

What is Spiritualism?

As you read this study, I encourage you to study the corresponding scriptures for yourself to develop a personal, confident understanding of biblical truth. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Study like the Bereans, who listened to Paul but did not take his word for it. They studied the scriptures for themselves so they would know for sure.

Acts 17:11 “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” I ask that you do the same with this study. Please pray before you begin.

What the Bible says

The Dictionary defines Spiritualism as the belief that the spirits of the dead survive physical death and can communicate with the living.

The Bible says spiritualism—often referred to as spiritism or necromancy—is strictly condemned. It is defined as the attempt to communicate with the dead or seek guidance from spiritual entities. The scriptures strictly forbid these practices, categorizing them as spiritual rebellion and deception.

The Biblical Stance on Spiritualism

Strict Prohibition: The Old Testament expressly forbids consulting mediums, spiritists, or the dead. In Deuteronomy 18:10-12, these practices are deemed "detestable".

Nature of the Dead: The Bible teaches that the dead are unconscious and cannot communicate with the living (e.g., Ecclesiastes 9:5). Therefore, any spirit purporting to be a deceased human is considered a deceptive or demonic entity.

Idolatry and Unfaithfulness: Seeking advice from spirits is viewed as turning away from God. The prophet Isaiah 8:19 argues that the living should consult God rather than the dead.

Key Scriptural Warnings and Examples

King Saul at Endor: In 1 Samuel 28, King Saul seeks out a medium to contact the deceased prophet, Samuel. This act is condemned as an ultimate failure to trust and obey God.

New Testament Exclusions: The New Testament includes spiritism in the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21), explicitly stating that those who practice it will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

According to the Bible, we will see that we are souls; we don't have souls.

Read Gen 2:7. It says, "man became a living soul." We do not have a soul that floats around after we die and goes directly to heaven, purgatory, or hell. If we did, there would be no need for a resurrection. See **Revelation 20:5-6**. These passages describe two resurrections, one for the just and the other for the unjust.

Even Jesus referred to death as sleep twice in the Bible, when He raised Lazarus from the dead and when He raised the little girl from the dead.

Turn to John 11:11: Jesus calls death "sleep." **In Mark 5:39**, another incident, Jesus calls death a sleep. **See Matthew 9:24.**

See II Peter 3:4. In this scripture, the term asleep for death is used. If we look at the following three scriptures, the word "asleep" is used again: **1 Thessalonians 4:15, 1 Corinthians 15:6, and Acts 7:60.**

If you have Bible software, search for the words "sleep", "slept", and asleep, you will get results in both the Old and New Testaments. Sixty-six different scriptures refer to death as a sleep. The Bible supports the idea of death as an unconscious, sleep-like state.

Instead of becoming part of a new reality or dimension, those who die become unconscious as God's Breath of Life, which makes our bodies human, returns to God. If we search the Bible for guidance on attempting to speak with the dead, it's not hard to find that God absolutely forbids it. He explicitly condemns mediums, necromancy, and any other form of spiritualism, even commanding the death of those who practice it in (**Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 20:27, Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Revelation 21:8**).

Once someone dies, they have no means of communication. They cannot contact the living, either by speaking to them or by reappearing in the places and homes where they once lived. **Let's read Ecclesiastes 9:5.** Here, we are told that the dead know nothing; with no brain function, they cannot contact anyone. And no human being has the power to "call" them. There can be no hauntings, no departed loved ones appearing to us in our time of need. It is simply impossible.

This is the reason God is so vehemently against the practices of spiritualism and contact with the dead. He knows the dead can't speak, and He doesn't want His children deceived or misled. He doesn't want us to be taken advantage of by those who could profit from our time of grief. God also doesn't want His children to open themselves to dangerous influences, such as the control of Satan or his demons masquerading as loved ones. This is a very real and legitimate danger.

Read Matthew 8:16: We see the use of devils and spirits interchangeably, letting us know that the so-called spirits of loved ones are actually demons in disguise. **In 1 John 4:1,** we see that there are only two types of spirits: fallen angels and unfallen angels. We are told to test and see if the spirit is from God; if it is not, there is only one other option, and that is from Satan. Who can appear in many different forms. **Let's look at Revelation 16:14:** It tells us that Satan's devils will go around working miracles "throughout the whole world".

What about Samuel's ghost?

Read 1 Samuel 28:10-19

Considering the Bible's teachings about the dead, it's unusual that King Saul consulted a medium to summon Samuel, a prophet who had already died. Samuel had passed away, was buried, and mourned by all Israel. Later, Saul fought the Philistines, Israel's enemies. His army was in trouble, and he was unsure what to do. His forces were outnumbered, and because he had neglected God, he believed God wouldn't listen to him.

At first glance, this story appears to challenge common views of the dead and of communication with them. The ghost of Samuel was not only aware and reachable but also seemed to know the outcome of the upcoming battle.

What's happening? Why could Samuel's "ghost" speak? It wasn't Samuel's ghost. Examine carefully. Why couldn't Saul see this ghost? If it was Samuel's spirit, why let Saul bow and worship? Only God deserves Saul's bowing, and Samuel knew this. These clues, plus how this scene contradicts God's teachings on death, suggest it wasn't Samuel's ghost but Satan's agent.

This is why God warns against speaking with the dead—not only because it's impossible but also because it can expose us to darker influences. Satan uses deception as a primary weapon, employing any trick to deceive us.

Analyzing Saul's story reveals that the being he saw was not Samuel's ghost but a Satanic agent. It is typical for the Devil to deceive people by misleading them about the possibility of contacting the dead.

What about Lazarus and the rich man?

In Luke 16:22-31, we find the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. It's important to remember that this is a story Jesus created to illustrate a point, using a common teaching method familiar to His audience. At first glance, the story appears to discuss the afterlife and whether the dead can speak to the living. By carefully examining each part of the story, we can better understand the lesson Jesus intended to convey.

Hades was a Greek term for the underworld, where spirits wandered. Jews used Sheol, meaning "the grave," which didn't suggest spirits roamed. Jesus, referencing a conscious afterlife beyond traditional doctrine, used symbolic language—such as the talking of the dead—to convey a message. The story shows the rich man with everything he desires, raising the question: What was Jesus communicating?

He was wealthy, and in Hebrew culture, wealth and prosperity were often mistaken for blessings from God, indicating righteousness and divine favor. Conversely, poverty, sickness, and disease, as Lazarus experienced, were seen as curses—proof of divine displeasure. When Jesus began his story, the Pharisees and audience expected the rich man to die fulfilled and favored by God, while Lazarus, the poor man, would serve as a warning.

In the story's second half, Jesus reverses the situation entirely. Lazarus is taken to Heaven, where he finds joy and peace, while the rich man remains in Hell, unable to cool his tongue with water. During his lifetime, the rich man had the opportunity to share his blessings and follow God's teachings through Moses by caring for the poor and needy around him. However, he declined. Now, he has nothing to offer—not even a warning to his family to make better choices than he did. Jesus summarizes this lesson when he tells the Pharisees **in Luke 16:15**, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly admired by people is revolting in God's sight."

This was meant to illustrate the importance of how we act and treat others in the present. Jesus had a vital lesson in his parable about the rich man and Lazarus; it wasn't about the dead. It was a lesson about living, how we are to treat others while we have the opportunity, and that we are given only one chance to do so. There are no contradictions between what Jesus taught about death and the rest of Scripture.

Biblical Miracles vs. Spiritism: While the Bible does record supernatural occurrences—such as Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17)—these are divinely ordained events rather than necromancy