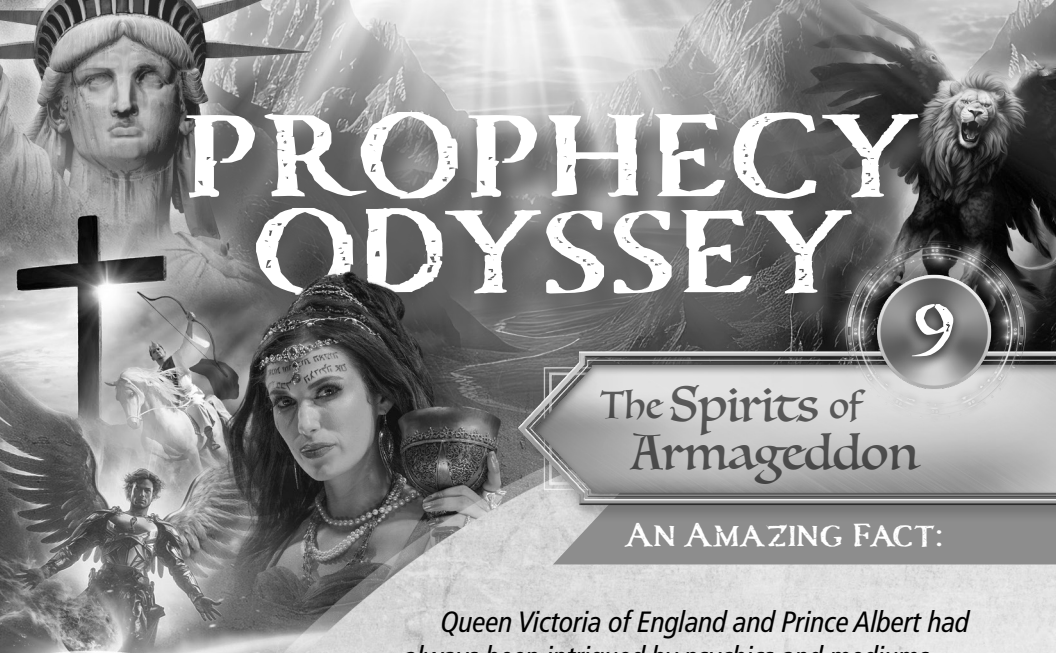




PROPHECY ODYSSEY

9

The Spirits of Armageddon

AN AMAZING FACT:



Queen Victoria of England and Prince Albert had always been intrigued by psychics and mediums. Both participated in seances in the royal residence. After Prince Albert died in 1861, a 13-year-old medium named Robert James Lees claimed that the prince, during a séance, had given him a message for the queen. Upon hearing this, Victoria arranged a séance with Lees, during which he "spoke with Albert's voice" and referred to information that only Albert would know—most notably, a personal pet name he had for her. Victoria continued holding séances at the palace with various mediums and was known to seek her dead husband's advice in political matters.

Saul, the first king of Israel, was desperate to speak with the dead prophet Samuel. But attempting to communicate with the dead was strictly forbidden in the law of Moses.

In his youth, King Saul was brave and loyal to God, but as the years went by, he became increasingly proud, rebellious, and sullen until he drove away God's Spirit. Now, tormented by demons, the paranoid monarch was facing a massive Philistine army preparing to invade Israel. The priests would not advise him since he had killed many of their



number. Moreover, the jealous king had driven David and his brave soldiers from the country.

Thus, in desperation, Saul turned to the dark arts, ordering his servants to find a spiritualist. In disguise, Saul was brought to the secret abode of a witch. After going through her incantations, the sorceress conjured up a spirit claiming to be Samuel, the judge and prophet of Israel. This spirit then gave the king an utterly hopeless message: The next day, the Philistines would defeat Israel, and Saul and his sons would die. And so it was, as the battle raged the next day, the wounded king fell upon his own sword after the Philistines killed his three sons.

What does the Bible say about the dead and ghosts?



When you see a blank, use your Bible to look up the missing word and fill it in.



.....
Was the spirit conjured by the witch really Samuel the prophet?

1 KINGS 22:21, 22

Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ... "I will go out and be a lying _____ in the mouth of all his prophets."

NOTE: God allowed a lying spirit to possess King Ahab's prophets. Since the devil is the father of all liars (John 8:44), this spirit was not a good angel but a demon. However, even a liar will tell some truth if it serves his interests. In speaking the truth about Saul's sin and his looming demise (1 Samuel 28:18, 19), the spirit at Endor was only goading him to despair. And considering God's "departure" from Saul (v. 15), anyone could have predicted the next day's events.

The Lord has warned His people, "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them" (Leviticus 19:31). When Saul went to a witch, he made the fatal mistake of consulting not Samuel but the devil. "So Saul died for his unfaithfulness ... and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD" (1 Chronicles 10:13, 14).



Through what agency will Satan gather the armies of earth to the final battle of Armageddon?

REVELATION 16:14–16

For they are spirits of _____, performing _____, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ... And _____ gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

NOTE: Heaven's angels are called "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14) and help people on the earth. The angels who were cast out of heaven with Satan (Revelation 12:7–9) are also spirits—evil spirits who deceive people by working miracles (Revelation 16:13, 14). They use "all power, signs, and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9) and can even make "fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Revelation 13:13). When psychics claim to be contacting spirits of the dead, they are really in touch with Satan's fallen angels, who impersonate the dead (Isaiah 8:19, 20).



Do the dead come back to converse with or to haunt the living?

JOB 14:21

His sons come to honor, and he does _____ it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it.

ECCLESIASTES 9:5, 6, 10

For the living know that they will die; but the dead _____, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their _____, their _____, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun. ... For there is no work or device or _____ or wisdom in the grave.

NOTE: No! The Bible is clear—a dead person does nothing and knows nothing about what is happening on the earth. Here are more passages showing this truth:

- **Psalms 6:5:** "In death there is no remembrance of You."
- **Psalms 115:17:** "The dead do not praise the LORD."
- **Job 7:10:** "He shall never return to his house."



..... 4 According to the book of Revelation, who has the keys of death?

REVELATION 1:18

*I am He who _____, and was _____,
and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and
of Death.*

NOTE: The Bible says that only Jesus has the keys of death, so we should go to His Word for answers to our questions about death and the afterlife. The devil cannot resurrect anyone.



..... 5 How did God make man in the beginning?

GENESIS 2:7

*And the LORD God formed man of the _____ of the
ground, and _____ into his nostrils the breath of _____;
and man became a living being.*

NOTE: Two things happened at Creation: (1) God formed man from the dust, or earth, and (2) He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus, man became a living soul.



..... 6 What happens at death?

ECCLESIASTES 12:7

*Then the _____ will return to the earth
as it was, and the _____ will return to God who gave it.*

NOTE: What takes place at death is the opposite of what happened during Creation. The body returns to dust, and the spirit, or breath, returns to the God who gave it. The Bible teaches that the "spirit" that returns to God is simply the breath of life, which God breathed into man in the beginning (James 2:26; Job 27:3; 33:4). Psalm 104:29, 30 states, "You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit [breath], they are created."



Where do the dead go when they die?

JOB 21:32 Yet he shall be brought to the _____, and a vigil kept over the tomb.

JOHN 5:28, 29 All who are _____ the _____ will hear His voice and come forth.

NOTE: The dead, both righteous and unrighteous, are now in their graves. One day, they will hear Jesus' voice calling them forth from the grave to reward or punishment.



The Bible makes it plain that King David is saved, so is he in heaven now?

ACTS 2:29 Let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both _____ and _____, and his tomb is with us to this day.

ACTS 2:34 For David did _____ ascend into the heavens.

NOTE: No! The apostle Peter plainly stated that David is dead and buried—not alive in heaven. Furthermore, Hebrews 11:32–40 makes it clear that all the faithful of the ages have not yet been rewarded, but rather, will all be rewarded together (verses 39, 40).



Isn't it true that the soul is immortal and that only the body dies?

EZEKIEL 18:4 The soul who _____ shall _____.

JOB 4:17 Can a _____ be more righteous than God?

1 TIMOTHY 6:15, 16 The King of kings and Lord of lords, who _____ has immortality.

NOTE: We *are* souls (we don't *have* souls)—and souls do die. Man is mortal. Only God is immortal. The widely believed teaching of the undying, immortal soul is not found in the Bible. Rather, the teaching is a manmade falsehood that opens people up to deception.



When will the righteous be given immortality?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53 *We shall all be _____—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last _____. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be _____ incorruptible, ... and this mortal must put on immortality.*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the _____ in Christ will _____ first.*

NOTE: The righteous will be given immortality at the resurrection. The wicked will perish (John 3:16).



How does the Bible consistently refer to death?

2 SAMUEL 7:12 *You _____ with your fathers.*

MATTHEW 27:52 *The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen _____ were raised.*

JOHN 11:11, 14 *Our friend Lazarus _____; ... Lazarus is dead.*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14 *Even so God will bring with Him those who _____ in Jesus.*

NOTE: The Bible often refers to death as a sleep. Death is a state of total unconsciousness, during which 15 minutes or a thousand years seem the same. The dead simply “sleep” in their graves until the resurrection, when all will be raised by Jesus. The teaching that the spirits of the dead are heavenly angels or some righteous, ghostlike entity that can be contacted is without scriptural foundation.



Why does Satan want us to believe that the spirits of the dead are really alive?

MATTHEW 24:24, 25 *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great _____ and wonders to _____, if possible, even the _____. See, I have told you beforehand.*

NOTE: Satan’s first lie to mankind was “you will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). He wants people to believe that the spirits of the dead are alive so that his angels can pose as saints, prophets, and righteous leaders who have died—and so that he can pose as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13–15). Thus, he can deceive people by the millions.

Utilizing these evil spirits is called “spiritism.” It is based on a two-part belief: (1) the dead are alive, and (2) they can contact you or you can contact them. This is one of Satan’s most damaging teachings, yet almost the whole world believes it today!



How effective will Satan’s use of these evil spirits be in the last days?

REVELATION 12:9 *That serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the _____ world.*

REVELATION 18:2 *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for _____ foul _____.*

REVELATION 18:23 *By your sorcery _____ the nations were*

NOTE: By Satan's miracles (sorceries) through his evil angels, he will deceive virtually the entire world.



How does God regard these miracles by evil angels?

LEVITICUS 20:27 *A man or a woman who is a _____, ... shall surely be put to _____.*

1 TIMOTHY 4:1 *Some will _____ from the _____, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

EPHESIANS 5:11 *Have no fellowship with the _____ works of _____.*

GALATIANS 5:19–21 *The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, _____.*

REVELATION 21:8 *Sorcerers ... shall have their part in the lake which burns with _____ and brimstone, which is the second death.*

NOTE: In Moses' day, God commanded that all psychics be put to death. Today, He still insists that sorcery is a work of the flesh for which people will be destroyed at the Second Coming. He warns that when you dabble with psychics, you leave the faith, and He tells us that all sorcerers will die the second death in the lake of fire.



What glorious power does God offer His people?

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

That I may know Him, and the power of His

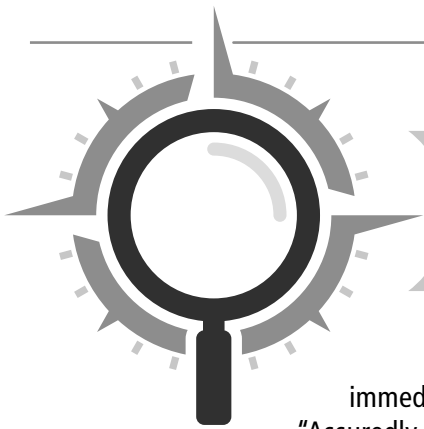
NOTE: Jesus offers us the same power to live righteously that raised Him from the dead. Fantastic! How could we possibly fail with such incredible power given to us—and that with no cost to us?

Jesus, because He loves us, solemnly warns us away from the power and miracles of evil angels and offers to work the divine miracles needed to prepare us for His kingdom. “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

» YOUR RESPONSE

Recognizing that eternal life is granted only to those who fully believe in Jesus, are you willing to surrender your heart to Him now?

ANSWER: _____



FURTHER STUDY

The Thief on the Cross

.....

Did Jesus promise the thief on the cross immediate access to heaven when He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”? (Luke 23:43). The meaning of Christ’s statement can be determined by this important question: Did Jesus Himself go to heaven on that day?

Not according to Scripture! On the day of the resurrection, when Jesus met Mary at the tomb, His words were, “Do not cling to Me, for *I have not yet* ascended to My Father” (John 20:17, emphasis added). Jesus could not have gone to paradise on Friday, the day of His death, if He hadn’t yet ascended to the Father by Sunday!

Why then did Jesus say, “Today you will be with Me in Paradise”? The apparent problem vanishes when you consider that the original Greek manuscripts had no punctuation. Commas and periods were introduced into the text of Scripture by well-meaning translators, who inserted them where they thought they should be—and believe it or not, a single comma can change the meaning of an entire sentence! The Lord’s statement in Luke 23:43 should read, “Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise.” This is what Jesus was really saying. Today, when all seems lost; today, when I do not look like a Lord or King, and after even My disciples have fled; today, although My hands are nailed to a cross, I can still save you!

That thief, along with everyone else who has accepted Christ, will someday realize the promise of the resurrection and be with Jesus in paradise.

WHAT DO THE WORDS “SPIRIT” AND “BREATH” MEAN IN THE BIBLE?

Job 27:3 points out that a person’s “spirit” and “breath” are the same thing. Job further states that this spirit, or breath, is in his nostrils. Remember that God placed the “breath” in Adam’s nostrils at Creation (Genesis 2:7). So, the spirit that returns to God when a person dies is the

breath of life—not a disembodied soul. Never in the Bible is a disembodied soul said to return to God at death.

WHERE DOES THE “SOUL” GO WHEN A PERSON DIES?

At Creation, two things combine to make a soul—body and breath. Until these two things combine, a soul does not exist. At death, these two components separate. The body returns to dust, and the breath returns to God. The soul goes nowhere; it simply ceases to exist.

WHAT IS MEANT BY “ABSENT FROM THE BODY ... PRESENT WITH THE LORD”?

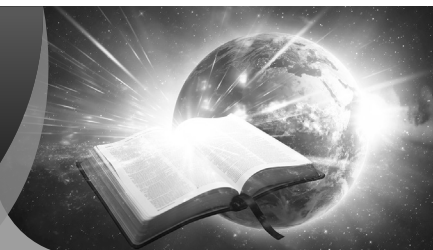
“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). This passage simply affirms that the next conscious thought a believer has after death is the resurrection and being in the presence of the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the apostle Paul connects the experience of “being with the Lord” with the time of the resurrection of the just. There is no consciousness in death and no sense of time. So, when a believer closes their eyes in death, their next sensation will be bursting from the grave with a glorified body and seeing Jesus coming in the clouds.

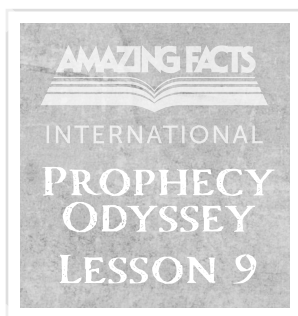
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