

Lesson 13: Visitor From the Grave

Church Bible Study 2-25-12

The first king of Israel, King Saul, did not know what to do and was trembling with fear. The entire Philistine army had gathered to attack Israel's smaller and weaker troops. Saul was fearful and perplexed and groaned, *"If only Samuel were here, he could tell me what to do."* But the prophet of Israel had died a few years before and was no longer a guide for Israel.

The King desperately tried to find guidance from other prophets or priests, but the Lord would not speak to him. As a young man, Saul had been close to God. But not too long after becoming king, he turned cruel and rebelled against God's Word. Once he even had a whole village of priests murdered. King Saul had persistently refused to listen to the Lord, and now in his distress, God would not answer him.

"Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor." 1 Samuel 28:7. God had clearly commanded His people never to consult a witch or medium (Leviticus 19:31; 20:27), but Saul now had little regard for God's implicit instruction.

Upon finding the woman in Endor who claimed to consult with the dead, the king disguised himself and went to see her. He said to the medium, *"Bring me up Samuel."* (verse 11). The witch went through her spells and enchantments until an apparition appeared, claiming to be Samuel the prophet of God, and gave the king an utterly hopeless message. It predicted that Saul and his three sons would die in battle the very next day.

The following day Saul's sons were slain by the Philistines, and afterward the wounded and discouraged king fell on his own sword and took his own life (1 Samuel 31:2-4). Who really spoke to King Saul through the witch at Endor? Was it truly the prophet of God, or was it really a devil in disguise?

In this lesson we are going to take a closer look at what the Bible says about the state of the dead. Are departed loved ones, or dead prophets, really alive or are they really dead? What does the Bible tell us?

- 1. Was it really Samuel the prophet that was before King Saul?** *1 Kings 22:22; Revelation 16:14.*

- 2. Do the dead come back to converse with or to haunt the living?** *Job 7:9-10; 14:21; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10; Isaiah 38:18; Psalms 6:5; 115:17; 146:4*

Webster's Dictionary (1828 Edition) defines "dead" as: *Deprived of life; -- opposed to alive and living; reduced to that state of a being in which the organs of motion and life have irrevocably ceased to perform their functions; as, a dead tree; a dead man.*

The Bible is clear. A dead person does nothing and knows nothing about what is happening on earth. They cannot converse with the living or haunt them.

3. According to the book of Revelation, who has the keys of death? *Revelation 1:17-18.*

Keys are a symbol of power and jurisdiction. Only Jesus has the keys of death and we should go to His Word for answers to our questions about it.

4. How did God form man in the beginning? *Genesis 2:7*

Two things happened at Creation: **1)** God formed man from the dust, or earth, and **2)** He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus man *became* a living soul—a living person. If you have either one of these without the other, you do not have a living person.

5. What happens to a person after death? *Ecclesiastes 12:7*

What takes place at death is the opposite from what happened during Creation. The body returns to dust and the spirit, or breath, returns to God who gave it. The Bible clearly teaches that the "spirit" that returns to God is simply the breath of life, which God breathed into man in the beginning.

The Hebrew word for 'spirit' here is '*ruach*,' which is translated as "breath," "wind," or "spirit" in the Bible. In not one of the 379 instances of its use does '*ruach*' denote an intelligent entity capable of existence apart from a physical body, so far as man is concerned. Psalms 104:29-30 states: "*Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*"³⁰ *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*"

6. Where do the dead go after they die? *Job 21:32; John 5:28-29.*

7. The Bible makes it plain that King David is saved. Is he in heaven now? *Acts 2:29, 34 (first part).*

8. Did Jesus promise the thief on the cross immediate access to heaven when He said, "*To day shalt thou be with me in paradise?*" *Luke 23:42-43; John 20:17*

Why then did Jesus say, "*To day shalt thou be with me in paradise?*" The apparent problem vanishes when you consider that the original Greek manuscripts had no punctuation. The commas and periods were introduced into the text of Scripture by translators, who inserted them where they thought they should be. And believe it or not, a single comma can change the meaning of an entire sentence!

The Lord's statement in Luke 23:43 should read: "*Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise.*" This is what Jesus was really saying. Someday that thief, along with all others who have accepted Christ, will claim the promise of the resurrection and be with Jesus in paradise.

9. Some say that the soul is immortal and that only the body dies, is that true? Ezekiel 18:4; Job 4:17; 1 Timothy 6:15-16

The word translated "soul" ('nephesh'), means "man," or "person," or "self." This verse is saying, "*the person who sins shall die.*" We are souls, and souls do die. Man is mortal and only God is immortal. The widely believed teaching of the undying, immortal soul is not found in the Bible. The teaching is man-made with help from the devil!

10. When will the righteous be given immortality? 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

11. How does the Bible repeatedly refer to death? John 11:11-14; Matthew 27:52; 2 Samuel 7:12 (first part); 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

The Bible often refers to death as sleep. The dead simply "sleep" in their graves until the resurrection, when all will be raised by Jesus. The teaching that the spirits of the dead are heavenly angels, or some righteous ghostlike entity that can be contacted, is not from the Bible. The dead sleep in the grave until called forth by Jesus.

12. Since wizards, witches, and psychics cannot really communicate with the dead, whom are they contacting? Revelation 16:14; Isaiah 8:19-20.

Heaven's angels are called "*ministering spirits*" (Hebrews 1:14) who help people on earth. The angels who were cast out of heaven with Satan (Revelation 12:7-9) are also spirits—evil spirits who deceive people by working miracles (Revelation 16:13-14). They use "*all power and signs and lying wonders*" (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and can even make "*fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men*" (Revelation 13:13). It is these demon fallen angels that are being contacted.

13. Why does Satan want us to believe that the dead never die? Matthew 24:24-25.

Utilizing these evil spirits is called "spiritism." It is based on a two-part belief:

- 1) the dead are alive, and
- 2) they can contact you, or you can contact them.

This is one of Satan's most dangerous teachings. Yet almost the entire world believes it today. The witch of Endor did not call up the prophet Samuel. Rather, they saw an evil angel who posed as Samuel. Satan is setting up millions on the earth for his impersonation of Jesus to hopefully deceive the very elect of God.

14. How effective will Satan's use of these evil spirits be in the last days? *Revelation 18:2; 23 (last part); 12:9.*

Satan has threaded his doctrine of “spiritism” through media to the entire world; television programs and movies are steeped in spiritism and it is preparing people to be lost. By Satan's miracles (sorceries) through his evil angels, he will deceive virtually the entire world.

15. How does God regard these miracles by evil angels and those who aid them in their work? *Leviticus 20:27; Ephesians 5:11; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8.*

In Moses' day, God commanded that all psychics, sorcerers and witches be put to death. In our day God tells us that sorcery is a work of the flesh, for which people will eventually be destroyed. Remember the warning when tempted to watch a movie depicting sorcery and witchcraft, or ghosts, vampires, zombies and werewolfs! Satan is setting you up to lose eternal life.

16. Is there hope for those who may have been deceived by demon angels? *Acts 8:9-11, 13; 16:16-18*

Yes! There is hope and power in Jesus to be delivered from the deceptions of demons, to those who believe.

17. What glorious power does God offer His people? *Philippians 3:10.*

Jesus offers us the same power to live right that raised Him from the dead. How can we fail with such incredible power given us—and freely?

18. What promise may be ours? *2 Corinthians 6:17-18.*

King Saul chose to mingle with the unrighteous and reject the counsels of God. He was led, step by step, away from God by lying spirits until he sought the counsel of a witch. King Saul will not be in Heaven because he gave in to these seducing spirits and rejected God. Satan is using the same tactics but different mediums today to deceive the world. No one has to travel to a secret location in Endor to gain access to a witch today. All one has to do is turn on the television, computer or go to a movie to come into contact with evil spirits... to receive that supposed visitor from the grave.

Now is the time to make a change and remove yourself from such unclean things. God will give you power to come out from such works of darkness if you will give yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”* Revelation 21:7-8. **Will you accept the water that Jesus offers? It will deliver you from the deceptions of the devil and give you power to overcome all his temptations and deceptions.**