in your heart, I will ascend... I will exalt... I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14.). This is how the Light Bearer became the Dark One. God then changed his name to Satan, meaning "adversary."

"And war broke out in heaven..." (Revelation 12:7). A cosmic battle erupted between Lucifer and

some of the angels against God and loyal angels. "... but they [the rebel angels] did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:8,9).

Right after the Great Rebellion, the Infinite Creator carried out His plan to create another non-angelic order of beings called Humans, formed "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). In an exercise of awesome power, the Magnificent One made the earth, the sky, the sea, all the animals, birds, fish, and finally a man and a woman. "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:11). God also created a beautiful Garden called Eden, and in the midst of it He planted "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:9). This tree was to test the loyalty of Adam and Eve when Satan would come there to offer them its fruit.

To eat or not to eat, that was the question. It was obedience vs. disobedience, loyalty vs. rebellion, trusting the source of life vs. believing the rebel angel. "No bites" meant Adam and Eve would be content to humbly rely on God for their happiness and would be satisfied reflecting *His image*, while tasting the forbidden fruit meant following Lucifer, becoming proud, seeking to *reflect one's own image*, and

searching for power—the *Power*—apart from their Creator. You know what happened. Adam and Eve sinned and failed the test (Genesis 3:1-6), thus plunging the entire human race—including their descendants—into the midst of an ongoing, life-or-death, cosmic struggle between God and loyal angels against Lucifer and his evil angels.

12 Deadly Fallen Angels

Let's go back to witchcraft. According to the Bible, Satan and his fallen angelic comrades now inhabit the invisible world and are constantly seeking to mislead human beings with their deceptions, just like the devil duped Eve at the forbidden tree. One of these delusions is, “*the sin of witchcraft*” (1 Samuel 15:23). In essence, witchcraft is a sophisticated occult science that claims to offer human beings special access to the world of supernatural powers—the *Power*—apart from humble submission and obedience to the Creator, the Source of life. Thus it caters to the very same pride and self-exaltation which turned Lucifer into the devil.

Witchcraft also claims access to special powers through contacting “the spirits of dead people”—spirits who supposedly seek to help us along the path to hidden knowledge. But it's all a trick. All spirits contacted through the techniques of the “Craft” are not the friendly ghosts of your Uncle Bill or Aunt Sue,

but are really “the spirits of devils, working miracles...” (Revelation 16:14, KJV). Whatever these sly, invisible entities may say, their ultimate goal is not our enlightenment, but our destruction. *This is why God warns us so strongly against witchcraft.* The Lord created us and loves us still—in spite of our sins—and longs to protect us from being invaded by highly intelligent, tricky, *yet deadly fallen angels.*

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire climaxes with a nightmarish death-dual between Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort, a frightful being with a “snake-like face” and “red eyes glinting through the darkness.”²⁹ Aided by a swarm of gruesome Death Eaters (his followers), Voldemort advances for the kill. As Harry desperately fights a losing battle and death stares him in the face, suddenly the “smoky shadow of a young woman” materializes and the stunned hero finds himself gazing “into the ghostly face of his mother. ‘Your father’s coming ...’ she said quietly, ‘Hold on for your father... it will be alright... hold on...’ And he came... first his head, then his body... the smoky, shadowy form of James Potter blossomed from the end of Voldemort’s wand.”³⁰ Through techniques he learned at Hogwarts and *emergency help from the spirits of his dead parents*, Harry again escapes Voldemort’s grasp.

Thus *Goblet of Fire* portrays the real occult practice of communication with the dead. Although inserted within the fantasy, its subtle message to chil-

dren is, when you're in a pinch, the ghosts of dead loved ones can help you. And such an idea is not so unbelievable today, especially when kids are also watching the popular TV series, *Crossing Over with John Edwards*, which regularly features Mr. Edwards talking to real spirits on the "Other Side."

13 Real Occult Practices Listed

The Bible's most comprehensive list of occult practices is found in the book of Deuteronomy:

"When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 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. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

These are the exact same practices described in *Harry Potter* – "witchcraft," "spells," and communication with "the dead," it's all there. Hogwarts, Hagrid, Dumbledore and Voldemort's Death Eaters may be fictitious, yet these occult activities surely aren't.

They've been occurring for centuries among the "nations." And again, in the Bible there's no distinction between good wizards like Albus Dumbledore and evil ones who have yielded to the Dark Side. No, they're all dark, and "*all* who do these things are an abomination to the LORD."

In Deuteronomy 18:9, God strictly warned His ancient people not even to "*learn*" about dangerous occult practices, yet this is happening right now all over Planet Earth through J.K. Rowling's fantasy-mixed-with-reality books. Kids *are* learning about the mysteries of the occult world when they read about Professor Binn's History of Magic class, Professor Snape's Potions class, Professor Flitwick's Charms class, Professor Trelawney's Divination class and the Restricted Section in Hogwarts library containing Black Arts books. Here lies *the poison within Harry Potter*. Yet most parents aren't concerned because at least kids are reading, the books are fun, they contain some good lessons, and they are even being used in the United States public school system as a teaching tool. The real Lord Voldemort must be quite pleased.

14 Revelation Warns of Global Sorcery

If you believe the Bible, take note. God's last book emphatically warns that through "*sorcery* all the nations were deceived" (Revelation 18:23). Dear friend, *that verse is not fiction*. It is describing a real

world whose “nations” are deceived by sorcery originating from a non-fictitious devil. And this devil is too smart to be obvious. He works in darkness, hiding in shadows, to deceive the unwary step-by-step. His method: First the fun, then curiosity, next inquiry, then involvement, and finally, full submission to real supernatural powers bent on our destruction. God’s word penetrates the future, “By your sorcery all nations were deceived.”

Another prophecy says that right before the battle of Armageddon, Satan will unleash “spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14, KJV). Don’t you see it? A global satanic tsunami is being described—a vast tidal wave of delusion—that will roll across the entire surface of Planet Earth before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. “And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Revelation 16:16). At Armageddon, Satan’s tsunami will dry up, but not before it has swept countless souls headlong into the jagged rocks of death.

15 Lucifer Behind the Spectacles

Is Pottermania part of this current? Potter supporters say, “No way! They’re just fiction, don’t take them so seriously!” But let me ask you three ques-

tions. First: Do you believe in a real devil? I imagine you would say, *yes*. Second question: Do you believe the occult practices listed in Deuteronomy 18 not only originate from this devil, but are real and dangerous? Yes, I hear you say again with possible reluctance. Ok. Now, since there is a real devil and since these occult practices definitely come from his satanic majesty, here’s my last question: How likely is it that the real Dark Lord has *nothing to do* with the world’s best-selling series of novels which have not only “mesmerized an entire generation of kids”³¹ but also graphically portray the very black arts he himself originated? ... Be honest!

If you were the Infernal One and one of your long-term goals was to sweep the entire world into the snare of real occultism, how might you do it? Here’s one way. In the inner recesses of your “Chamber of Secrets,” you might inspire a mesmerizing series of books and movies—especially for kids—that teach the dark arts under the guise of ghoulish giggles. And anyone who tries to swim against the tsunami or raise a red alert in the midst of Warner Brother’s party, you would simply call a “Muggle”—yes, that’s it—just an unimaginative, ignorant, party-pooing “Muggle.”

Remember, tsunamis have hidden causes that lie beneath the waves. The same book of Revelation that warns about sorcery and a massive, end-time current of evil spirits, also refers to “the depths of Satan” (Revelation 2:24). Lucifer is ingenious. If he deceived

holy angels in Heaven, how much more can he dupe 7-year-olds who innocently stand in long lines for hours waiting for the next *Harry Potter* book? Where do you think that “crystal clear” image of a young wizard-boy with big spectacles came from anyway when it mysteriously “strolled” into Joanne Kathleen Rowling’s mind the day she rode that train? God knows.

16 Wholesome Alternatives

Is there an alternative to *Harry Potter*? Yes, a wonderful one. Instead of learning the black-arts-made-funny in the Potter books, Jesus Christ says, “. . . *learn from Me*, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29, italics added). Harry Potter lies, breaks rules regularly, has angry fits, and, most importantly, he doesn’t even exist. Jesus Christ is pure, kind, gracious, humble, unselfish, *and real*. He loves children, youth, teenagers, young adults, and everyone else. Beyond this, He can provide real supernatural strength to cope with life’s stresses. To all bruised young people who need a true friend to lean on, Jesus Christ Himself promises, “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18).

Instead of allowing our “sons and daughters” to learn dangerous occult ideas, God commands all parents to instill the words of sacred Scripture deep into

their hearts. “You shall teach them diligently to your children,” says the Lord Almighty (Deuteronomy 18:9-11; 6:6, 7). Therefore I recommend the Bible. It speaks of fantastic things – like Heaven, a Celestial City, and a New Earth where lions are as tame as kittens (see Isaiah 65:17, 25). It’s not fiction, and it doesn’t give kids nightmares like *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (believe me, that book is *really scary*). True, its holy pages may not be as mesmerizing as *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, yet it describes a wonderful future that will be a lot more fun—and personally satisfying—than the most thrilling Warner Brothers movie about Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, *or real sorcery*.

If you want to read good fiction, I also recommend John Bunyan’s, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Modern young people need the character lessons in that book much more than imaginary portrayals of broomstick wizard sports. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, while traveling the Narrow Way, Christian encounters dangers on every side (like kids do today), but learns to develop patience, humility, purity, honesty and faith in God – virtues sadly lacking in Harry Potter. Christian also discovers how to get rid of a terrible burden on his back. One day, after climbing a steep hill, he saw a lifted cross with the Son of God crucified there. After a full look in faith, the heavy burden fell off and rolled down the hill! He was freed from sin through the grace of Jesus Christ!

17 The Love of Jesus Christ

In the very first Potter book, when the evil Lord Voldemort propelled his death-curse against baby Harry, it bounced back, leaving a lightning-shaped scar on the child's face. Dumbledore remarked to a fellow wizard, "He'll have that scar forever."³² Of course, this is pure fantasy. Outside Jerusalem, Jesus Christ was brutally assaulted by the real Dark One, beaten by the very human beings He came to save, and crucified on a tree. Before He took His last breath, He experienced the full death-curse of sin—"the sin of witchcraft" (1 Samuel 15:23), the sin of pride, the sin of seeking power apart from the Heavenly Provider, and the sin of every other evil thought and action.

There is only one kind of power God wants us to experience. It's safe, friendly, and grounded in truth. It's the very same power that motivated Jesus Christ to come down from Heaven, to bear our sins, and to humble Himself "to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

It's the power of love—of God's infinite love for us—made known through "the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13) and the tears of the Crucified One.

Our Lord Jesus Christ will forever bear the marks of that death-curse on His forehead, hands and feet.

He thinks you were worth the price.

S.W.

Endnotes:

- 1 *Time Magazine*, June 23, 2003, p. 67
- 2 *Newsweek*, June 30, 2003, p. 52.
- 3 *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick*, by Richard Abanes. Horizon Books (2001), p. 21. J.K. Rowling, quoted in Reuters, "Harry Potter 'Strolled into My Head,'" July 17, 2000.
- 4 *Time Magazine*, June 23, 2003, p. 63
- 5 *Chamber of Secrets*, p. 4
- 6 *Time Magazine*, June 23, 2003, p. 63
- 7 *Chamber of Secrets*, p. 314
- 8 *Sorcerer's Stone*, p. 8
- 9 *Chamber of Secrets*, p. 341
- 10 *Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 31.
- 11 *Chamber of Secrets*, p. 150
- 12 Malcolm Jones, "The Return of Harry Potter!," *Newsweek* (Online), July 1, 2000, 4. Quoted by Abanes, p. 124.
- 13 Robert Frisken of Christian Community Schools Ltd. in Australia, quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 27, 2001.
- 14 WMUR interview J.K. Rowling, Oct. 12, 1999, available at www.wbur.org. Quoted by Abanes, p. 24.
- 15 *Sorcerer's Stone*, p. 193
- 16 Maurice Magree, *Magicians, Seers, and Mystics*, (Kessinger Publications, 1997; transl. Reginald Merton, available at www.alchemylab.com).
- 17 *Sorcerer's Stone*, p. 66.
- 18 Leslie A. Shepard's, *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, Detroit: Gale Research, 1991, Ch. 1, pp. 6-7.
- 19 Abanes, p. 24

- 20 Rowling interview on *The Diane Rehm Show*, WAMU, National Public Radio, October 20, 1999, available at www.wamu.org.
- 21 Robert Night, quoted in Deidre Donahue, "Are Parents Pushing 'Potter' on the Young," *Tulsa World*, June 20, 2000; cf. *USA Today* article of the same title, available at www.northernlight.com.
- 22 See www.paganfed.demon.co.uk
- 23 Reported in *This is London*, in an article entitled, "Potter Fans Turning to Witchcraft," August 4, 2000, available at www.thisislondon.co.uk. Referenced from Abanes, p. 66.
- 24 Andy Norfolk, quoted in *This is London* (ibid).
- 25 Lily, "Reader Comments," <http://hosted.ukoln.ac.uk/stories/gallery/reviews/rowling/rowling-stone.htm>.
- 26 Letters to the Editor, "What Readers Think about 'Goblet,'" San Francisco Chronicle, July 26, 2000, available at sfgate.com.
- 27 Abanes, p. 173.
- 28 Linda Beam, in an article entitled, "Exploring Harry Potter's World," *Teachers in Focus*, Dec. 1999, available at www.focusonthefamily.org
- 29 *Goblet of Fire*, pp. 659, 660
- 30 *Goblet of Fire*, p. 667
- 31 *Time Magazine*, June 23, 2003, p. 6
- 32 *Sorcerer's Stone*, p. 15

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