

[Everything You've Always
Wanted to Know About Spiritism
But Didn't Know Who to Conjure Up](#) - Lloyd W. Cary

Is there life after death? Do the living talk to the dead? Do departed spirits give advice and comfort to those remaining behind? How can we know? Is there a source we can go to for ultimate truth?

[Sins of the Fathers](#) - Darren W. Cary

Can a person blame others-even God-for his own calamities? It is true that God is a "jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation of those who hate [Him]" (Exodus 20:5), but what does that mean?

[Question&Answer](#) - Vance A. Stinson

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Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About

Spiritism

But Didn't Know Who to Conjure Up

Is there life after death? Do the living talk to the dead?
Do departed spirits give advice and comfort to
those remaining behind? How can we know?
Is there a source we can go to for ultimate truth?

by **Lloyd W. Cary**

You'll never believe who I talked to last night."

Who?"

My Uncle Harry."

"But Uncle Harry has been dead for twenty years!"

Yes. I know."

Is there life after death? Do the living talk to the dead? Do departed spirits give advice and comfort to those remaining behind? How can we know? Why is there so much interest in spiritism today? Is there a source we can go to for ultimate truth?

Spiritism may be simply defined as the belief that the "dead" communicate with or influence the living. It is a phenomenon in which a person seeks information from the "dead"; knowingly or unknowingly worships them; or becomes the medium or instrument of an evil spirit who is actually a fallen angel, or demon. Broadly speaking, spiritism encompasses many related activities, including:

Astrology: The study professing to foretell the future and interpret the influence of the heavenly bodies upon the destinies of men. It is perpetuated today by the reading of horoscopes.

Divination: The art or act of fortune-telling or the revealing of occult knowledge by means of some alleged supernatural agency. This includes fortune-telling, tarot cards, water divining, and so on.

Glossolalia: The unintelligible speech or sounds that are currently claiming to be a gift of the Holy Spirit. These speech patterns are commonly associated with a trance state or certain schizophrenic syndromes. Many primitive tribes practice glossolalia.

Necromancy: The art of divining future events by allegedly communicating with or

conjuring up the spirits of the dead. Also called black magic or sorcery.

Satanism: The worship of the devil himself. Satan-worship is frequently characterized by profane mockeries of supposed Christian rites and symbols.

Sorcery: The supposed art of using supernatural power or influence over others through the assistance or effects of spirit beings. Lead practitioners are often called wizards, conjurers, diabolists, or magicians.

Witchcraft: The practice of magical or irresistible influence through spells, incantations, potions, or charms. It is sometimes called Wicca, and proponents often break it down by into "White Magic" and "Black Magic" to give it a tone of innocence.

Voodoo: A form of belief in which a supreme god rules a large pantheon of local and tutelary deities, deified ancestors, and saints who communicate with believers in dreams, trances, and ritualistic processions, and who can be influenced by magical rites. Also called vodoun.

The common thread weaving through all these abominations is some secret force or power other than the God of the Bible that can predict, influence, or control the affairs of men. God calls this, simply, idolatry.

These and similar pursuits are currently deluding multitudes-including many sincere people claiming to be Christians-into violating the commandments of the Almighty Creator God against such demonic activities. Society is being subtly seduced into believing spiritism is innocent "fun." Halloween, for example, is nothing more than thinly disguised spiritist activity, and yet is endorsed by many churches today.

Behind each spiritist activity lurks the treacherous power of Satan and his demons, who untiringly seek to seduce unsuspecting souls-mostly by means of miracles or omens. A close examination of the claims of spiritist outlets soon reveals, in the final analysis, that they invariably set aside the laws of God in favor of "awe-inspiring manifestations" that pose as truth: manifestations that are in reality the unclean output of lying demons. Spiritism is an abomination to God and is classified in the Scriptures with idolatry, whoredom, and bestiality. Spiritism is the most deceptive of all evils, and because of its spectacular demonstrations, will in the last days deceive some of the very elect. People credulously assume that all miracles are of God. "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24). And, if it is possible, it will happen!

Spiritual Diagnostics

The Bible is like a super-sophisticated x-ray machine: it sees inside us and tells us what is wrong. There is only one reliable method to determine whether the power

behind a miracle-working group is of God or of Satan, and that is to compare its beliefs and practices with the law of God and the writings of the prophets: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word [the Scriptures], it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). If any spiritual activity fails this infallible "spiritual diagnostic," you can know that the organization's supernatural activities-be they ever so wonderful and attractive-are nothing more than the camouflaged products of one or more demons. In other words, all wonder-working leaders who oppose the commandments of God are preachers of heresy and darkness.

Watch

The Church of God, International takes this opportunity to warn all readers to beware of all forms of spiritist deception. Satan is even now making massive inroads into current Christian thinking under the guise of the various spiritualist and charismatic movements. Be especially aware of influential leaders working "mighty miracles" supposedly under the banner of Truth.

Here are some things to note:

1. The dead are unable to communicate with the living and are in fact asleep in their graves awaiting the resurrection. The beings who speak in the seance (spiritualist meeting) are, therefore, not the dead, but are either frauds or evil angels posing as departed loved ones. The dead, according to the Scriptures, are asleep in their graves and are unable to communicate with the living. (For the sake of brevity, many texts that follow are not printed out in their entirety. Take up your Bible and look them up for yourself.) Job 7:9,10; 14:10,12; Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

2. Spiritism in every form is strictly forbidden in the Holy Scriptures. Witches, wizards, and sorcerers were found in many heathen lands, including Assyria (Nahum 3:4), Babylonia (Isaiah 47:9; Daniel 2:2), and Egypt, but were forbidden in Israel. Leviticus 17:7; 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

3. Satan and his agents are able-and indeed are scheduled in the last days-to pose as the ministers of truth and righteousness. Indeed, Satan's greatest deceptions will come from "within the Christian church." The Bible repeatedly warns us that false prophets and ministers of darkness will abound in the last days. How subtle and how dangerous are Satan's tactics. Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Jude 4.

4. Evil spirits invariably rely heavily on miracles and supernatural demonstrations to carry through their deceptions. Jesus Christ forewarned that this would be the case in the last days. Miracle workers are to be found in nearly all the world's religions, but a miracle is not a reliable sign of truth. Again, the only reliable sign of truth is this: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word [the Scriptures], it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). If a

preacher's message is not in line with God's law, and if it contradicts the testimony or doctrines of the Bible, then that preacher must not be taken seriously-regardless of what he says and how many miracles he is able to perform. Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:21,22; 2 Thessalonians 2:8,9; Revelation 16:13,14; 19:20.

5. Evil spirits are not slow to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 8:29). Jesus warned, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:4,5). A confession of this kind from the lips of a miracle worker is not evidence that he or she is working under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Mark 3:11; Luke 4:33,34,41; Acts 16:16,17.

6. It is a fact that many professing Christians who are currently doing miracles "in the name of Jesus" will not be in the first resurrection because of their blatant disobedience. They are referred to in the Scriptures as "workers of iniquity." That is, they are blatant sinners-law breakers-because "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, KJV). Although many claim to "know the Lord," God will tell them, "I never knew you." Matthew 7:21,23; Luke 13:24,30; 1 John 2:4.

7. Those who willfully reject God's commandments and the plain statements of the prophets lay themselves open to the deceptions of "lying spirits" speaking through human mediums. 1 Kings 22:21,23; 2 Thessalonians 2:9,12.

8. The power of deception will be so great just prior to Christ's return that entire nations will be taken in by sorcery, devil worship, and miracle-working false prophets. What will be the staggering extent of such a deception? How will it be accomplished? How will it end? We are told in God's Word that all nations will be deceived in this way. Notice how all these errors are classified under the heading of "sorcery." "[F]or by your sorcery all the nations were deceived" (Revelation 18:23). Can you say with absolute assurance that your beliefs are founded on God's Word-the Bible? Do you believe what you believe "because the Bible says so"? Is your faith in God in line with what His Word teaches? Or are you like millions of deluded souls blindly accepting the erroneous doctrines of devils? We must shun all doctrines that have little or no foundation in truth and which are absolutely obnoxious to God Almighty. 1 Timothy 4:1.

9. Willful disobedience of God's commandments is a grievous sin and is punishable by death! People grow bold because the Most High appears to be withholding His judgments; but He will punish evildoers just as surely as night follows day. This is described in His law and amplified by His prophets. Exodus 22:18,20; Leviticus 24:14,16; Deuteronomy 28:15,16,18; Micah 5:12; Malachi 3:5; 1 Chronicles 10:13,14; Revelation 21:8.

10. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is only given to those who obey God (Acts 5:32). How our "enlightened" society hates that word obey today! Persistent sinners are certainly not channels of God's Holy Spirit. The main purpose of

salvation, Scripture tells us, is that we may be saved from sin [disobedience] and death; and that we may live holy and righteous [that is to say, obedient] lives (Psalm 119:172), to the glory of God. He is calling many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). That is why Christ came to this earth and that is what the Bible teaches. Those reveling in spiritism will not inherit eternal life. Instead they will perish in the lake of fire along with multitudes of persistent sinners who refuse to repent and give up their sinful ways. Acts 5:29,32; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:35; Psalm 51:1013; Revelation 21:8; 22:15.

Oh, by the way, getting back to your long-lost Uncle Harry. Now that you've read this article, you must realize that it wasn't really your Uncle Harry you talked to last night. Do you know who you really conjured up?"

Yes. I know."

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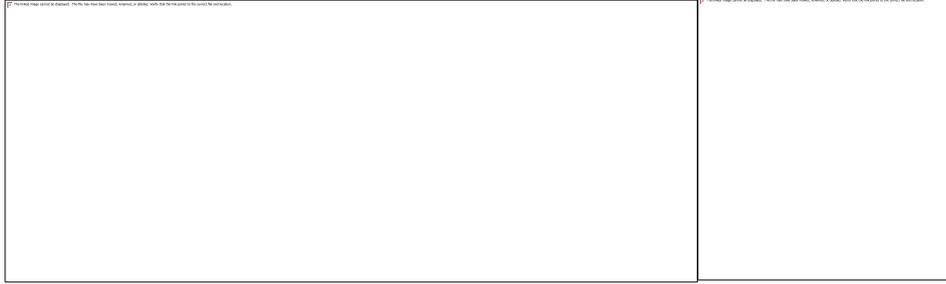
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Questions & Answers

by Vance A. Stinson

What does 'in the sides of the north' mean?

Question: I have tried to understand the meaning of the phrase "in the sides of the north" in Isaiah 14:13. I have read the surrounding verses and have some ideas, but I am not sure. Can you help me?

K.V., Brockville, Ontario, Canada

Answer: Isaiah 14:13 is part of a "proverb ["taunt"-NIV] against the king of Babylon" (Isaiah 14:4), and part of the larger "oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw" (Isaiah 13:1, NIV). The verse reads, "For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.'"

The latter part of the verse may be rendered this way: "I will also sit in the mountain assembly in the farthest north." In the ancient world, it was commonly believed that a mountain assembly for the gods was located in the farthest north. However, the phrase "sides of the north" refers to Zion, the holy mountain and city of God, in Psalm 48:2. It is likely that the verse refers to both ideas since the passage is about an individual who seeks to elevate himself above all that is worshiped.

The entire passage (verses 421) is a poetic description of the prideful self-exaltation of the king of Babylon. In the backdrop is the pattern of pride and vanity that caused Satan to become the devil. The point of verse 13 is that "Lucifer" (verse 12), because of his ever-swelling pride, sought to exalt himself and his throne above all other principalities and powers. "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds," he says in his heart; "I will be like the Most High" (verse 14).

Only two Persons in the Godhead?

Question: If there are only two Persons in the Godhead (the Father and the Son), how can one be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

B.B., Colorado City, Texas

Answer: Jesus said to His disciples, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19,20).

The expression "in [eis, "into"] the name of" denotes "in recognition of the authority of (sometimes combined with the thought of relying or resting on)" (W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 772). Baptism is performed in recognition of the Father's authority, which is administered through the mediatorship of the Son and confirmed by the reception of the Holy Spirit.

The fact that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mentioned together does not prove that all three are in precisely the same category. Paul speaks of "God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels" (1 Timothy 5:21), and no one would argue that the angels belong to the same category as God the Father and Christ the Son. Similarly, the fact that the Holy Spirit is mentioned along with the Father and the Son does not mean that the Spirit is the third Person of a triune Godhead.

Since the expression Holy Spirit is consistently used in reference to the presence and power of the transcendent God in the natural world, it is not surprising that Jesus Christ, who has been given authority in heaven and earth (the natural and supernatural worlds), should mention the Holy Spirit in this context. In heaven, the Father gives power to the Son. On earth, the expression of that power is called the "Holy Spirit," "Spirit of God," or "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9,11). It is the presence and power of God, both the Father and the Son.

-End-

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Sins of the Fathers

Can a person blame others-even God-for his own calamities? It is true that God is a "jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation of those who hate [Him]" (Exodus 20:5), but what does that mean?

by Darren M. Cary

Long ago, while Israel was under Babylonian captivity, there was a proverb in the land: "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2, NIV throughout article).

It is a strange saying to our ears, but it is still quite vivid and colorful. I imagine a distinguished, old father munching on a handful of sour grapes, expressionless. Meanwhile, his son across the countryside suddenly senses the horribly sour taste in

his mouth-violently gasping and spitting!

It's an amusing proverb, but the Israelites considered it to be a fatalistic truism. Their suffering and captivity, they said, was the result of their fathers' sins. Stiff-necked and stubborn, Israel had the problem of blame-shifting. "I don't deserve this-something or someone else is responsible for these curses."

This was an attitude God did not appreciate. "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son-both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die" (verses 3,4).

Where did the Israelites get this idea of "It's not my fault"? It certainly was convenient, because no one wants to openly admit to guilt. It's uncomfortable, painful. And they went to great pains to avoid it.

Over time, even Holy Scripture was used (that is, misused) to support their lacking sense of personal accountability. They misinterpreted a part of the Third Commandment: "You shall not bow down to them [idols] or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:5,6).

The Israelite captives pointed to the Law, or Torah, to relax their conscience. But in reality, the Law taught quite the opposite!

It was made clear to Adam in the beginning that he would suffer the consequences of his own actions. "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you [not "your great-great grandchildren"] will surely die" (Genesis 2:16,17).

God taught the lesson to Cain as well after Cain's offering was rejected: "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4:7).

It must have been the blinding power of self-justification that kept the captives from considering these words of Moses: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin" (Deuteronomy 24:16).

The real truth expressed within the Third Commandment is that the effects of sin are serious and long-lasting. A father's example affects his children; his sins can hurt them.

We have modern proverbs of our own that more accurately convey the actual

meaning. "Like father, like son" or "Like mother, like daughter" captures one possible meaning. A family of crooks often produces children who are crooks-merely because they've been reared as crooks. It's all they know.

Also, the effects of sin and wrongdoing are rarely short-lived. Its penalties live on. What if a child from that family of crooks decides to repent, to change his lifestyle and break the pattern? His name will undoubtedly be tainted in his community, but time will wash that stain away-even if it takes three or four generations to do so.

Clearly, though, the Law never taught that it was okay to shirk personal responsibility.

Through Ezekiel, God answers the Israelites' problem proverb: "But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?" (Ezekiel 18:27-29).

God put the blame back where it belonged. Arrogance and self-justification do not go over well with God, because that glossy, "prettied up" self-image is a false image.

Jesus' intolerance for that attitude was evidenced when Jesus shouted repeatedly, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" (Matthew 23).

God has always reacted negatively to those who refuse to humble themselves (James 4:6). Sometimes God has to do the humbling for us. He would rather not, but sometimes He has no choice.

"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord.

"Repent and live!" (Ezekiel 18:30-32).

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