

# Let Freedom Ring!

## 10. America's Most Famous Haunted House and a Stairway to Nowhere



Scripture: Job 7:9, 10

### *Introduction*

The Winchester Mystery House is America's most famous haunted house. It was built over the course of nearly 40 years by Sarah Winchester, the wealthy widow of William Winchester, son of the man who founded the Winchester rifle empire. Sarah's early loss of her only baby sank this multi-talented Eastern society favorite into severe depression, seclusion, and near madness. Fifteen years later Sarah had not yet recovered from the loss of her only child when her beloved husband also died. She dealt with this new blow in a way that was

**fashionable for a lady of standing in her day. Sarah resorted to a psychic in Boston for help.**

**The woman—often referred to as the “Boston Medium”—informed Sarah that her family was under a curse. The medium claimed that the spirits of the people and animals killed or injured by the rifles of her late husband upon which her continuing fortune were founded were enraged. They were seeking to avenge their deaths on the maker of the weapons that had killed them. The only way these spirits could be appeased, claimed the medium, was for Sarah to travel to the West, buy a piece of land and begin constructing the angry spirits a house. It seems there was a shortage of suitable haunting quarters for departed spirits. So long as Sarah continued to build the spirits a house and serve as the landlady to ghosts, the spirits would do her no harm. In fact, the spirits promised the grieving widow that so long as she continued to build for them, she herself would never die.**

**Mrs. Winchester had inherited a fortune of 20 million dollars at her husband’s death. She also owned nearly half of the stock in his firearms company, which provided a tax free income of \$1,000 a day—an enormous income stream for the late 1800’s. She was wealthy. She could do as she pleased. She would be thought eccentric rather than merely mad.**

**In 1884 Sarah moved to California and purchased an eight room farmhouse in San Jose. She began to build. For the next 38 years, 16 carpenters worked 24 hours a day, 365 days a year building the most peculiar house ever constructed. Day and night the sound of sawing and hammering went on and on. At midnight each evening, the bell in the bell tower was rung to summon the spirits to the séance room to meet with Sarah. At two in the morning, it was again rung as a signal for the spirits to depart. During those early morning hours the plans for the sprawling maze of disjointed rooms that spread outward and upward from the original farmhouse were imparted to Sarah.**

**The orders from the spirits included:**

- doors that open into walls**
- a cupboard with only ½ inch of storage space**

- toilets with clear glass windows looking into them, only one with a lock—and that lock on the outside rather than the inside of the door
- 40 bedrooms that the widow slept in at random
- doorways so tiny that only the tiny 4 foot 10 inch Sarah could fit through
- 47 fire places, most of whose chimneys did not penetrate the roof to let smoke out, since Sarah believed ghosts would come in by the same passage the smoke went out
- and a stairway that has seven switchbacks with 44 steps, yet only goes up nine feet total—perhaps designed to slow down the spirits.

Other peculiarities woven into the ongoing construction included a fascination with the number 13. For example:

- in the 13<sup>th</sup> bathroom—the only one with a shower—are 13 windows
- one of the sinks has 13 drain holes
- there are 52 sky lights—four times the number 13
- the grand staircase has 13 steps
- thirteen palm trees line the driveway
- one chandelier designed for 12 lights has a 13<sup>th</sup> added just to match the number scheme
- and as a final touch Sarah had her will written into 13 sections that required 13 signatures to complete.

The house that was ever being built grew in size and in legend over the course of the nearly four decades Sarah lived. Before the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, it had soared to seven stories. The top three stories collapsed during the quake, trapping Sarah in one of the 40 bedrooms. Because she slept in a different bedroom every night, it took her workers over an hour to find and freed her. She took it that the spirits were displeased with how the building was unfolding and were expressing their anger. She boarded up the front 30 rooms of the mansion and always slept in the same bedroom each night after the quake.

In all, it is estimated that 600 rooms were built, torn down and rebuilt again. To this day an exact count of the number of rooms in the approximately 160 room Victorian mansion seems to shift depending on

who does the counting, and when. The house contains approximately 10,000 windows, 3 working elevators, gold and silver chandeliers, two ballrooms with a third under construction and a beautiful garden. A lifetime of creativity, energy and expense poured into each detail. While Sarah never had a master blueprint, she was the designer of each room—sketching them onto pieces of paper and even onto tablecloths as guides for her carpenters and craftsmen according to the instructions given by the spirits she summoned nightly to the séance room.

Decade after decade the strange maze continued to unfold as the wealthy widow poured her fortune into the uncanny tangled-room house that was her hope of immortality. She had to keep building. If she didn't, the spirits she summoned each midnight would seek their vengeance. So long as Sarah obeyed the spirits' every bidding, she would live forever.

### *I. Ancient King Resorts to a Medium*

Sarah Winchester is not the only human to have ever resorted to someone claiming contact with the spirits of the dead. The Bible has its own tale of haunting. Only this occurred with a king rather than a widow, and in a cave at a place called Endor rather than in a mansion in San Jose.

The 28<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of First Samuel is the eeriest story in all the Bible. In it we find a troubled king, facing powerful enemies in the next day's battle slipping from his war camp by night. He makes his way through the darkness to the lair of a witch—an ancient medium or psychic. He comes in search of the spirit of Samuel, a prophet of God whose council he had repeatedly disobeyed during the time the prophet lived.

The disguised and distressed king enters the unholy haunt and coaxes the hesitant “retired witch” to call up the spirit of the dead prophet. By means of her uncanny arts, the witch calls forth a ghostly specter robed in a prophet's mantle. This spirit alerts the witch to the true identity of the king. Then it delivers a decree of doom: King Saul and his sons will die by the hand of their enemies in the coming battle. Their army will be

**defeated. The monarch will soon join the spirit among the restless, wafting shades of the netherworld.**

**The shock of the summoned spirit's words fells King Saul like the blow from a club. The worried witch and the king's servants rouse Saul enough to eat his final meal. He returns to the battlefield demoralized and leads his army to the predicted defeat. But King Saul is neither captured and executed nor slain by the hand of the enemy in the heat of conflict as the spirit foretold. Instead, mortally wounded by arrows and fearing capture and torture, the king begs his armor bearer to kill him. When the armor bearer refuses, the king falls on the blade of his own sword and ends his life. So ends the strange and much older tale of a king who courted a witch, meddled with a spirit, and met with disaster.**

**What really happened that night long ago in the witch's lair at Endor? What happened with Sarah Winchester? Do their stories make any difference for us today?**

**Many who read the story of King Saul have struggled to grasp the reality behind Endor's shifting shadows. The basic issue is simple enough: Was the spirit that appeared dressed in the prophet's mantle actually the departed prophet Samuel? Or was it something else? Was troubled King Saul the only one who arrived at that weird interview in disguise? Or did the spirit also come in disguise?**

**We need to know clearly what the Word of God teaches concerning the matter of the spirits of the dead reappearing to communicate with the living either directly, or through the agency of mediums, witches, necromancers, and psychics. Why is it important that we know? It is important because the same scene that occurred in the witches cave at Endor--and perhaps in Mrs. Winchester's séance room--is being played out in varied forms all around us today.**

**A few years ago, a study conducted by a major university revealed that four out of ten Americans believed they had personally been in contact with the spirit of a dead friend or relative. Another study suggested that 75% of widows and over 85% of parents who lose young children in death experience similar spirit contacts.**

**Popular movies, television shows, books and workshops offer the same sorts of experiences King Saul and Sarah Winchester encountered. The**

shadows of Endor lengthen to our very doors. We live in an age that has sinned away the voice of God, rejected the Bible as a guide for life, and found itself facing powerful, planet-threatening forces it cannot deal with alone. We live in an age of spiritual hunger that feels itself abandoned by God and reaches beyond to the material realm to grasp the hand of whatever supernatural power presents itself.

When the darkness and shadows come swirling, we need a light. The teaching of God's Word has ever been the safeguard for all who will take heed. This evening we turn to the pages of the Bible for light. We will examine three beams of Bible truth that cast light into the shadows of Endor's gloom and reveal the true source of similar phenomenon in our day. We will briefly examine the following:

- First, what the Bible has to say about death.
- Second, what the Bible says about attempts to contact the dead.
- And third, what the Bible says about Satan, the Master of Disguise.

Our primary passage is the story of King Saul and the Witch of Endor from the 28<sup>th</sup> chapter of I Samuel. In addition, we will note a variety of passages throughout the Bible in our quest to understand this story correctly. The key truth we will uncover in this story is this:

**The spirits who impersonate the dead are demons in disguise.**

## *II. What the Bible Says About Death*

The story of King Saul going to the Witch of Endor begins with these words:

**“Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah.” *I Samuel 28:3***

Samuel the prophet was dead. Here is where we must begin. What does the Bible have to say about the condition of man during death? Let's briefly review its teachings before we go further.

**In Ecclesiastes chapter 9, verses 5 and 6 God's Word says:**

**“For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing: they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that is done under the sun.”**

**And again in verse 10 of the same chapter:**

**“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave where you are going, there is neither working, nor planning, nor knowledge, nor wisdom.”**

**Samuel was dead. We are not left to wonder what that involves. The Bible tells us plainly. The dead don't know anything. The dead don't feel anything. The dead cannot act, plan, or think. They have no more share in anything that happens under the sun. They have no wisdom.**

**Samuel was dead. He didn't know, feel, or think. His thoughts had perished.**

**Some would object and say that while Samuel's body may have indeed died, his spirit had surely gone to glory and was in heaven praising God. But a later king of Israel gives a different picture of the condition of the righteous who die. In the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah, verses 18 and 19, the righteous King Hezekiah writes this prayer to God:**

**“For the grave cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praises; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. It is the living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today...”**

**And again in Psalm 6, verse 5 the relationship between God and the dead is spoken of in this way:**

**“No one remembers you (O God) when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave?”**

**The 115<sup>th</sup> Psalm, verse 17 describes the realm of death in these words:**

**“It is not the dead who praise the Lord, those who go down into silence.”**

**The Word of God is very clear in its repeated teachings in this matter. Wherever the prophet Samuel was—he wasn’t thinking, feeling, or praising God. He couldn’t make plans, give advice, or impart knowledge or wisdom to those still alive. Death is thoughtless, praiseless, and silent. The dead really are dead.**

**Jesus gave us the clearest illustration of the felt experience of being dead that we who are still alive can know. In the gospel of John, chapter 11, our Lord uses the phrases “Lazarus is asleep” and “Lazarus is dead” interchangeably. In a parallel account of Jesus raising the synagogue ruler Jairus’ daughter from death, He again uses the metaphor of sleep in describing death. Apparently common, ordinary sleep is the nearest thing to the felt experience of death that we who are still alive can know.**

**If someone falls asleep during a sermon, can they tell you later what was spoken? Of course not! During the time they are asleep, they are quite unconscious to both God and man. Death is like sleep, Jesus says. Lazarus sleeps. Lazarus is dead.**

**Jesus comparison of death with sleep is not original to Him. This same comparison appears over 50 times throughout the pages of the Bible. But the sleep of death is not eternal. There is a getting up time when those who are dead awake. It is called the resurrection. The book of Job, chapter 14, verse 12 speaks of the waking up time in these words:**

**“...so man lies down and does not rise; till the heaven are no more, men will not awake or be roused from their sleep.”**

**And again in Daniel, chapter 12, verse 2, there is mention of the sleeping dead—both the righteous and the wicked—who await the future resurrection. It says:**

**“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”**

**In the gospel of John, chapter 5, verses 28 and 29, Jesus says that an hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear the voice of Jesus Himself and wake up and come forth. Those who love Jesus and**

**chose to obey Him in this life will come forth to the resurrection of life. Those who did not love Jesus and rejected Him in this life will come forth to a resurrection of judgment. Until then, the dead sleep in their graves and cannot communicate with the living.**

**The prophet Samuel was dead. His thoughts had perished. He was asleep in the dust of the earth with David, Hezekiah, Daniel and all the righteous dead. He was unable to communicate with either God or man until the resurrection at Jesus' future Second Coming. This beam of Bible truth shining into the lair of the Witch of Endor sets our understanding of the old story on an entirely different track than it might otherwise take. It allows us to do more than the witch, or King Saul, or Sarah Winchester did. It allows us to look beyond mere appearances and discern actual spiritual reality.**

### ***III. What the Bible Says About Attempts to Contact the Dead***

**But let's go on. Again from the Bible's story of the scene in the witch's cave at Endor:**

**“Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.”**

**Mediums and spiritists were the ancient equivalent of our modern psychics, channelers, and necromancers. They made their living by powers derived through their contact with the spirit world—which included alleged contacts with the dead. King Saul's earlier actions in driving such practitioners from his real brings us to the second great beam of Bible truth that must be brought to bear on the shadows of Endor. What does the Bible say about attempts to contact the dead?**

**In short, God says, “Don't even try. If you do, you will die.”**

**Leviticus 20, verse 27 says:**

**“A man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.”**

**Among His own people, where the law of God was also the law of the land, it was a capital crime to engage in attempts to contact the dead. The guilty were responsible for their own death.**

**Again in Deuteronomy chapter 18, verses 9 through 13 we are given a complete listing of forbidden occult activities that in one way or another involved a belief in contact between the realm of the dead and the living. It says:**

**“When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God.”**

**Notice what this list of forbidden occult practices includes:**

- **Child sacrifice to idol gods**
- **Witchcraft**
- **Interpreting omens**
- **Casting spells**
- **Being a spiritist or a medium**
- **Attempting to call up the dead.**

**This unholy chorus of occult practices is clearly on the rise in America in our day. It is championed by a new emergence of the pagan past tampering with spirits that God strictly forbade.**

**The book of Revelation, chapter 12, verse 7 through 9 tells of a great war in heaven when the great red dragon, a symbol of Satan, was cast from heaven to earth along with 1/3 of those angels once loyal to the Creator God. These angels turned devils have long shared planet Earth with us. Such demons seek contact and control of human minds, hearts and bodies.**

**They don't really care whether we think they are the innate powers locked within our own minds, or the spirits of long dead warriors and famous people from the past, or beings communicating to us from flying saucers, or the channeled spirits of dolphins or other totem animals. They will assume any shape or form. They will spin any web of ideology or theology. They'll work inside or outside of any movement they can in order to suck the unsuspecting in. They'll even work within the borders of Christianity where people pay more heed to the supernatural than to the clear teachings of the Bible. So long as we will pay more heed to these spirits than we do to the Word of God which warns us against tampering with them, and exposes them for what they actually are, these deceiving spirits are satisfied.**

**Who taught that man could sin and not really die, but would go on to a higher state of being and become godlike? It was the Devil himself, of course. This occurred in the Garden of Eden when mankind first fell. In the third chapter of Genesis the tempter hissed:**

**“You will not surely die. Eat of the fruit, and you will be come as God, knowing good and evil.”**

**In the bewildering array of modern forms of spiritualism, these same two most ancient lies run like railroad tracks. They teach that mankind is naturally, or can become, gods. They do not believe that those who die are genuinely dead. These two ancient lies are multiplied in a thousand forms. They allow Satan and his demons access and influence among all who accept them as true.**

**The Bible teaches something quite different. It is very clear on who alone possesses immortality—the quality of having life in one's self without dependency on anyone or anything else. I Timothy chapter 6, verse 16 says God...**

**“...alone is immortal, and lives in unapproachable light.”**

**Only God is immortal. We are not God. Our hope of immortality comes only through our attachment to the Source of Life. That source is Jesus Christ himself. II Timothy 1, verse 10 says that Jesus...**

**“...destroyed death and brought immortality and light for us through the gospel.”**

**If we have the Son of God, we have eternal life. If we do not have the Son of God, we do not have life. Apart from Jesus, we will surely die like branches broken off from the vine. The eternal life we receive from Christ through faith in His death for our sins is bestowed in promise the moment we believe. It is received in actual experience at the Second Coming of Christ when the righteous are called from their tombs in the resurrection.**

**Yet many within Christianity itself teach and believe that those who die are not really dead. If they are not truly dead, why shouldn't they return to communicate with the living?**

**We live in the Age of Endor. The witch has crept inside Christianity itself and speaks even from pulpits and at gravesides. The occult is all around us in its most alluring and shocking forms—both the Christianized and pagan forms. God says, “Don't even touch it! Leave it absolutely alone!”**

**King Saul had earlier paid heed to such warnings as we have noted in these matters. He had been zealous to drive all who resorted to contact with the spirits of the dead from his land. Now he sought out the very evil he had formerly opposed.**

**A question is appropriate here: Why would God forbid such activities?**

**Having seen what the Bible teaches about the unconscious state of man in death, the answer is obvious. God forbids occult activity of any kind for the same reason He forbade Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To violate God's command exposes us to a powerful, seductive, ruthless, deceitful and utterly evil intelligence that seeks our bondage and destruction.**

**Isaiah chapter 8, verse 19 says:**

**“When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?”**

**There is a stairway in the Winchester Mystery House that does up several steps, and ends in the ceiling. It goes nowhere at all. This is symbolic of the whole dangerous diversion of the occult. God knew our**

dealings with the alleged spirits of the dead would lead to such costly dead ends—both in this world and in the world to come. Those who seek the occult sources for advice in our day will be ruined in the end as surely as was King Saul. God says, “Leave these things strictly alone.”

#### ***IV. What the Bible Says About Satan, the Master of Disguise***

An important question remains: If the dead really are dead and cannot communicate with either God or those who are still alive, if God has pointedly forbidden any attempt to contact the dead in order to keep us from being deceived, what was it that appeared to King Saul in the witch’s cave at Endor? If we can find clear Bible answers to this question we will know what lies behind similar phenomenon in our day.

Let’s return to the witch’s lair at Endor and pick up the story of King Saul again. The Bible says:

“Then the woman asked, ‘Whom shall I bring up for you?’ ‘Bring up Samuel,’ he said. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, ‘Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!’”

Some who have read this passage have said, “The witch cried out because Samuel really did appear, and she had been expecting something else. She was frightened by the actual appearance of Samuel’s spirit.”

We have seen the Bible clearly teaches the prophet was dead and could not appear. But even without this broad based Bible understanding, the commentator couldn’t be correct. The witch didn’t say, “Help, its Samuel!” She said, “Help, its King Saul!” She didn’t cower back from the ghostly specter. Instead she turned in fear toward the disguised king, the former witch’s bane. The thing that appeared immediately let the witch know the true identity of the king.

**Think it through. Would God allow Samuel to be called forth by a witch in a manner He had sternly forbidden? Would the godly prophet Samuel stop to warn the witch before talking with the king? Of course not! The prophet had doubtlessly urged King Saul on in ridding the land of Israel of such traffickers in the alleged spirits of the dead when he was alive. Why should he suddenly switch sides and become a witch's confidant?**

**There is no agreement between good and evil. Whatever appeared in the gloom of Endor's cave and held council with the witch before turning to Saul had nothing to do with the real Samuel.**

**Verse 13:**

**“The king said to her, ‘Don't be afraid. What do you see?’ The woman said, ‘I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.’**

**‘What does he look like?’ he asked. ‘An old man wearing a robe is coming up,’ she said.**

**“Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.”**

**What was it that convinced King Saul that the spirit was that of the prophet Samuel? It was the witch's description of an old man wearing a robe. Probably King Saul had seen Samuel in that very robe many times when he was alive. He may have even helped bury the godly old prophet in it when he died. This authentic detail in appearance was proof enough for Saul. The king knew it was Samuel. But he was dead wrong.**

**“There is a way that seems right to a man, but it ends in death.”**

**King Saul had been badly mistaken many times before:**

- **He thought David was plotting to steal his throne and attempted repeatedly to kill him.**
- **He thought all the priests in the town of Nob were conspiring to aid David in seizing the throne and slaughtered a whole town of them.**
- **He thought his son Jonathan should be killed for tasting a bit of wild honey during a battle, even though Jonathan was the hero**

who had won the day—and the army had to step in and rescue the prince.

- Saul thought he was justified in offering the priestly sacrifices before a battle in place of the tardy Samuel.
- Saul thought he was justified in disobeying direct orders and sparing the life of the King of Amaleck and saving the best of the flocks and herds when he had been instructed to destroy all.

In short, King Saul is notable in Scripture for making poor and hasty judgments based on appearances and then sticking with them tenaciously. If King Saul knew the thing in the cave was Samuel, that is plenty good cause for us to take a second look.

Something did appear in the cave, however. It consulted with the witch. It made a prophecy that came at least partially true. It talked like Samuel might talk. It looked like Samuel might look. It apparently wore the prophet's customary robe. What was it? To answer this crucial question we need to see what the Bible has to say about Satan, the Master of Disguise.

In the third chapter of the Bible's first book, Genesis, we meet Satan for the first time at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. He is disguised in the form of a beautiful winged serpent. In that appearance, he told the very first lie on record in the Bible. God had told Adam and Eve that if they ate from that tree, they would die. Satan hissed, "You will not surely die!" So in a disguised form, the Great Deceiver preached the first sermon in history on the innate, inborn, undying nature of the human soul.

The book of Revelation, chapter 12, verse 9 identifies this ancient serpent with Satan. That chapter says that when Satan fell from heaven, he drew a third of the heavenly angelic stars from the sky—those angelic beings like himself who joined him in his rebellion against God's government. These angels turned demons fought against the archangel Michael's loyal angel forces in heaven. They lost that great battle and were cast down to this earth. Here their leader ensnared our race in Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in Eden. So Satan and his angels gained access to our planet.

**We first meet Satan disguised as a serpent. In II Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 14 and 15 we are given a look at the other end of the closet where Satan keeps his disguises. This passage speaks of false human teachers pretending to be apostles, then it says:**

**“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.”**

**We must allow that King Saul deceived the witch initially by wearing a disguise the evening he came to her lair. She didn't recognize him for who he was until the spirit she called up alerted her. If a man who stood head and shoulders taller than any other man in Israel could put on the clothing of a common soldier, stoop a little, and deceive a witch, doesn't it stand to reason that a lying spirit could put on the robe and appearance of a dead prophet and fool a king?**

**The Master of Disguise can hide himself in the form of anything from a snake in a tree to an angel of light. He is, simply put, a shape shifter. He can alter his appearance at will. His servants—those fallen angels that make planet Earth their home from Eden onward—have their dark master's ability to deceive by appearance, tone of voice and the intimate knowledge of those who were once alive.**

**What have these multitudes of “demons in disguise” been doing here among us over the course of so many centuries? Plainly a large part of their ongoing energies have been directed toward capitalizing on Satan's original lie that the dead don't really die, but move on to a higher sphere of wisdom where they gain godlike knowledge that they can communicate to the living. They have provided the supernatural manifestations behind all systems of thought and worship founded on the belief in contact between the dead and the living.**

**The monumental scope of their activities in this regard is staggering. Many gods of the ancient peoples were held to be the deified spirits of dead heroes who had once been human. Idolatry in most of its forms rests firmly on the belief in the conscious state of the dead. As the ancient people of God were about to enter into Canaan after 40 years of wilderness wandering, they fell into idolatry at a place called Baal Peor. Psalms 106, verse 28 interprets that experience. It says:**

**“They joined themselves also to Baal Peor and ate sacrifices offered to the dead.”**

**I Corinthians 10, verse 20 says:**

**“No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.”**

**The sacrifices to the dead at Baal Peor were sacrifices offered to demonic powers impersonating the dead. A demon in disguise was at Endor impersonating the dead prophet Samuel. Demons in disguise were being worshipped at Baal Peor, and in every form of worship in the ancient past where the supposed spirits of the dead were sought by the living. Demons in disguise are abroad in our world today carrying on a similar work. The ancient lie that man does not truly die first told in Eden is crucial to the success of their work and their influence and hold on the hearts and lives of the unwary.**

**Further, the Bible plainly teaches that supernatural manifestations will greatly increase in the days before Jesus’ return. There is a very good chance each of us will bump into the work of these spirits. Some may have already done so. The apostle Paul told young pastor Timothy:**

**“The Spirit clearly says that in latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”**

*I Timothy 4:1*

**The first teaching Satan ever hissed in Eden was that those who sin don’t really die, but live on as gods in some exalted, more wised and powerful state. Any pagan, psychic, or allegedly Christian teaching or practice that echoes this claim is demonic. Great world religions numbering multiplied millions are built on the belief that the dead are conscious and can grant aid to the living. Consider the following examples from the religious world in the light of the Bible’s teaching that those who have died are truly dead and cannot communicate with either God, or those who are still alive:**

- **The Reverend Sun Moon of the Unification Church claims that the 12 apostles and various Old Testament saints appeared to him in vision telling him things that are important for believers to know today.**

- **Joseph Smith, first prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints made a similar claim that the spirits of those we read of in the Bible appeared to him in vision giving him the authority to set up the temple system and the priesthood.**
- **The Catholic Church emphasizes prayers to God made through the mediation of the Virgin Mary and the departed saints.**
- **Protestant preachers declare the dead loved ones go directly to heaven to be with God at the point of death, then wonder why so many of their widows hold ongoing communion with what they believe to be the departed spirits of their husbands.**
- **Other great world religions numbering multiplied millions are built on the belief that the dead are not really dead, but are conscious and can grant aid to the living.**

**All these fall before the Bible's simple declaration:**

**“For the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything.”**

**The worst still lies ahead. Revelation 16, verses 13 and 14 speak of a worldwide occult revival that will flood planet Earth shortly before Jesus' return. It says:**

**“Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole earth to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”**

**In the Western World and in America for the past century and a half, the supernatural has been pushed to the background by Darwin's claims of a materialistic explanation for existence that needed neither God nor the supernatural in any form. Now into that vacuum is sweeping a marked renewed interest in the supernatural. We live in an age when claims of the supernatural are heating up. They are with us on every hand. The shadows are lengthening. The darkness is strengthening. Endor is everywhere.**

**How will the spirits of demons achieve their aims of drawing together all branches of religious and political activity in opposition to God's truth and to his people? The Bible says it will be by means of lying signs and wonders. The magnitude of the coming supernatural display is shown in Revelation, chapter 13, verses 13 and 14. The Word of God says:**

**“And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the world.”**

**It is a renewal of the Battle of the Gods, whether the ancient prophet Elijah called down fire from heaven on top of Mount Carmel to turn the hearts of God's straying people back to Him again. Only next time it is the false power that displays the wonder-working might. Satan's side calls down fire from heaven to deceive.**

**Make no mistake. There is actual power behind supernatural deceptions. In Moses' day Pharaoh's magicians turned their rods into serpents even as Moses' rod turned into a serpent. In New Testament times the false wizard Simon of Samaria performed many miraculous signs before Philip arrived preaching the gospel. A Bible-quoting Devil once transported the Lord Jesus Himself to the pinnacle of the temple, then to a mountain top where all the kingdoms of the world could be viewed in an instant.**

**Satan has power. God has more.**

**Moses' rod turned serpent swallowed up the rods of Pharaoh's magicians. Peter saw through the pretences of the wizard Simon of Samaria. Jesus conquered Satan in the duel in the desert by a simple reliance on the Word of God and refusing to cooperate with Satan's suggestions. There is something greater than any miracle. It is a simple and firm reliance on the clear teaching of the Bible. Its teaching that the dead are truly dead and cannot communicate with either the living or with God until the resurrection is a shield we need. It is absolutely essential now, and in the days still ahead.**

**Lets turn a final time to the Bible's own evaluation of the story of King Saul's encounter with the spirit in the cave of the witch at Endor. There**

is no need for us to guess what really occurred there. The book of First Chronicles, chapter 10, verses 13 and 14 settle the matter. The Word of God says:

**“Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the Lord.”**

True prophets are an appointed way of inquiring of the Lord. Spirits claiming to be departed prophets are not. The King James version of this verse identifies exactly what appeared in the witch’s cave at Endor. It says King Saul died, “...for asking counsel of one who had a familiar spirit to inquire of it...”

The Bible’s own inspired evaluation of the incident at Endor says nothing about actual contact with the spirit of the dead prophet. The troubled king only sought out a witch who dealt with a familiar spirit. A familiar spirit is the Old Testament word for a demon.

In Saul’s case the threatened warning of Leviticus 20, verse 6, was quickly fulfilled. There God said:

**“I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.”**

We don’t have to wonder what really happened at Endor, or what is really going on with similar phenomenon in our own day. The Bible says the dead are truly—though temporarily—dead. Until the resurrection at Jesus’ Second Coming they know nothing and can tell us nothing. The Bible says we must never attempt to contact with any occult power—including those claiming to speak to the living from beyond the grave.

All such deceiving spirits—however closely they resemble our dead loved ones, however great their display of miraculous powers—are in fact demons in disguise. The end of the road that leads to Endor is death without waking until the resurrection of the damned.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy the Bible’s most complete listing of prohibited occult activities appears. Then an alternate means of making

**contact with the supernatural is recommended. After warning us away from what is harmful and deceptive, God does not leave us in a vacuum. He offers us something far better. Deuteronomy 18 says:**

**“The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery and divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”**

**Who is the prophet like Moses God would raise up to whom we should listen? It is Jesus Himself, of course. Through Him is our only safe contact with the supernatural world. He is our help and hope.**

### ***Summary/Appeal***

**How sad that Sarah Winchester turned to a medium as the means of attempting to deal with her grief over the loss of her little girl and her husband! If she had turned to the God of the Bible and relied on its teachings instead, she would have found all the comfort, hope and truth necessary. Instead, like King Saul, she resorted to a medium who opened a channel for the grieving widow to the realm of deceiving spirits. These spirits gave her the same false promise of endless life that Satan gave to Eve at the tree in Eden. “You will not die.” In fervent belief in this lie the wealthy widow followed the spirits’ promptings, sought to appease their threatened anger, and hoped by intentional cooperation to obtain escape from death.**

**In the end, she met the same fate as King Saul. In the year 1922, Sarah Winchester died in the house she had built for the lying spirits. They had promised she would live forever, so long as she kept on doing their strange biddings. That was a promise they could not keep.**

**When news of Sarah’s death spread through the house, it reached the carpenters. They simply lay down their tools and walked away. Today the peculiar mansion remains as it was the moment Sarah’s builders learned of her death. There are still spots visible where the workmen stopped hammering nails halfway in. The long lie of the spirits Sarah**

**trusted was over. After her death, the furniture in the house was auctioned off. It took eight weeks of six truckloads a day to remove it all. Today America's most famous Haunted House has been restored and is opened for tours for the public. It stands as a monument to the fatal folly of giving heed to the alleged spirits of the dead.**

**But what of us today? How can we avoid taking the stairway that leads to nowhere? How can we escape the bewildering maze of the spirit realm so aptly demonstrated in the wealthy widow's haunted mansion? How can we deal with the death of those we love and even our own deaths with confidence?**

**There is only one way. We must have Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He only has the demonstrated power over death itself—both for Himself and for His followers. Jesus raised people from the dead when He walked among us. And after the third day in the tomb, He rose from death himself. He holds the key to the tomb for all who look to Him in faith. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**And when will that life be bestowed? I Thessalonians 4, verses 13 through 18 picture the great waking up time clearly. They say:**

**“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.**

**“According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.**

**“After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”**

**We all face death as did King Saul and Sarah Winchester. When we do, there are two places we can look. We can either look to the dark and twisted ways of the spirit realm where demons in disguise wait to entrap the unwary and enslave the ignorant. Or we can look forward and upward to the Bible's true teaching and comfort: that great resurrection morning when Jesus calls His own to Himself. Then we will be reunited with Him and with those who have also placed their faith in Him, even though the silence and slumber of death should part us from those we love for a time.**

**Which will you choose? If you would say, "Lord Jesus, I will receive you and the eternal life you offer to me in the gospel" please raise your hand now.**

*(Raise your own hand and give those present a chance to do the same.)*

**Let us bow our heads together as we close this evening. Be sure to get your copy of the leaflet for this evening before you leave. It contains added information on this vital subject that may be of help to you.**

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**Closing prayer:**

**Dear Father in Heaven,**

**We thank you for the clear teaching of Your Word this evening concerning those who have died that provide a shield to all who receive them. We thank you for the life you offer to each here in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves and those we have loved and lost into your wise and kind hands and look forward to the great day when we may meet Jesus and those now sleeping in their graves when He returns.**

**In His name we pray. Amen.**

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