

# Ghosts: Friends or Demons?

*Are the dead really dead?*

What possesses a skeptical, educated Western society to hanker after ghosts and spirits?

The same kids who grew up on "Casper the Friendly Ghost" now identify with "Sam" (Patrick Swayze), the hero yuppie ghost. A celebrity like Shirley MacLaine has elevated the pursuit of connecting with the spirits of the dead from side-door parlors to a very sophisticated level. The going rate for any respectable "channeler" runs in the thousands of dollars.

Why are people so anxious to communicate with the spirit world of the dead? First of all, one would naturally long to communicate with a deceased loved one for many reasons... In the ad lines of the recent movie, "Always," now available in video cassette, "They couldn't hear him. They couldn't see him. But he was there when they needed him. Even after he was gone." But is a human longing a basis for a legitimate hope for reaching the dead? Another reason for expecting to communicate would be because most people have only a vague understanding of what death really means.

Only truth really satisfies-and comforts. The origin of death traces back to the Garden of Eden... the first man... and sin. God linked Adam's continuance of life on earth on simple obedience. However, "In the day that thou eatest of the tree, thou shalt surely die." Satan, using the serpent, contradicted this stipulation, saying, "Thou shalt not surely die." When Adam did sin and did die, Satan-being the "father of lies" that he is-perpetuated his lie in every generation and to every people: "You don't really die. You only seem to die. You are more alive than ever when you die!" The Egyptians believed it. Socrates and Plato taught it. And, unfortunately, many Christians adopted it.

Just how dead are the dead? And is there any precious hope for any life after death? When God created Adam, "Man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7 After God had infused the "breath of life" in the body He prepared, Adam himself was "made a living soul." But sinning plunged the soul itself into death. Ezekiel 18:4 The breath of life is not the soul. The breath of life is the life energy from God which causes a body to live. Take away this life spirit and the soul dies. True, Adam "died spiritually" in that his fellowship was cut off immediately in that first 24-hour day. But Adam also immediately began physically to die ("Dying thou shalt die"). And he did die literally within God's 1,000-year day. I Peter 3:8

But even as God pronounced the grim death sentence on Adam, a ray of hope pierced this judgment. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head..." A fatal blow would fall on the great tempter, Satan. Later this "seed" was identified as the "seed of Abraham." Genesis 22:17 Christians are heirs to this promise as part of the seed which will bless all families of the earth. Galatians 3:29 They are with Christ, the "firstfruits of them that have slept." I Corinthians 15:20 Then, during Christ's presence ("parousia," Greek), his 1,000-year reign with the church, all the families of the earth will be the "afterfruits" in the resurrection of the dead.

So the legitimate hope for reaching the dead will be in the resurrection in the "last day." John 11:24 If man possessed an immortal soul, he would not need a resurrection. To say mortal man is inherently immortal in some way is to disregard our need for Jesus Christ who is our life and resurrection!

## **Communications with the Dead?**

If then, it is impossible for the dead to communicate, what accounts for the apparent communication with the dead? Aside from frauds, too many convincing experiences suggesting extra-human contact have occurred.

The Bible verifies the existence of positive spirit beings called angels. But they have their counterpart. The Mosaic Law soundly rejects any meddling with spiritism. Deuteronomy 18:10,11 The four Gospel accounts

of Jesus' life have no less than forty-two references to negative spirit beings, fallen angels, called "demons." Where did these demons come from?

The account of Genesis 6 reveals that certain angels violated God's law of keeping their own spirit nature separate from man's human nature. These angels who "left their own habitation," (Jude 6, I Peter 3:20) took wives of the women of earth. Although not destroyed in the flood, they were constrained in a condition where they could not return to heaven, nor could they materialize any more on earth. This state, called "*tartaroo*" (*Greek*, see Footnote), was to be endured until the Judgment Day.

In the meantime, these fallen angels or demons have been limited to working through willing human channels. They have operated through the bodies of these, instead of bodies of their own. Such "mediums," or human channels were in the past known as "fetishes," "shaman," "wizards," "witches," "necromancers," "medicine men." In dark seances they endeavored to gain control of people's minds and bodies. Not able to materialize in bodies of their own making, they tried to possess the bodies and minds of others. When this happens a fate as terrible as drug addiction occurs. The individual enters a slavery to demons. They have misrepresented God. They have misrepresented God's plan. They have misrepresented the dead. By claiming to be the dead speaking, they have promulgated Satan's lie in Eden,

### **"Thou shalt not surely die."**

The record shows that the restraints that have been placed upon the fallen angels have a time limit-"unto the judgment of the great day." As we now see about us the evidences of the climactic events of the "Day of the Lord," it should not surprise any that the chains of restraint on those evil spirits are gradually being loosened. The upsurge of activity of the fallen angels in the form of newly acceptable channeling sessions, devil worship, and spiritist inspired movies and music is part of the result of the relaxing of the "chains" of restraint. There is no question that Satan and his legions are more energetic than ever to do all the mischief they can.

Despite the clear warnings of Scripture regarding the occult, many Christians subject themselves and their families to be entertained by demon inspired themes. Much seems so harmless. Kindergarten children are taught, as part of a rigorous school curriculum, the friendly side of ghosts and witches. A proper understanding of the seriousness of the negative spirit world demands a healthy distance.

While speaking of the Lord's return, the Apostle Paul (II Thessalonians 2:8-12) says that although the Lord will consume Satan with the "brightness of his presence" (epiphania of his parousia), Satan will very energetically work deceptions "with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." So strong a delusion will it be that if it were possible it would deceive even the true saints of God-those who would "believe a lie," because they receive not the "love of the truth."

Demons are by no means our friends. But yes, we will see our friends and loved ones again-in the resurrection. Then too, know ye not that the saints "shall judge the angels?" Perhaps some of the fallen angels will have learned their lesson and conformed to God's will. But those who used their greater liberty to wreck havoc on man will be destroyed in the second death. Revelation 20:10

**Footnote:** *Tartaroo*-The Word *tartaroo*, used by Peter, very closely resembles *tartarus*, a word used in Grecian mythology as the name for a dark abyss or prison. But *tartaroo* seems to refer more to an act than to a place. The fall of the angles who sinned was from honor and dignity, into dishonor and condemnation, and the thought seems to be-"God spared not the angels who sinned, but degraded them, and delivered them into chains of darkness."

The Christian is admonished to especially put on the "whole armour of God" in the "evil day" that we live in today. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:11-13