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## Near Death Experiences

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### Near-Death Experiences

**Editor's Note: This 1994 article by Dr. Martin covers different information from my Commentary for September 17, 2011 also titled "Near Death Experiences." That Commentary answers two questions presented by a listener of *The Byte Show* program. DWS**

There have been a mass of new books on the market about angels, life after death, out-of-body occurrences, and people supposedly returning to an earthly life after having a near-death experience. I have read many of the accounts and I have also surveyed a variety of reports about numerous encounters with spiritual powers. There is one thing the majority have in common. Their experiences contain teachings that the Bible utterly condemns and quite a number display outright falsities that are as bogus as a three dollar bill. My critique does not mean that those experiencing such things were dishonest and that they were themselves telling lies. Indeed, I have not the slightest doubt that most of these recorded experiences were very real, but the teachings they relate were also very wrong from the biblical point of view.

In the great majority of cases, the experiences present teachings from certain angelic powers that the Bible warns people to avoid. Remember, Satan and his demons are fallen angels. This is where the problem lies. These experiences can be very dangerous if they are not properly understood and dealt with by those who approve of and indulge in them. This report explains the truth in this matter. It is time to let the Bible be the sole guide, and not let false visionary experiences gain our esteem.

The apostle Paul gave Christians a solemn warning that in the last days people would align themselves with the teachings of false spiritual powers. These are fallen angels whom God allows to exist at the present. Though they exist, and God permits it, the Word of God also instructs us to resist these false angelic powers and Satan their leader. **"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"** (James 4:7).

Though these angelic powers are not to be feared since God is on our side, one should not gravitate toward their teachings or desire to be in their presence or to seek their influence. God also created rattlesnakes and they do a lot of good in keeping down the rodent population that could overwhelm the earth without such checks and balances to stem their runaway growth, but I have learned to stay away from the dens of rattlesnakes that one can find in the desert regions of the United States. The same thing applies to

the false angelic powers whom the apostles called **“seducing spirits.”** They are compared to various poisonous serpents that are found in the world. Notice what the apostle Paul taught Christians who live at the end of the age, the age we are in today:

**“Now the Spirit speak expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrine of devils [demons]. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”**

• **1 Timothy 4:1–2**

Notice this important point. Though Satan and his fallen angels are likened by God to the serpents and dragons (Revelation 12:9; 20:2), they in no way look like serpents and dragons in their outward form. The fact that most people think that Satan and his evil angels must appear ugly and grotesque is one of the great deceptions that Satan and his angels want people to believe. The very opposite is the truth. Satan and his seducing spirits actually appear to humans as righteous and glorious spiritual beings that ostentatiously show outward beauty to those who gravitate to them. Indeed, they look like “angels of light.” They are associated with *light*, and often they deceptively display the essence of goodness and they will embrace you with their light. Paul warns:

**“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [whether angelic or human] also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”**

• **2 Corinthians 11:14–15**

Most people are deceived by Satan and his angels into thinking that they are righteous, benevolent, and good. Indeed, often these angelic spirits state that Jesus is truly the Christ and that all must submit to Him. This submission is usually by giving heed to the false teachings of these seducing spirits who claim to come in the name and authority of Christ Jesus. We must be on guard against such spirits. Recall that Christ Himself said: **“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ** [that is, they will admit that Jesus is the Christ]; **and shall deceive many”** (Matthew 24:4). It is the *many* who will be deceived, not the few. Just because the angelic powers, or humans who follow them, say that Jesus is the Christ, that the apostles are proper messengers, and that Mary should be honored, is no guarantee that they are the true agents of God.

The apostle John got more specific in his warning. He admonished Christians to be aware of those people who claim to get messages about Christ and His teachings from the spiritual powers. Before one believes the spirits or their teachings, those spirits must be tried and tested to see if they are telling the truth and that they are really the agents of the Father and Christ. The apostle John wrote:

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone into the world.”**

• **1 John 4:1**

Note again that it is the **“many”** who are influenced, because there are many false prophets who are proliferating throughout the world. They are inspired by false spirits. This is the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

### ***How Do We Recognize False Spirits?***

The sole means by which anyone can know if an angelic power is from God or Satan is to test their statements and appearance by the Word of God, the holy Scriptures. Speaking about these very false spirits known in the Bible as **“familiar spirits,”** the prophet Isaiah gave us precise and clear instructions from God. Notice what the prophet stated:

**“When they shall say unto you, ‘Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter’ [like those speaking in “tongues”] should not a people seek unto their God? for [should] the living [seek] to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they [the**

spirits or their mediums] **speak not according to this word, it is because THERE IS NO TRUTH IN THEM.**"

• *Isaiah 8:19–20*

The central teaching of this passage of Isaiah is that the people of God should not seek the dead! Why shouldn't people seek the dead? The simple reason is: the dead are very much dead and in no way are they alive whether in body, soul, or spirit. The Bible clearly teaches that when a human dies, that human will remain dead (totally without consciousness) until the person is resurrected from the dead at Christ's advent. That's right, the dead are truly dead and they are in no way alive, either in body, soul, or spirit. The dead are incapable of speaking to anyone. Note the Bible teaching:

**"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them [that is, their ability to have memory] is forgotten."**

• *Ecclesiastes 9:5*

**"For In death there is no remembrance of you [God]: in the grave who shall give you thanks."**

• *Psalms 6:5*

**"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; In that very day his thoughts perish."**

• *Psalms 146:4*

The New Testament is equally clear on this matter that humans are mortal in body, soul, and spirit. Dead humans are not alive and immortal. Only Christ has attained to the immortal state after living the life of a human. On this the Scripture is clear. Note what Paul taught:

**"[Jesus Christ] is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; WHO ONLY HAS IMMORTALITY."**

• *1 Timothy 6:15–16*

The only human who has lived on earth and then died and now has immortality is Jesus Christ. All the other saints of God from Adam on through Abraham, Moses, David, John the Baptist, Peter, John and Paul, and all the rest up to today, are in their graves and totally dead. They are completely unconscious. None of them will put on immortality until the resurrection from the dead at the second advent. This is the plain teaching of the Bible.

**"We shall not all sleep [die and go to the "cemetery," which in Latin means "sleeping place"], but we shall be changed, In a moment, is the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised Incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on Immortality."**

• *1 Corinthians 15:50–53*

Immortality is not attained by us humans, even if we are Christians, until the second advent of Jesus Christ to this earth. This means that all people who have died are not alive today.

### ***Encounters With the Dead?***

The reason Isaiah said not to seek the dead through wizards, witches, visions, or any type of medium or channeler, is because it is NOT the dead that one encounters. One actually contacts what the Bible calls **"familiar spirits"** who are fallen angels. They can mimic a dead person with expert precision. They can tell you things that only the dead person and you would know. That is why they are called **"familiar spirits"** for they are often privy to (or "familiar" with) the most intimate details of the dead person's life. When many people today encounter such spirits, most think the dead person is still alive, while the actual fact is, they are in contact with lying spirits.

Now, a full 95% of Christendom today has been hoodwinked by Satan and his angels into believing that a person goes immediately to heaven, hell, or purgatory at death and continues to remain alive. This is pure nonsense. This false teaching has led to major denominations accepting, for example, that Mary the mother of Jesus is now alive and almost like a goddess in heaven who is able to intercede with Jesus on behalf of humans on earth. The biblical truth is, Mary is dead and awaiting the resurrection. Those apparitions seen by people, with a spirit personage saying she is Mary or some other dead person, are visions of lies.

### *Near-Death Experiences*

When people are in a dream or trance-like state near death, it is possible to see visions, and the Bible prophesies that as the end of the age approaches there will be an increase in spiritual dreams and visions (Acts 2:16–19).<sup>1</sup> Not all of these spiritual experiences are evil, but it takes a strong biblical person to rightly divide the evil from the good. Near-death experiences and so-called “out of body” occurrences are actually visions and that is what Paul said they were in 2 Corinthians 12:1–4. And though the Bible nowhere encourages God’s people to seek such experiences, one should not be surprised if God does allow some visions to occur.

I personally have never experienced such things, but I have known close friends and relatives who have. Many of these visions were not evil and they can be signs that God gives to His people to encourage them to know that He cares for them and that they are in His loving hands. Similar visions are sometimes given to people through what we call mental telepathy (to see things in vision of what is happening at a distance). I once knew a man who was not particularly religious, but an honest and decent person, who saw his sister dying in her home while giving birth to a child. A day later, his brother-in-law traveled thirty miles south to tell the man and the rest of the family what had happened, but they already knew the exact details that were given to the brother in that dream/vision. There is no problem with this type of benign vision.

### *But Watch Out!*

In any vision you or anyone might have of the various kinds, if one or more of the personages in the “spirit world” says he or she is a dead relative or friend, or that she is Mary or that he is Peter, Paul or John, then you can know at an instant that the spiritual personality is a lying familiar spirit. What I would do is to tell that spirit to depart from my presence immediately and never come back in the name of and by the authority of Jesus Christ! In no way would I attempt to converse with such a “rattlesnake” who is speaking flagrant lies to me.

Another point. It is most dangerous when people see a great light and a personage within that light with long feminine hair like the “Jesus” falsely portrayed by artists since the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD to look like the pagan gods. Such a long haired spirit IS NOT THE REAL JESUS. Jesus Christ DOES NOT HAVE LONG HAIR. Paul said that human males are in the image of God and Christ and that they should groom themselves like God and Christ and not have long hair like women. It is a shame for a male person to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:3–16).

Indeed, the priests of God who attended in the Temple, which was then considered “God’s House,” could not come into His House without first cutting their hair (Ezekiel 44:20). And though Nazarites could let their hair grow for a period of time under normal circumstances, God still kept such people separate from Him. Nazarites could not enter into God’s House with their hair growing longer than normal. The word “*nazar*” in Hebrew means to be separated. God even separated Nazarites from His presence until they cut

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:16–18:

**“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.’”**

their hair. And Josephus, the Jewish historian as recorded by Eusebius, said in Christ's time Jewish men were noted for short hair (Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel*, IX.9).

Recall this. In the teaching of the Bible the only spirit personalities who were males and having long hair like women were the fallen spirits who come out, of the bottomless pit (Revelation 9:8). Yet there are today major denominations who have had visionaries as their leaders, and when most have seen their "Jesus" in vision, he always has long hair like that of women! These visionaries are not seeing the real Jesus, they are witnessing wicked spirits. God demands certain spirits to wear their hair long as a sign of separation from Him. The fact that these spirits have long hair like the pagan gods Zeus and Sarapis (that the churches display today as "Jesus") shows anyone knowing the Bible that those depictions are evil spirits, and not God or Christ. This is a sign of God to His people for recognizing evil spirits. While having short hair is no guarantee of a spirit's righteousness (there are also other tests), one can know at an instant that a spirit is fallen if that male spirit displays long hair.

Be assured, all we require to identify the true spirits from the false is to read and apply Ephesians 6:10–18. We can then be protected from the bad influence of evil spirits.

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