

## *Do You Believe in GHOSTS???*

### *I. A Ghost Story*

#### *II. Define "GHOST" –*

*They are tortured spirits, caught between this life and the afterlife, doomed to walk the earth forever. Some are victims of a horrible injustice, such as murder, and are merely trying to make contact with the living in hopes they may somehow find eternal rest. Some are vicious, evil phantoms who were vile beings in this life and who now walk the halls of places familiar to them, intent on terrifying those who dare trespass. Others are guardian spirits who linger only to help those loved ones that still number among the living. There are even playful spirits, who mean no harm and enjoy perpetrating harmless pranks in homes that they take up residence in.*

*They take various shapes, sizes and forms. Some may have an appearance similar to what they had during their living years. Some may appear as a fog or shadow. Others may reveal themselves as a pale, slightly transparent, shrouded figure floating through the air. Some show up on film or video as an 'orb'.*

*These are what most people think of when they think of ghosts. We see these images on television and movies, especially around Halloween time. Shows like "Ghost Hunters", "Supernatural" and "Ghost Adventures" reflect our culture's growing interest in the occult as well as the afterlife. The generally accepted definition of a ghost is that of a person who has died but is somehow stuck between the world of the living and the 'spirit world'.*

*But what does the Bible have to say about this? Is there a possibility that after we die, we could become a ghost? Can the dead appear to us? Speak to us?*

#### *III. Episode 1: Saul, Samuel & the Witch of Endor – 1 Samuel 28: 1-25*

\* 2 Different takes:

(1) This spirit wasn't Samuel ... it was a DEMON

(2) This spirit really was Samuel's ghost

> Clearly, the author believes this is the spirit of the dead Samuel.

\* He is called "Samuel."

\* He speaks much as he had spoken to Saul in his lifetime.

\* He uses the name of the LORD seven times.

\* He correctly prophesies that Saul and his sons will die.

\* What was the witch's reaction when she saw Samuel (v.12)?

What does this tell us?

**> Her surprise and fear lead us to believe that her "normal" activity was either faking or demonic ... not what she experienced here!**

- \* Our conclusion: This episode is a REAL GHOST STORY ...  
... BUT not one that is a PATTERN.

Note from Spirit-filled Life Study Bible: *"It is clear that the medium has not called him up, but that the Lord has again stepped into the life of Saul to speak to Him. The woman was terrified and cried out, literally "screamed in terror," shocked at Samuel's appearance. Far from giving credence to any kind of spiritualist activity or contacting the dead, this passage shows that God is supreme. The medium is left terrified and Saul is paralyzed in fear, as both of them are rejected by the living God."*

### *IV. CURIOUS SEAFARERS*

- \* Luke 24: 36 – 37
- \* Mt. 14: 26; Mk. 6: 49
  - > Is this, in effect, a confirmation of the existence of ghosts?
  - > People in Jesus day were SUPERSTITIOUS!  
In Jewish culture, it was believed that the appearance of spirits at night was a bad omen.
  - > Interestingly, Jesus doesn't say "There is no such thing as ghosts."  
Rather, his language leaves open the question.

### *V. So ... Should We Believe in Ghosts?*

What does the Bible Say?

- \* Hebrews 9:27
- \* 2 Cor. 5:8 (also, Phil. 1:23)
- \* Is. 14:9 (also, Mt. 25:46)

Conclusion: There are NO DISEMBODIED SPIRITS roaming the earth!

### *VI. Can the Dead Communicate with Us from "Beyond the grave?"*

- \* Many have such stories: Amy's story concerning Dad
- \* Luke 16: 19 – 31
  - A. There exists an UNCROSSABLE CHASM between heaven and hell. (v.26)
  - B. The rich man asked that Lazarus be allowed to go back and warn his

family, clearly implying that HE HIMSELF COULD NOT GO!

C. Why wasn't Lazarus allowed to go back? It wasn't NECESSARY!

*Just like this story, we can say that visitations from dead loved ones simply are not necessary! What can they provide that God's Word does not provide. Comfort? Assurance? Direction?*

*On the other hand, relying on the dead for anything can be dangerously close to the Catholic practice of praying to saints ... or even idolatry.*

Almost everyone has seen something at one time or another that they cannot explain, although many times strange and seemingly "paranormal" occurrences can (and do) have rational explanations. So many people, even born again believers, have seen "something" they would classify as paranormal. I have heard good, God-fearing Christians say that they believe that their dead loved ones "watch over them and protect them". I am reminded of one story where a grandmother died while cooking breakfast early one morning. After her death, the family would smell bacon and eggs cooking at various hours of the night, but upon investigating would find the kitchen empty. Also, the family would hear the sound of the woman's sewing machine being used in her vacant bedroom, but found no one using the machine. Lights would turn on and off and other unexplainable events would occur. Their conclusion was that "it's just grandma letting us know she's keeping an eye on us and looking out for us". As comforting as this may be for some, there is no scriptural basis for the belief that people, even believers, can return to this world to help others. That is the role of angels. The bible is full of stories where the Lord has sent angels to help people. If God were to send an angel to serve in the role of helper, the angel would not appear as a ghost or even act in ways that would lead someone to believe that a ghost was behind unexplained phenomenon because that would lead to confusion. And we know that God would not do that, as 1 Corinthians 14:33 declares "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." (ESV). In scripture, whenever God sent an angel to appear to someone, it was obvious that it was an angel of the Lord and the angel's purpose of being sent was clear. There was no ambiguity to leave anyone whom the angel appeared to wondering whether it was an angel from God that appeared to them or if it was a spirit of someone who was dead. No angel sent by the Lord ever made an appearance disguised as a spirit returning from the grave. An important thing to remember is that God's word will not contradict God's word, as this will lead to confusion on the truthfulness of His word. . If God will not allow a soul to return from death to make contact with the living for the purpose of something major like warning them about impending doom (such as the story of Lazarus and the rich man ), then He will not allow a soul to return for some trifling reason such as cutting on lights or moving things around.