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The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



The Tyrant With
Seven Heads

SPIRITISM

Fraud...or Fact?

Can men actually communicate with departed spirits? What about the witch of Endor? What does the Bible say of spiritism?

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Is there anything to *spiritism*?

Granted, there is trickery and deception. Houdini, one of the greatest trick artists of modern times, exposed numerous frauds. So also have Thurston, Walsh, Gearson and many another. Some leading spiritists have been convicted of plain dishonesty or common fraud and imprisoned.

Yet not all spiritism is fraud or sleight of hand!

When all the frauds, the tricks, the deceptions are carefully and scientifically sifted out, there remains something to be accounted for — some *real* SUPERNATURAL EVENTS that cannot be explained away!

Wicked spirits in control

Whether or not human beings like to admit it, the Bible plainly teaches that *supernatural powers control and operate this world*. The apostle Paul was inspired to write that human beings must struggle “against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places” (Ephesians 6:12, Authorized Version, marginal reading).

Jesus Christ never contested Satan’s claim that all the nations of the world were his. Said Satan: “All this *authority*” — the control of the nations — “I will give

You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours” (Luke 4:6-7).

Little wonder, then, that spirit-

ters. Now, spiritism has obtained millions of followers. It is a RELIGION masquerading under the name of Christianity.

Spiritism is based on the devil’s first recorded lie! The devil has

‘Visions’ of the Dead

Ghosts
in photographs

**OUR DREAM HOUSE
WAS HAUNTED**

... Experts say
spirit of loving
child remains
in toy today

**Amazing New Proof
Of Life After Death**

**Lady’s ghost haunts
‘quiet’ police station**

HAUNTED FAMILIES:
THE MYSTERIES SCIENCE CAN’T EXPLAIN

ism should be manifest in a world controlled and operated by wicked spirits in high places!

Modern spiritism had its birth at Hydesville, N.Y., in 1848. It began with the famous Rochester knockings heard by the Fox sis-

continued to deceive millions into believing that the dead can *talk* with the living!

**The dead cannot talk
with the living**

Notice what Jesus said about

the dead: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are *in the graves* WILL HEAR His voice and come forth . . . to the resurrection" (John 5:28-29).

The dead *cannot* communicate with the living!

But the DEVIL must perpetuate his lie! He must make it *appear* that the dead can communicate with the living. That is why the manifestations of spiritism exist — to perpetuate a lie!

Spiritism is a work of DARKNESS! Paul warns us, "Have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfruitful works of DARKNESS, but rather expose them" (Ephesians 5:11).

Millions of dollars have been filched from unthinking people who have lost loved ones and who have sought to contact them in the DARKNESS of spiritist séances. GOD'S blessings come without price. But it *costs money* to fellowship spiritism's DARKNESS!

Extorting money from innocent victims on behalf of the *dead* is a RACKET ALMOST 6,000 YEARS OLD! The racket is controlled by Satan the devil. Spiritism, however, is not its only form. This racket even manifests itself in powerful denominations. Sorrowing relatives are asked to *pay* to relieve their loved ones from suffering supposedly occurring on the other side of death!

Two kinds of angels

Since not all spiritism is trickery, and since the dead CANNOT communicate with the living, then what power *causes* the phenomena of spiritism?

Remember that this world is controlled by SUPERNATURAL SPIRIT POWERS. Satan is called the *ruler of this world* in three distinct scriptures — John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11. He is the *god of this age* whom the world worships in ignorance! Paul said, "The *god of this world* [or "age"] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4, AV).

The Bible reveals that there are

only *two* classes of spirit beings created by God. Man is NOT spirit. He is mortal flesh. Paul wrote of man, "For this corruptible must *put on* incorruption, and this *mortal* must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:53).

Here are the two classes of spirits:

1) *Obedient angels* of God. Paul wrote: "But to which of the angels has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? Are they not all ministering *spirits* sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13-14). Obedient angels are *spirits* sent to minister to mortal, fleshly human beings who are heirs to salvation — *heirs* to immortality!

2) *Demons or fallen angels*, subject to the princely authority of Satan the devil. Satan is the "ruler of the demons" (Mark 3:22). We read of Satan and his angels in Revelation 12:9, AV: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and *his angels* were cast out with him." The apostle Peter wrote of them: "For if God did not spare the *angels* who *sinned*, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment" (II Peter 2:4).

The two classes of created spirit beings are both angels. The only difference is that one class is obedient, the other class DISOBEDIENT.

The spirits manifesting themselves through spiritism are of the second class — WICKED spirits.

Cause of demon possession

The demons manifest their powers in various ways — sometimes in the *darkness* of spiritist séances, sometimes through possessing the mental and physical attributes of human beings. This latter form is often termed *demon possession*. There are several interesting cases recorded in the Bible. Turn to Acts 16:16-18 and notice one example:

"Now it happened, as we went

to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.' And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the *spirit*, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And he came out that very hour."

Notice that evil spirits can possess the mental and vocal faculties of human beings. They *impersonate* or *pretend* that they are human beings. They often manifest their powers in connection with religion to deceive innocent victims or to bring reproach upon the name of God by their misconduct, as in the example of Acts 16.

In other instances they utilize human faculties in a violent manner. Institutions for the insane are filled with helpless human beings possessed with spirits of violence. Notice the example found in Matthew 8:28-32:

"When He [Jesus] had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, *exceedingly fierce*, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?' Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, 'If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.' And He said to them, 'Go.' So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water."

Here is an example of the power of evil spirits — the very evil spirits *impersonating* lost loved ones in spiritist séances.

God condemned spiritism centuries ago. Here are His words:

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:31, AV).

A *familiar spirit* is a particular spirit who associates itself with a spiritist medium, who is usually a woman. A familiar spirit is often called a *guide* because it guides or controls the séance for the medium. A *wizard* is a male human being who acts as an instrument of wicked spirits.

In this verse in Leviticus, God warns His people not to *attribute divine power* to women or men who act as slaves of evil spirits, not to regard what they say. We are to regard what God says and to attribute power to HIM! He is the Eternal your God!

Spiritism condemned in Bible

Again, notice God's condemnation of spiritism in Deuteronomy 18:9-12, AV:

“When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth *divination*, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a *witch*, or a charmer, or a *consulter with familiar spirits*, or a *wizard*, or a *necromancer*.

“For all that do these things are an ABOMINATION unto the Lord: and because of these ABOMINATIONS the Lord thy God doth drive them [the gentiles] out from before thee.”

Spiritism is an ABOMINATION to God. He drove out the gentiles in the days of Joshua for permitting spiritism.

And the same punishment is coming upon our nations for permitting spiritism and its kindred arts to flourish!

Notice that God condemns the witch, a woman who pretends to contact the “spirit” of a beloved one who has recently died — and a consulter of familiar spirits, usually a woman who contacts a particular spirit for information — and a wizard and a *necroman-*

cer, one who professes to predict the future by the art of communicating with the dead.

These are all forms of spiritism. All these forms are *condemned* by God Almighty. Spiritism is *evil*. It is a direct instrumentality of the DEVIL. Because it is so evil, God condemns those who practice spiritism and those who seek to contact the dead in its séances!

God means business. It is a question of following spiritism and rejecting eternal life or of rejecting spiritism and obeying God in order to receive eternal life.

Spiritism perpetuates the devil's lie that the dead are not really dead. God says we must come to HIM to OBTAIN eternal life: “For the wages of sin is DEATH, but the gift of God is *eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Spiritism is condemned as one of the products of *human carnality* — as a fruit of the flesh. Paul wrote: “Now the works of the flesh are *evident*, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, *sorcery*, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellies, and the like; OF WHICH I TELL YOU BEFOREHAND, JUST AS I ALSO TOLD YOU IN TIME PAST, THAT THOSE WHO PRACTICE SUCH THINGS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD” (Galatians 5:19-21).

Saul's experience with a witch

One of the most noted portions of Scripture — yet one of the *least* understood — is the case of Saul and the witch at Endor. This story is found in I Samuel 28. Notice verse 3 of this chapter: “Now *Samuel had died*, and all Israel had lamented for him and BURIED HIM IN RAMAH, in his own city.” Notice that Samuel was dead and buried. He was *not* alive.

Continuing: “And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. Then the Philistines gathered togeth-

er . . . when Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord DID NOT ANSWER HIM, either by dreams or by Urim [through the high priest] *or by the prophets*” (verses 3-6).

God would *not* listen to Saul. Saul had been disobedient. Samuel had been inspired to tell Saul, “For rebellion is as the *sin of witchcraft*” (I Samuel 15:23).

What did Saul do? “Then Saul said to his servants, ‘Find me a *woman who is a medium*, that I may go to her and inquire of her.’ And his servants said to him, ‘In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at *Endor*’” (I Samuel 28:7).

Remember that Samuel was buried in *Ramah*, located in the territory belonging to the tribe of Ephraim (I Samuel 1:1, 19). But the Philistines and Saul were now near Lake Galilee, in Mount Gilboa, near Endor, about 50 miles from the place in which Samuel was buried.

The night before the battle “Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, ‘Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you’” (I Samuel 28:8).

Saul sinned by seeking a witch. If God would not answer Saul by a prophet because of Saul's disobedience in government administration, how much more would God *refuse to answer Saul by a prophet* when Saul sought to a witch! Remember that Samuel was a *prophet* (Acts 13:20) and a *judge* (I Samuel 7:6, 15-17). And God would *not* use a prophet to answer Saul!

In other words, God would *not* use Samuel the prophet to answer Saul; neither would God use any other means, for that matter. God absolutely refused to listen to Saul because of his rebellious attitude.

But notice what happened: “Then the woman said, ‘Whom shall I *bring up* for you?’” (I
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Samuel 28:11). Notice that the woman spirit medium claimed to contact the dead by supernaturally bringing them up from the grave through the familiar spirit. This form was practiced in times past when the people believed that the dead were in their graves. *Today* spirit mediums have the familiar spirit produce a voice from the air, because it is commonly believed *today* that the dead are *not* in their graves but somewhere else!

Saul replied to the woman, "Bring up Samuel for me."

The spirit masquerades as Samuel

Instead of the familiar spirit appearing *first*, and then the visionary form of a dead person, the woman saw *first* a form that looked exactly like Samuel!

"When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, 'Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!' And the king said to her, 'Do not be afraid. What did you see?'" (I Samuel 28:12-13).

Notice that the familiar spirit did not manifest itself first at Saul's séance. Instead, the familiar spirit produced the form of Samuel that **ONLY THE WOMAN SAW!** Saul did not see it! He asked the woman what *she saw!*

"And the woman said to Saul, 'I saw a *spirit* ascending out of the earth.'" This is an *incorrect* translation. The word translated "spirit" is *elohim* in the Hebrew. It can mean either the true God, pagan gods or *judges*. In Exodus 22:8-9, the Hebrew word *elohim* is translated *judges*. In I Samuel 28:13, the verse should have been translated, "I saw a *judge* ascending out of the earth." This is *proved* by what follows: "So he said to her, 'What is his form?' And she said, 'An old *man* is coming up, and *he* is covered with a mantle.' And Saul *perceived* that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the



One of the least understood portions of Scripture concerns Saul and the witch at Endor, in which an evil spirit impersonating Samuel spoke to Saul.

ground and bowed down" (verse 14).

A deception

Notice that Saul still did **NOT** see anyone! He only *perceived* by reasoning from what the woman said that the form the woman saw was that of Samuel!

Here we have a perfect illustration of the impersonation of

human beings by evil spirits. The familiar spirit produced an illusion that only the woman saw. To her the illusion was that of a judge rising out of the earth. Remember that Samuel was actually buried about 50 miles away, not at Endor where the séance was occurring! Samuel was *not* resurrected. The whole thing was a **SUPERNATURAL**

Illustration by Basil Wolverton

FRAUD! While *impersonating Samuel*, the spirit spoke to King Saul thus: "Now Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?'" Notice the *lying* spirit. Satan lied to Eve in a similar manner.

"And Saul answered, 'I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and GOD HAS DEPARTED FROM ME AND DOES NOT ANSWER ME ANYMORE, NEITHER BY PROPHETS NOR BY DREAMS. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do.'"

The spirit continued to impersonate Samuel by reprimanding Saul for all his evil deeds. Finally the spirit concluded by saying: "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines" (verse 19).

How did the spirit know what was to happen? Because God often makes His plans known to evil spirits! Notice I Kings 22:22-23 and II Chronicles 18:21-22. God permitted "lying spirits" to know His plans.

God rules over all. But He has allowed Satan and his demons to control and influence this entire world. The familiar spirit of the witch at Endor must have known that God would deliver Saul that next day. So it told Saul what would happen in order that its impersonation of Samuel might *seem* real!

Saul's punishment

Now read what happened to Saul because he inquired about the future from a spirit medium: "So Saul *died* for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and *also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him*, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse" (I Chronicles 10:13-14).

That is exactly how serious God regards spiritism! He took the life of Saul for seeking information at a séance!

In His revelation to John, Jesus

warns us of the *growing* influence of wicked spirits. The control of these wicked spirits, described in Revelation 16:13-16, will lead to ARMAGEDDON!

TODAY we are warned, "Do *not* believe every spirit, but TEST THE SPIRITS, *whether they are of God*" (I John 4:1). We need to *prove* whether spirits are good or evil.

Notice what Isaiah wrote: "And *when* they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To *the law and to the testimony!* If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:19-20).

Evil spirits pretend to bring light

The spirits who masquerade as human beings at spiritist séances *pretend* to bring LIGHT and knowledge.

Here is what Paul wrote of them: "For such [ministers who pretend to serve Jesus Christ] are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

James tells us what to do when the influence of wicked spirits is present: "Therefore submit to God. RESIST THE DEVIL and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

You must not obey the devil by yielding to his temptations. Instead, ask God for help. Refuse to yield to satanic influence. Submit to God's correction. Let Him guide you.

The most important chapter in all the Bible relating to our combat with evil spirits is found in Ephesians 6, beginning with verse 10. Here is what we read:

"Finally, my brethren, be *strong* in the Lord and in the *power of His might*. Put on the

whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, *against wicked spirits in high places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand . . . stand therefore, having girded your waist with TRUTH" — Jesus said the *truth* shall make us free (John 8:32). God's Word — the Bible — is *truth*. We need to *understand* it.

Continuing in Ephesians 6:14: "Having put on the breastplate of righteousness" — righteousness is defined as keeping all God's commandments (Psalm 119:172). "And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace" — we must all work, that the good news of the Kingdom of God may reach the whole world.

"*Above all*, taking the shield of FAITH with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" — *absolute trust* in God for deliverance despite all obstacles — "and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the WORD of God" — use the Bible to know what to do and what to resist. The Word of God is the only sword that can vanquish evil spirits, and that can help you overcome sin and produce self-mastery!

"*Praying* always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end *with all perseverance* and supplication for all the saints" — don't slack off in praying, don't become negligent.

PRAY with perseverance, not only for yourself, but for all those whom God has called (Ephesians 6:15-18).

We are all in this battle together! It is a titanic struggle.

Our eternal life depends upon whether we overcome the temptations of the devil and submit to the rule, the AUTHORITY, of God over our lives. It is high time we recognized the evil powers that manifest themselves through spiritism! □