

What Does The BIBLE Say?

As you read this study, I encourage you to study the 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 it 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.

Spiritualism

According to the Bible, we are a soul; we don't have a soul.

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 a 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: We see that Jesus calls death a 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 get results in both the Old and New Testaments. Sixty-six different scriptures describe 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 places and homes they once lived in. 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 use our time of grief to profit. 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, either fallen angels or 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 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.

At first glance, this story appears to challenge the common views on the dead and communication with them. The ghost of Samuel was not only aware and reachable, but it also seemed to possess knowledge about 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 outside traditional doctrine, used symbolic language—like 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 the living, how we are to treat others while we have the opportunity, and how we are only given one chance to do so. There are no contradictions between what Jesus taught about death and the rest of Scripture.