

Amy: Welcome to A Word Fitly Spoken, a podcast about Jesus, His Word, and our joy in following Him. I'm Amy Spreeman.

Michelle: And I'm Michelle Lesley. Thanks for joining us! Well, we want to kick this episode off with a very special shoutout. One of our sweet listeners tweeted us last week to let us know that her 17 month old little girl, Edith, gets so excited when she hears A Word Fitly Spoken come on because she loves to dance to our music! In fact, Edith's mama said, "I have to keep rewinding it so I don't throw off her groove!". So Edie, we just want you to know that Auntie Amy and Nannie Michelle love you. Keep dancing and keep listening to A Word Fitly Spoken!

And if you'd like to send us pictures or videos of your kids dancing to our music or you listening to A Word Fitly Spoken or comments or whatever, we are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and you can find the direct links for all of those at AWordFitlySpoken.Life.

In this episode we're going to talk about a trend in the church that borrows mystical elements from Buddhism and Hinduism and melds or syncretizes them into Christian practices. Mysticism in the church is as old as the church itself, and has been rightly called out over the centuries as unbiblical. But it is a trend in our time as many Christians are now bringing in these practices and normalizing them.

Amy: That's right, Michelle, Mysticism in the church is one of those things that - to many believers - sounds right or almost right...and it's become a mystical mess. One thing that you might be thinking is, "well, don't you believe in miracles and mystery?" And to that we agree - yes! God is supernatural and His miracles are incredible. Our Gospel, the Good News of Jesus' birth, death, resurrection and eventual return has power in Truth, and it's what God uses to redeem us and regenerate our souls. A Gospel that can save a sinner from eternal Hell is a miracle. God's miracles happen everyday!

So why the warnings about mysticism? Isn't it the same thing? Actually, no. There is a stark difference between God's supernatural power and His miracles, and the mystical practices many professing Christians use to experience something of God. Those practices include using techniques from false religions like Michelle mentioned, to New Age elements and sorcery or dark arts.

Michelle: What is mysticism? That word is derived from the Greek *mysticos*, meaning the occult knowledge veiled in mystery that can only be known through subjective experience.

Mystics are those who, through contemplative, meditative techniques, attain altered states of consciousness beyond the thinking mind to experience unmediated union with the Divine, the All, the Source, the Universal, the Force, the Energy, or the Void.

Did you know that New Age thinkers who call themselves Christian believe that there will eventually be a progressive unification of world consciousness?

It's also called, Christ consciousness, as Oprah Winfrey says, that will bring all of us together regardless of whether we are born again or not.

These ideas are not found in Scripture, but many Christians think they are because of what they've been taught. And those who don't know what the Bible teaches about God's nature will often fall for New Age mysticism.

Of course we all want to experience God. We want to believe more in His power, His love, and whatever takes us into the realm beyond what we can see.

Hebrews 11:1 says: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. So faith is simply believing in Christ as God Himself - along with the Father and Holy Spirit, and trusting in Him alone for our salvation and sanctification.

But many people want more. We've talked many times on this program about the importance of the sufficiency of Scripture as our only authority for knowing the nature and character of God, and how oftentimes people want to turn to other methods of authority and signs.

It's as if to say to God, "Your Word is not enough for me." And so we'll see Christians using pagan practices and dabbling in the New Age practices of Hinduism and Buddhism.

And sadly, a lot of it comes through the church doors from women, bringing in teachings on Reiki, chakras, crystals, magic energy oils, yoga, karma, energy fields, and more.

Amy: Michelle, add to that list Christian Ouija boards and Christian tarot cards! A few years ago Bethel church in Redding California and a ministry called Christ Alignment promoted something called Destiny Cards, which are designed to do psychic readings to get in touch with the Holy Spirit for supernatural healing, and to do readings on how you can control your destiny in areas like jobs, relationships, and more. It's basically divination with a churchy covering. The cards were created by a woman named Jen Hodges, and we'll put a link in our show notes so you can see them for yourself.

Some Christians are using a version of the Ouija board to get in touch with angels. They think it's okay because angels are in Heaven, right? The board is called Angels Talk: The Message Board that Connects You to Your Angels," the device is used to communicate with spirits and looks almost the same as the Ouija board only with an ethereal-looking female angel on the board with the letters and numbers. Never

mind that angels in Scripture -- at least the named ones -- were always male. But I digress.

Michelle: That is not only frightening, but the Bible tells us these methods of divination are an abomination to God.

Consider these verses:

Deuteronomy 18:10-14: "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so."

Leviticus 19:31: "Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 20:6: "I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people."

1 Chronicles 10:13: "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance"

Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Amy, you had an experience recently with a woman who was a Christian psychic, not that there is any such thing, but tell us about that.

Amy: Yes, it was a couple of years ago up here in small town Wisconsin where I was in a salon, and another customer and I began to talk about our shared faith as Christians. I had never seen her before, and she said she was new in town and looking for someone to help her set up her website - she had some sort of a business as well as a Christian ministry, she said. Well I do websites and said that I would be happy to talk more. On her way out the door she handed me her old business card from California...and her title was Christian Psychic. Well you can imagine what was going through my mind.

(Amy and Michelle chit chat more)

Amy: The New Age movement in the Church tries to convince us that we can be like God, by tapping into His supernatural power to enhance our lives. Or that there are secrets in the Bible that you must unlock, and these New Age YouTube stars, posing as Christian gurus, just happen to have discovered the Key.

Mystical divination and impressions are also being introduced through prayer programs like The Soaking prayer - or Soaking in the Spirit-, which is transcendental meditation set to music. That was popular in Charismatic churches in around 2013 when television host Sid Roth - not recommended - introduced it on his show. Then it was picked up by Charisma Magazine and other so-called Christian publications, and took off from there. I'll explain what Transcendental meditation is, but please don't do this - it is a technique that is achieved by having you get into a relaxed position, usually on the floor, so that you can completely let go of all of your physical body - the feelings in your limbs, muscles, tummy, neck - just let it all go. Then once you do that, you are taught to empty your mind of all thoughts, anxiety, emotions, memories - all of it. Make your mind a blank slate so that you can receive impressions from the divine or spirit world. People who teach this can get participants to believe they've visited heaven, or have seen people who've died, (that's called Necromancy - also forbidden in the Bible) - or have some sort of out-of-body experience.

Transcendental meditation is something I did as a kid growing up in the Unitarian church. I remember several times during the Sunday services we would do this right in the pews, and there would be soft music playing. There were no sermons delivered, just the instructions from the leader on how to get there, and then silence. But the Bible doesn't ever tell us to empty our minds. We are to be sober minded. A couple of verses from 1 Peter: Verse 5:8 says "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." And verse 4:7 says "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

Michelle: We need to be aware of these tactics, and if you see any of these things in your churches you need to alert Church leadership.

But a lot of these New Age mystical practices are being done outside of the church buildings and you may never see your sisters in Christ practicing these things unless you visit their homes or see what they post and who they follow on social media.

There are a lot of these gurus with huge followings who call themselves Christians but do not have a church - or at least a biblically sound church - where they are taught about sin, judgement, repentance and holiness. Instead they are deceived, believing that they have come to a new understanding of themselves by tapping into the hidden powers of the universe.

They don't really desire Biblical Christianity, and eventually they will trap others into the snare of disbelief.

We're going to put some excellent resources in our show notes that you can read and share with anyone who is ensnared by New Age mysticism.

Amy: As we wrap up, the truth is, yes, our God is Supernatural. Jesus showed us many miracles, and He enabled and empowered His apostles too. He did that as a sign to unbelievers to prove His deity. The Supernatural nature of God will always be a part of our Christian faith. But New Age mysticism has no place in our churches. Head on over to our website, [A Word Fitly Spoken.Life](http://AWordFitlySpoken.Life), for those resources. Until next time, be sober-minded, trust in the Word, and walk worthy!