

# Divination

1. One who practices divination (in Deut. 18:10) comes from two Hebrew words, the Qal active participle of *qâçam* (קָוַץ) [pronounced *kaw-SAHM*] and it is followed by its noun cognate. Strong's #7080 BDB #890 (verb) and Strong's #7081 BDB #890 (noun). It literally means *divines divination* (very similar to *sacrificing a sacrifice*). We found the noun first in Num. 22:7 23:23. Balaam is actually a man who had contact with the true God and he went to God to speak, to curse Israel. The term *divination* actually stood for the money or the remuneration for divination which the servants of Balak brought to Balaam. The *divination* was apparently the act of cursing Israel. What is expected is to go to God and to curse Israel, resulting in the immediate destruction of Israel.
2. Balaam is referred to as a *diviner* in Joshua 13:22. The verb and the noun are first found together in Deut. 18:10, where the act is prohibited, but not defined (see II Kings 17:17 Ezek. 21:23 as well). The use of this word was obviously understood by the people of the Generation of Promise during the time of Moses; however, we have to examine the Scriptures to gain the same understanding of its meaning. *Divining* for money is also mentioned disparagingly in Micah 3:11.
3. Diviners are among the religious hierarchy of the Philistines in I Sam. 6:2 (associated with their priests). Being that Satan generally mimics God's plan, a *diviner* could be taken for the Satanic equivalent of a *prophet of God*. See also Jer. 27:9. This would mean that *diviners* would attempt to foretell future events or render advice because of their close association with the demon hierarchy. This can further imply that some *diviners* might be demon-possessed.
4. Rebellion is equated in terms of evil to divination against God in I Sam. 15:23. King Saul recognized that divination was wrong, at this point in time, but did not realize that his rebellion against God was just as evil. He recognized his sin in I Sam. 15:24.
5. At one of Saul's lowest points, he goes to a spiritist, one who is in contact with God (supposedly), but not an official prophet sent by God. In I Sam. 28:8, King Saul orders a spiritist to *divine* for him—to conjure up Samuel. In this context, it appears as though *divine* refers to *contact with the unseen world*. The ability to foretell the future or to contact the other unseen world could be *implied* in Isa. 44:25. *Then Y<sup>e</sup>howah said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds* (Jer. 14:14; see also Ezek. 13:23 21:23 22:28 for *divining* being associated with *false visions*). This verse associates *divination* with false prophets. *False prophecy* is associated with *divination* in Jer. 29:8–9 Ezek. 13:9 and lying is associated with *divination* in Ezek. 21:29 and Zech. 10:2.
6. *Divination* is used in a good sense in Prov. 16:10, where it reads: *A divine decision [lit., divination] is in the lips of the king; his mouth should not err in judgement*. Here, a king stands in God's place as God's authority and his decisions are like the result of accurate *divination*.
7. The word *diviner* is used in a good or neutral sense in Isa. 3:2 and probably in Micah 3:6.
8. Ezekiel uses these two words more often than any other writer of Scripture. It is through him that we see that *divination* is often an association with particular methods and rituals, such as shaking the arrows, consulting household idols and examining livers (Ezek. 21:21). Most of the references to *divination* in Ezekiel have already been covered.
9. ZPEB summarizes all of this quite handily with *Divination is the practice of consulting beings (divine, human, or departed) or things (by observing objects or actions) in the attempt to gain information about the future and such other matters as are removed from normal knowledge*.<sup>1</sup>
10. The sources I examined, separated divination into two basic types: (1) Internal, where the diviner falls into some sort of a trance or is transported by a vision. (2) Mechanical, where the diviner depends upon the such things as sand, water, sticks, entrails, etc. in order to communicate with the other side.
11. The proper rendering of Deut. 18:10–11 is: *"There is not to be found in you one causing his son and his daughter to pass over into fire; a user of divinations: an observer of times, and an enchanter, and a sorcerer, And a caster of spells [or, a charmer of charms], and an inquirer of a ventriloquist demon, and [the] demon-possessed, and one seeking [or, inquiring of] the dead [ones]."* This passage enumerates the types of

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<sup>1</sup>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible; ©1976; Vol. II, p. 146.

divination used by man, most of which are covered by separate doctrines. However, some will be found below:

12. Some specific types of divining would include: rhabdomancy, as found in Ezek. 21:21 and possibly Hosea 4:12, where arrows or sticks are thrown into the air and one makes a judgment based upon the way that they land.
13. Astrology was one method which became popular in the Hellenistic period, quite some time after this portion of Deuteronomy. However, Astrology seems to date back to the time of Babylonia. The assumption is that there was either an innate harmony between the movement of the stars and planets with the fate of man on earth or the stars and planets controlled, to some extent, the destiny of same. It has been described that *terrestrial evens are but shadows of the celestial realities*.<sup>2</sup> It was thought (and still is) that the future of individuals, groups or nations could be determined by examining the stars. Whereas Astrology is not specifically condemned in the Bible, it is belittled in Isa. 47:13 Jer. 10:2 (I need to examine these and astrology). According to *The New Bible Dictionary*, the wise men who visited our Lord at His birth were not necessarily astrologers. Also, the word *astrologer* in Dan. 1:20 is an inconclusive translation.
14. Necromancy was one of the most common methods of *divination*. This is where spirits from outside the physical realm would be contacted for information. Although these spirits were often demons (familiar spirits), they were just as often passed on as the spirits of those who had recently departed. One of the rare exceptions was King Saul's contact with the witch of Endor. He wanted to contact the prophet Samuel, who had died, and God allowed communication between Samuel and Saul—this was a one-time affair and Saul was accursed for it (this is all found in I Sam. 28 I Chron. 10).
15. Haruspicy, mentioned in Ezek. 21:21, is the examination of the entrails and organs of animals for insight. Although this may seem silly to us, people do the same today with tea leaves, tarot cards, palm reading, etc. It is a medium for demon contact.
16. The Bible touches on several nations and cultures who were involved in divination: Moab (Num. 23), Philistia (I Sam. 6:2), Babylon (Isa. 44:25). Throughout the struggle between Moses and Pharaoh, there were court magicians and religious types of Egypt who attempted to duplicate the miracles performed through Moses (Ex. 7–8).
17. The only mention of divination in the New Testament is found in Acts 16:16, where a girl is said to have a spirit of divination. We will cover that in the future.

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<sup>2</sup>*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; ©1956; Vol. II, p. 860.