

Can We Talk With The Dead

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From the earliest times men have tried to talk with the dead. An the hour of sorrow when the heart is desolate, we long for “the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still.” This desire is almost universal, because sorrow at the loss of loved ones and friends is universal.

“There is no flock, however watched and tended
But one dead lamb is there:
There is no fireside, how so ever defended,
But has one vacant chair.”

Sir Oliver Lodge describes death as an adventure and “declared he had frequent talks with the dead”, reports the Montreal Gazette. He also said, “The body is a nuisance to get rid of, there are no dead in the grave-yards. I cannot doubt about that because I am frequently talking with them.”

Another modern theologian says: “Every human being is inherently divine, already immortal. Immortality is not bestowed after death.” He goes on to say that every person, be he Christian, Buddhist or Atheist, is immortal. In other words, they have everlasting life without faith in Christ.

This reminds us of certain words in the third chapter of Genesis. God said: “In the day that thou eats thereof, thou shall surely die.” Out the serpent said: “ You shall not surely die: In the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Verses 4, 5. This really was the same as saying: “ After death you will know more than you know now. You already have eternal life. Nothing can kill you, not even God Himself. His words certainly have that meaning and we find this same opinion expressed in the works of many modern writers.

The Word of God is our only guide. We read in John 3:16 “Whosoever believes in Him (Christ) should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Do you believe that statement in John 3: 16? Do you believe it in all its implications? I do. I believe the only way to live is in Jesus Christ, to receive His gospel and thus be a recipient of that wonderful gift of eternal life that God gives to those who accept Him. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son has not life.” 1 John 1: 4.

Now in Genesis the second chapter, we have a record of the creation of man. How did God make man? What is man? We read in Genesis 2:7 “And the LORD GOD formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”. It took the union of the “breath of life” with the inanimate form to make a “living soul”. It does not say that God gave man an immortal spirit, but it does say that “the LORD GOD formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

That is just what we are made of now. The body is composed of the things we eat - sixteen elements in all. God made man of the dust of the earth. That is true in every particular. A chemical analysis of the human body was given by Dr. F. E. Lawson. He says the average man, 140 pounds, is composed of enough water to fill a ten gallon barrel, has fat enough for seven cakes of soap, carbon for 9,000 lead pencils, phosphorus for 2,200 match-heads, magnesium for one dose of salts, iron for one medium-sized nail, lime to whitewash a chicken coop, and enough sulfur to rid one dog of fleas. The whole could be bought for a few shillings. The value is much the same, whether the body is that of a village idiot or an Einstein.

At creation God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath or spirit of life (Genesis 2:7). At death this process is reversed. The elements of man’s body return to the earth and the breath or spirit of life returns into the hands of God.

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It is clear from all this that before the living could talk with those who have passed away, God must needs restore to them the breath or spirit of life, and raise them from the dead. But the scriptures teach that this will not take place until the Second Coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54). Therefore it is not now possible to talk with the dead. And, there are also strong Bible statements to this effect. Notice Ecclesiastes 9:6 “Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.” Job 7: 10 “He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. Whoever the “spirits” may be who attempt to communicate with man, they are not the spirits of our dead friends. We will meet our loved ones again, not in some darkened seance room, but in the glorious presence of Christ when He returns to gather His people. “And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31. We cannot talk with the dead, because the dead are asleep.

When Jesus came to the house of Lazarus, He said: “Lazarus is not dead but sleeps: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” When questioned more closely, He said plainly: “Lazarus is dead. John 11:11-14. When Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus He wept, not only because Lazarus was dead, but because of the unbelief of those present, and a realization of the hardness of the hearts of those people who later would not only put Him to death, but would also try to put Lazarus to death. John 12:10. “Lazarus, come forth,” He cried. He did not call him from the pit of perdition, or from purgatory, or from heaven, but simply called, “Come forth.” The man that had been dead was now alive. At the command of Jesus, “Come forth”, he arose from the dead.

The condition of repose in sleep is the condition of death according to the scriptures. Death is simply an unconscious state. That is what the Bible tells us in Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished, neither have they any more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun.” My dear friends, never make the mistake that some people make in trying to evade the force of this scripture and say it applies to the body alone. The statement of the scripture is clear “The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.” The part of man that knows now, will not know then. Call death what you want to call it, but the part that knows now will not know then. “The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything. Neither have they any more a reward (in this life, of course) for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished.” Ecclesiastes 9:5.

Do not be afraid of some ghost or some hobgoblin or some “haunt” coming around because of something you might have done to someone in the past. Do not be afraid of them, my dear friends, because “Their love, and their hatred and their envy is now perished.” So, these “spirits” that return are not the spirits of the dead.

Now, do not misunderstand me. We do not claim there are no communicating spirits. But we do deny, on the authority of God’s Word, that such spirits are connected with the dead. They may claim to be the dead, and they may talk with a voice similar to the voice of your dead loved one, and they may say things that you believe are only known to you and your loved one, but that does not prove that spirit is that of your friend who is gone.

That masquerading spirit which claims to be the spirit of your loved one may write the same handwriting as did your departed one, but that proves simply nothing. You remember many prisons are full of men and women who have been too handy with their pens. If a man in the flesh can imitate your cheque writing habits, and is still walking around, is alive and well, in broad daylight, what about some unseen power that knows all about you? Can you trust it?

Do not trust these unseen spirits. God says, “they (the dead) have no more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun.” The dead cannot come back. It is impossible. The dead are asleep in repose, and the spirits that claim to be the dead are not the dead. Ecclesiastes 9:10 “Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goes.” In Psalm 115:17 we read: “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down in silence.” So the dead do not praise the Lord, according to the Word of God.

Not long ago I read an epitaph from a tombstone in a certain cemetery. It read something like this:

“Here lies the body of Solomon Peaze,
It is not himself, but just his pod,
He’s shelled out his soul and gone up to God.”

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Solomon Peaze may have been a good man, but friends, he did not “shell out” his soul and go up to God. Solomon Peaze may have been a good man, but Solomon Peaze is not in heaven, Solomon Peaze is sleeping, and, some day, if saved, he will go to be with God, but he is not there now. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down in silence.” Now let us read Job 14: 21 “His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.”

Friends, did you ever think of that? If the dead know what their children are doing, don’t you think it would keep them in misery and suspense all the time? If a mother should see her daughter going down the primrose path of destruction, do you think she would be happy? No. This belief is not according to the Word of God, for it says: “His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.” In Psalm 146:4 we read (speaking of man in death): “His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish.”

So, friends, it is impossible to talk with the dead. How can you talk to a man who has no memory of joy, no love, no hatred, no envy, no praise for God, no knowledge of good or evil, and whose every thought has perished? Impossible. Death is called a sleep 54 times in the Bible. Now read Job 14:12 “So man lies down and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, not be raised out of their sleep.”

Then when will they arise? When the heavens pass away, at the Second Coming of Christ. Revelation 6:14; 2 Peter 3:10 “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life.”

Let me earnestly press home the question to every reader Do you have the Son of God in your heart? If not will you surrender to Him now? See Him upon the cross dying for your redemption. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. That whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:14, 15.