

**Is There a
REAL
Spirit World?**



Is There a **REAL** Spirit World?

How do we account for the many aspects of extrasensory experience that physical scientists are at a loss to explain? What about communication with the dead through mediums and receiving messages from another world by “trance channeling”?

THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One

“CHANNELING”: WHAT IS IT? 1

Chapter Two

COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEAD? 4

Chapter Three

IS THERE A REAL SPIRIT WORLD? 9

Chapter Four

THE “SPIRIT GUIDES”
OF CHANNELERS 13

Chapter Five

DREAMS, DREAMERS
AND THE SPIRIT WORLD 19

“CHANNELING”: WHAT IS IT?

THOSE who have experienced it say “channeling” is essentially contact between a person and a spirit being. Critics, however, see it differently.

Channeling is a popular phenomenon. Books, magazines, movies and television shows promote channeling.

Interest has grown to the extent that some schools are experimenting with teaching preliminary meditative and self-esteem techniques just in case some children discover inner abilities that could lead to channeling and other psychic activity.

Why is channeling gaining so much interest?

Because it claims to be a personal ticket to a new and improved self, a mental evolutionary step to a new age!

“Channeling” is, in reality, an ancient occult art. The term has been applied to many different mental activities in recent years, including techniques to build the conscious mind. “Trance channeling” is the popular form of channeling now in vogue.

What Channeling Is

Let’s examine a typical channel (one who practices channeling). He or she gathers an audience, chants a few lines or in some meditative way puts his or her conscious mind into a neutral state that is receptive to a particular “spirit guide.”

The channel may go limp for a moment. Then the extraordinary happens.

The person suddenly seems filled with an entirely different personality. The spirit is now allegedly working in the individual.

The spirit usually claims to be some exotic being, often from the past, although some spirits claim to be "from the future," from another planet, or even to be the voice of a plant or animal.

The "channel" will engage in a captivating dialogue with the audience. It may personally give a message to each listener, make a diagnosis of illness, or deliver eloquent "wisdom" and fantasy.

How is all this to be explained? We asked Dr. Thelma Moss, a University of California parapsychologist, to comment on trance channeling. It is "a new name for old activity," she observes. "It goes back to the mediums and way back to the oracles at Delphi."

Some have spent large sums, given up homes, abandoned loved ones to pursue the advice of channels.

Channeling, then, is twentieth century mediumship.

Dr. Moss further explains that channeling is "the exact opposite of developing the conscious mind... [it] means putting aside the conscious mind while bringing forward the unconscious mind."

Many hypnosis sessions, meditative "higher consciousness" techniques and therapeutically assisted methods in the "human po-

tential movement" may be considered a form of channeling.

Being a part of a channeling experience can, for some people, be persuasive. Some have spent large sums of money, given up homes, moved across country or abandoned loved ones to pursue the advice of channels.

Dr. Moss, who has studied many channels, says: "The

chief danger of channeling is you come to believe the messages are true. You rely on them because they seem to come from a higher source, a personal contact with the gods."

Channelers, and those who heed their message, inevitably restructure their lives to conform to the message brought from this "higher consciousness."

"The impressive sensation of channeling causes people to rely on it more and more, turning them inward, and making them crazy, causing dissociation—they are no longer in touch with reality or in control of themselves," continues Dr. Moss.

We also asked Dr. Moss about the quality of the information that comes from channels. She replied: "Most channeling material is in the person's unconscious mind. I've never received information that appeared to be helpful and genuine. Most answers are vague or nonsense, simply fabrications of the person's mind... the person shapes the knowledge."

Some cases such as past-life recall, out-of-body experience and new unexpected knowledge or abilities, however, seem to defy adequate scientific explanation.

Are these a deeper type of channeling that goes beyond the unconscious mind?

And what about people who become capable of super physical or mental feats? Or who relate visions or knowledge seemingly outside time and space, such as astral visions or time travel?

How should channeling, or at least its deeper levels, be evaluated? And what about the channelers' teaching that the spirits are people who have "passed over" to the next world?

COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEAD?

FEW questions are as vitally important as that of man's nature and ultimate destiny. What happens after death? *Is there a life beyond the grave?* If so, is it possible to communicate through channeling, or by other means, with those who have "passed over"? Can a person "make contact" with dead relatives and friends, or famous persons in history?

Virtually all civilizations since the beginning of history have possessed some form of belief in an afterlife. And not surprisingly, attempts to communicate with the dead go back to earliest antiquity.

The belief that the spirits of those who have "passed over" can make contact with the living is known today as *spiritualism* or *spiritism*. Modern spiritism had its birth in Hydesville, New York, in the middle of the last century—specifically, March 31, 1848.

It is an interesting story. For several nights, mysterious rappings and strange noises had kept the Fox family awake. As far as John Fox could determine, the disturbing sounds could not be attributed to mice, rats or the wind. History is full of "haunted houses" of this type. But in this case, events took a unique turn.

On March 31, John Fox's two young daughters playfully issued a *challenge* to the noises—a challenge to *repeat* their

own patterns of raps. Remarkably, their exact patterns *were* repeated—seemingly tapped out by invisible hands! The Fox sisters had established a *dialogue* with the unseen presence causing the noises!

News of the goings-on in the Fox house spread rapidly, creating considerable stir. Neighbors were invited in to hear the “conversations.” Many became convinced that the Fox sisters were in actual contact with the dead.

Modern spiritism was born.

Within a few decades, the controversial movement had gained millions of followers around the globe. Among them were many famous persons, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—creator of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes—and Sir William Crookes, the English physicist.

Messages from the “Other Side”?

Death, the spiritists or channelers declare, is merely a door to continuing life—in the “spirit world.” Moreover, they said, we can contact, that is to say establish communication with, those on the “other side.”

This contact, historically, has usually been attempted through the agency of a medium at a seance. A seance (French for “a sitting”) is a meeting for the purpose of producing or witnessing spiritistic phenomena. The medium (usually a woman) is the focal point of a seance and acts as the organ of communication with “departed spirits.”

Seances became the rage in fashionable society throughout Europe and America in the last century. In brief, a seance is conducted as follows:

A small group of people sit in a circle around a table, usually holding or at least touching hands. The room is quiet and dark. The medium then goes into a trance or semitrance, a state resembling deep hypnosis.

While in the trance, the medium purports to convey messages from the spirit world to those around the table. The messages often come by way of a “control,” a departed spirit that associates itself with the medium and passes on messages from other spirits.

Sometimes the medium simply repeats to the participants around the table what she is told by her “control”—or

describes what she sees in the spirit world. At other times, the control spirit or another spirit speaks directly through the medium.

On occasion, the participants themselves hear spirit voices coming from outside the medium, often from somewhere overhead. In rare instances, a spirit creates a vague visible form for itself and partially materializes—creating a ghostly apparition for all to see!

Many have come away from seances convinced of the authenticity of the phenomena. Others have suspected fraud. What is the truth?

Is communication between the “two worlds” possible?

The famous stage magician Harry Houdini (1874-1926) sought an answer to this question. He threw out challenges to mediums to prove to his satisfaction the authenticity of their activities. He claimed he could duplicate by purely physical means any effect they produced in the course of a seance.

During the course of 30 years of witnessing alleged examples of communications with the “next world,” Houdini declared he had not “found one incident that savored of the genuine.”

What Houdini often did uncover were extremely clever frauds and skillful illusions perpetrated by charlatans and unscrupulous mediums on trusting victims.

Darkened rooms provided the perfect setting for fraud. Concealed microphones, wires, mirrors, projectors, ventriloquism, sleight of hand and other ingenious techniques combined to produce a variety of spectacular effects convincing to the gullible. Houdini caught scores of embarrassed mediums red-handed in such frauds.

Based on his investigations, Houdini concluded that

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Tolstoy . . .

spiritism was riddled with trickery, deceit and fraud. Other investigators have agreed with him that the percentage of fraud is high.

But are *all* mediums fakes?

By no means!

There are serious mediums—or channelers, as they are called today—who have stood up under the most *rigorous* scrutiny of investigators. Despite meticulous testing, they have given no evidence of any type of fraud. Are they, then, really in contact—as they believe—with *the dead*?

Spirit Photographs

The art of photography—in its infancy when modern spiritism was born—soon came to the aid of spiritists in convincing the public of life beyond the grave.

Hundreds of photographs have been taken over the decades purporting to show vaguely materialized spirits actually caught by the camera! Many spiritists consider such photos to be the outstanding proof of their beliefs.

A large percentage of these photos, however, have been shown to be bogus—the results of “doctored” or retouched negatives, double exposures, trick lighting effects or other deceptions.

But others have stood up to the tests of investigators.

But again—are these photos *proof* of life after death?

Electronic Communication

And now—a spectacular further development in the world of spiritism.

Experimentation by a group of scientists and psychic investigators has reportedly produced an electronic device enabling the operator to engage in two-way, telephone-like conversations with the dead—a type of Ouija board with a voice! You may have seen newspaper articles about this alleged “breakthrough.”

It was the great inventor Thomas Edison who first conceived the possibility of instrumental communication with the dead. But experimenters had to admit failure in establishing an electronic link with the spirit world—until the late 1950s.

In 1959, the Swedish filmmaker and painter Friedrich Jurgenson played back tapes of bird calls he had recorded in a Swedish forest. To his astonishment, he heard what he believed to be his dead mother's voice on the tape! This began a series of experiments to record spirit voices. Hundreds of voices have appeared on his tapes.

Other researchers have claimed to have recorded the spirit voices of Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, Tolstoy and many other famous men and women of history.

Many years of such research and experimentation have now produced the two-way machine previously mentioned. The device tunes in on certain radio frequencies that provide a channel over which "those in the higher planes"—the reputed dead—can convey their messages.

There is no apparent reason to doubt the sincerity or the integrity of those who have worked on this project or of other researchers in the field of EVP (electronic voice phenomena). It is unlikely that the voices have been faked in any way. There are no indications of fraud or hoax. It is apparent that the researchers are in actual voice contact with spirit entities.

By what means does the device work? "It does work," remarks one of its inventors, "but we don't fully know those underlying laws yet." He also admits that mediumship is involved to some degree. "It [the device] requires an operator with a very special type of psychic energy."

Are these the voices of the dead?

Some investigators have suggested that these reputed "messages from the dead" might actually be coming somehow from the *subconscious* of the machine's operator himself, and not from the "other side." The same explanation has often been put forward to account for the messages of mediums in seances.

Many other explanations have also been suggested. But again, *not all* spirit phenomena can be adequately explained away by such theories. There remain certain manifestations for which no entirely satisfactory explanation has been offered—other than *actual spirit contact*.

IS THERE A REAL SPIRIT WORLD?

IS THERE a world of spirits or spirit beings? Is there a devil?

How *do* we account for the many areas of extrasensory experience that physical scientists are at a loss to explain?

Not so long ago a major British newspaper reported: "Increasing numbers of people who believe themselves to be possessed by an evil spirit are being given exorcism by Church of England clergy."

This—in the 20th century?

Invisible forces?

In this mixed-up society, many people are bored and frustrated. They become "seekers." They involve themselves with astrology and psychic activities of various kinds. They want to "experience" a spirit world.

But they forget—or may never have realized—that some who have given themselves over to powers they do not understand have not come out unscathed!

It is time we come to understand the truth about this much misunderstood subject. Is there an unseen world—a world of spirit forces behind certain manifestations of physically unexplainable events, certain forms of mental illness, horrifying and unnatural acts of violence masquerading as

insanity—and even religious miracles that masquerade as acts of God?

The ONE Source of Knowledge

Physical scientists cannot fully explain what has gone wrong in human civilization. Psychologists and psychiatrists too are puzzled.

Religions, of course, have speculated about the causes of evils. Isn't it time we looked at the *one* reliable source of knowledge about spirit and spiritual matters—the revelation of the Creator *God* to mankind? Of course you can reject this revelation—which we know as the Holy Bible—but then what answer do you have to the very questions that have puzzled thoughtful scientists?

God reveals in his written revelations of essential spiritual knowledge that he is spirit (John 4:24). He is the Supreme Creator Spirit Being. He is called the “Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9).

The Bible claims to be the revealed word of God—a revelation of essential knowledge not otherwise accessible to men. Jesus of Nazareth said that man should live by its every word (Matt. 4:4). Jesus also said that the Bible cannot be broken—cannot be disproved either by internal or external evidence (John 10:35). It is inspired directly by the Creator (II Tim. 3:16). It is God's “handbook” wherein he reveals understanding to man that could not be obtained any other way. The Holy Bible is the final authority on questions of origins, purposes, and whether there is a devil and demons.

The Source Speaks

The earliest part of the Bible was originally written in Hebrew. It reveals the origin of a superpowerful spirit being called the devil. He did not begin as the devil, but as an angel of light. But he let vanity enter his mind and rebelled against his Maker. He became Satan.

In Hebrew the word Satan means “Obstructor” or “Opposer.” This should give us a clue as to Satan's attitude, which he has infused into human civilization.

In the Greek New Testament, Satan is defined as the “tempter,” the “evil one,” the “accuser,” the “prince of the

power of the air,” the “father of lies,” the “ruler of this world.” (For references, see Matthew 4:3; I Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 13:16, 38; I John 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18; Revelation 12:10; Ephesians 2:2; II Corinthians 4:4; John 8:44; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.)

So there is an unseen world of spirits—good and evil. There is not only a Creator God, but there are lesser spirit beings, two thirds of whom administer God’s government in obedience, and another third (Rev. 12:3-4) under leadership of Satan, who are in a state of rebellion.

Let’s notice the very first encounter of a human being with the world of spirit. God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion . . .” (Gen. 1:26). God had created man to be like him—to develop character and ultimately share eternity with God in the very Family of God.

Shortly after this relationship was established, Satan appeared to our first parents as a cunning serpent. Notice his approach: “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1).

Immediately, Satan began putting questions and doubts in the first woman’s mind: “Has God really withheld something from you? Perhaps God is not fair.”

Then after hearing the woman tell of the death penalty for sin, Satan told the woman: “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (verses 4-6).

So now, Satan was in effect calling God a liar—accusing God of withholding the forbidden fruit in order to keep man down and prevent him from becoming “as gods.” Satan also appealed to physical lusts—the tree looked appealing—and to

Since many scoff at his very existence, it is easy for Satan to get under their guard . . .

intellectual vanity: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The Devil and Job

Satan is the accuser. He is also the "father of lies." So he will often accuse God or God's true servants—whom Satan hates—of being guilty of the very things that he, Satan, is guilty of.

In the first two chapters of the book of Job we have a remarkable account of Satan's activities and method of operation.

Notice! When God pointed out to Satan that the patriarch Job was a good and upright man, what did Satan do?

Satan wanted to tear down and destroy Job and all that he had. Satan resented Job's character and his promised destiny—to rule under God over the earth and to "judge" the angels and Satan's demons (I Cor. 6:3).

So he immediately started to accuse God's servant Job. Satan implied that Job had wrong motives. Satan challenged God: "But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:11).

God responded: "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand." Then follows the account of how Satan smote virtually all that Job had.

Later, Satan gained permission and began to destroy Job's health—bringing him to despair and to the brink of death. Yet, notice that Satan can only go as far as God allows him. He can do nothing without God's permission (Job 1:12 and 2:6).

Satan is a real being. So are his demons. There really is a spirit world. So now we ask, what role do spirits play in channeling or communicating with the dead?

THE “SPIRIT GUIDES” OF CHANNELERS

MANY HAVE WRITTEN to us inquiring about channelers, mediums, seances, spirit photography, “ghosts” and related phenomena.

The Bible sheds a great deal of light on this subject. It reveals that there *is indeed* a world of spirits! But the Bible warns of the dangers of humans dabbling in that world. For example:

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits [the “control” or “guide” that associates itself with a channeler, witch or medium], neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them . . .” (Lev. 19:31).

“There shall not be found among you any one . . . that useth divination [obtaining secret knowledge by supernatural means], or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer [one who presumes to enquire of the dead]. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord . . .” (Deut. 18:10-12).

Again: “They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination . . .?” (Ezek. 13:6-7.)

And in the New Testament—in Acts 16—the apostle

Paul cast out a spirit of divination from a young woman.

Now notice another biblical example of just how seriously God takes spiritism and its modern form—channeling!

In I Samuel 28, we find an account of an ancient “seance” involving King Saul of Israel. Saul desired to know about the outcome of a great battle with the Philistines in which he was about to engage. He inquired of God, but received no answer (verse 6). God refused to listen to Saul because of his rebellious attitude.

Saul then defied God’s clear commands in the law and ordered his servants: “Seek me a woman that hath a *familiar spirit*, that I may go to her, and enquire of her” (verse 7).

Saul was told that there was a woman at Endor that had a familiar spirit. She is referred to as a *witch* in some translations, as a *medium* in others.

So Saul disguised himself and went to the woman by night and said: “I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee” (verse 8). The practice of “consulting the dead” was rife among ancient Israel’s heathen neighbors. Saul had been influenced by their practices.

Now notice what happened:

The medium asked whom she should bring up. Saul said: “Bring me up Samuel” (verse 11).

The woman then saw a form that she believed to be Samuel. Saul himself did not see the spirit, for he asked the woman to describe it to him. As a result of the description, Saul “perceived that it was Samuel” (verse 14).

The spirit—still invisible to Saul—then spoke directly to Saul and prophesied of his impending defeat at the hands of the Philistines (verses 18-19).

The spirit that appeared was not Samuel. Samuel was *dead* (verse 3), and “the dead know not any thing” (Eccl. 9:5, 10). At death, one’s thoughts perish—as the Bible plainly teaches (Ps. 146:4). The idea that souls are immortal does not come from the Bible. Rather, the Scriptures state that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4). (Write for a free copy of our booklet *What Is Man?*)

Moreover, Scripture tells us that God refused to answer Saul by prophets (I Sam. 28:6). But Samuel was a prophet

(Acts 13:20). The spirit that spoke to Saul thus could not have really been Samuel.

What had appeared to the medium and spoke to Saul was simply a form that *looked like* Samuel—a demon *impersonating* Samuel! It was *deception*, however sincere the medium may have been. There is *no other* explanation within the teachings of the Bible!

Saul *assumed* the demon was Samuel—just as spiritists *assume* they are contacting the spirits of the dead.

Saul *sinned* by seeking a witch. God takes the sin of spiritism very seriously. "So Saul *died* for his transgression . . ." (I Chron. 10:13).

Works of Darkness

Demons are spirits of darkness. Spiritism is a work of *darkness*. Little wonder that it is normal spiritist practice to conduct seances in a *darkened* room. Strong light, say spiritists, hinders communications with the spirits. This fact in itself should tell them something about *what kind of spirits* they are dealing with!

One might well have asked of channelers and spiritists in general, why the "afterlife" is apparently so concerned with such *trivia* as is often manifested in seances and "hauntings": knocks and rappings, eerie noises, screams, table levitating and the like. Is there not *more* to this alleged afterlife than the playing of childish pranks and usually trivial conversation?

Of course, there are those who claim to communicate with the prophets and apostles, and even Jesus himself. But the prophets and apostles and Jesus himself speak to us *through the pages of the Bible*—not through seances and channeling!

It is the world of *demons* that is behind spirit manifestations in seances, spirit photographs and electronic voice phenomena. Masquerading as "spirits of the dead," they deceive the biblically unlearned—just as King Saul was deceived at Endor!

DIVINATION: BEWARE OF SHORTCUTS TO MAKING DECISIONS!

What's a rewarding occupation for me? Where should I live? What can I make of my future?

These can be tough personal questions. They demand we make choices.

A significant number of people find life a confusing and frustrating process of steering the right course of action through a dangerous and uncertain world.

They seek shortcuts to end fears, doubts, frustrations and responsibilities that come with making a decision, taking action or overcoming difficulties. People in every age and culture have, in fact, sought shortcuts in the mystical services of oracles, wizards and shamans; those claiming magical arts, special devices, or secret knowledge for interpreting natural signs.

Such activities are called "divination." Divination replaces the essential need and duty of every man and woman to make wise decisions that develop character.

It involves attempting to consult sources (such as humans, spirits, the dead, or things such as objects, elements or nature) in order to obtain knowledge about people, events, the future and other matters that is not normally or easily available.

Instead of learning to make sound and wise decisions themselves, numerous people today place their faith in divination. Major techniques include:

ASTROLOGY

The central belief of astrology is that an active relationship exists between man and the natural

universe and that this relationship may be interpreted to direct people's lives. Astrology proposes that the relationships of the celestial bodies influence human fate, human affairs, and human character.

However, very thorough research has found no correlation between character traits and the zodiac signs of thousands of successful people.

Yet astrology continues to be so popular that in some areas surveyed 9 out of 10 know their zodiac signs, while less than half know their blood types. The fastest selling books in some large bookstore chains are the astrology books. Astrology usually reaches peak popularity before or during wars or crises. During World War II, leaders of opposing armies each sought astrology to secure victory over the enemy.

Today various nations have astrologers in official governmental offices to guide affairs of state. By contrast, the instruction in the Bible is this: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Wisdom comes through prayer to God and the study of his revealed will—the Bible.

HYDROMANCY

Michel de Nostredame, better known as Nostradamus, a French medical doctor of the 16th-century, claimed to have received visions from gazing into a bowl of water supported on a tripod.

He used hydromancy (or lecanomancy), divination employing water or other liquids or objects by means of which visions were said to appear. Nostradamus claimed his visions came from God. However the Bible says God does not use divination to reveal his will (Deut. 18:10-11).

A few of the many obscure predictions in his book *True Centuries* have been interpreted by diviners as accurate only after the event.

NECROMANCY

Necromancy is consultation of the dead or of a spirit to answer questions, solve problems or to obtain secret knowledge. This is done usually through a medium or channel who contacts the spirit. Of special note are the biblical accounts of

King Saul's consultation with the witch at Endor (I Sam. 28) and the slave girl encountered by Paul (Acts 16:16).

The Bible clearly reveals the futility of necromancy. "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?" (Isa. 8:19, NIV.) "For . . . the dead know nothing . . . never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun" (Eccl. 9:5-6, NIV).

RHABDOMANCY

Rhabdomancy is the interpretation of the position of rods, arrows, or staffs for the purpose of divination. Rods and staffs were commonly used in ancient daily life, but the use of a rod or staff for the purpose of divination was condemned in the Bible. "My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, and their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, and they have played the harlot against their God" (Hos. 4:12, NKJ).

This type of divination,

as all divination techniques, originated as a way to learn the will of the gods. Divination, by its very nature, is an art or activity that interferes with a person's ability to develop character and to have a right relationship with the true God.

Man is to use and build his mind. God provides ways to sharpen the mind. God's Spirit, not a false spirit or a stick, gives discernment. God's spirit develops a sound mind (II Tim. 1:7).

God also provides true counsel through his servants who are skilled in the application of his love and his law. They are equipped to help guide decision-making when there is a need. The final responsibility to make a decision or take an action belongs to each of us, though.

We must choose the way we shall live. Above all we must not let a diviner do so. God commands each of us in Deuteronomy 30:19 to choose the way that leads to life as revealed in the pages of the Bible.

It is the Bible—not recourse to divination—that is the foundation of all knowledge.

DREAMS, DREAMERS AND THE SPIRIT WORLD

HAVE YOU EVER had a dream so vivid that while you were dreaming you could have sworn that it was positively *not* a dream? It seemed so real.

At other times, strangely, you dreamt that you were dreaming—you knew it was a dream while you were still asleep, and hoped it would continue, because the dream was so pleasant.

We all have interesting tales to tell about our dreams. Sometimes they are humorous, other times sad. Sometimes light, sometimes heavy—such as nightmares.

Nightmares may include some real horror stories, or, traumatic experiences like falling off a cliff—going down, down and down until—bump—you land in bed in a cold sweat! You suddenly awake to find that it was only a dream!

Nightmares may occur in times of severe tension. They have been experienced by soldiers in combat, or even years after combat, since the events were traumatic in nature. Frequent nightmares among children or adults may indicate a physical or emotional problem.

Where do dreams come from, anyway, and what does this subject have to do with the spirit world? Are some dreams influenced by outside forces?

Dreams usually occur naturally. There may be an in-

crease of mental activity during the day, and the brain is working overtime, as it were. Thought patterns can continue when an individual is asleep.

To understand how dreams occur and how they may or may not be affected by the spirit world, we need to understand what man is, what separates him from the animals, what sets him apart as a thinking, reasoning and rational being.

Man is far superior to other earthly creatures. Yet, did you ever wonder about the vast difference between human mind and animal brain? The physical brain of the higher vertebrates in the animal kingdom is similar in physical design to the human brain. The brains of whales, elephants, dolphins are larger — and that of chimpanzees almost as large. Yet the output of the human brain is indescribably greater. Why?

Many passages of Scripture show that there is a spirit in man. Spirit is not matter, but man is matter. This human spirit (which should be differentiated from God's Holy Spirit) imparts the power of intellect to the human physical brain. This human spirit imparts mind power to the human brain.

The Bible shows that the human spirit can be influenced by the around: by the day's work, by other people, even by evil forces (Eph. 2:1-2) that are able to inject wrong moods and attitudes, or, if from a good source (Ezra 1:1), by forces able to influence the human spirit toward the good.

Scientific researchers who have done extensive studies on sleep patterns have observed (by use of an instrument called an *electroencephalograph*) that the brain gives off electrical waves. During slow-wave sleep, mental activity slows down but does not stop. During periods of fast brain activity, the sleeper's eyes move rapidly as if they were watching the events of a dream. If a sleeper is awakened during such a period, he may recall that he had been dreaming. Sleep during this period is called REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep (*World Book Encyclopedia*, 1977, article "Sleep"). So dreams are a natural phenomenon experienced by humans.

Certain dreams are mentioned in Scripture. In them, God's servants received direct communication from God, or

from an angel or messenger of God. Some dreams were used to warn God's servants of danger—see the account in Matthew 2 where Joseph, the husband of Mary, mother of Jesus, was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt and then in a later dream to return to Israel.

At other times visions or dreams were given as a source of encouragement. See Judges 7:13-15 and Acts 18:9.

Many have heard of Jacob's dream of a ladder going up to heaven. The dreams of Joseph are well known by students of the Old Testament. There are the visions that Daniel received, and the famous ones that John, the apostle received directly from Jesus Christ, described in the book of Revelation.

But Satan, too, can communicate through dreams. Throughout history whole re-

ligious movements have started because some man or woman had startling dreams which, later on, may have been called "visions." The leader became established as a prophet or prophetess. The writings of such people then become revered, and their dreams and visions form the basis of extensive literature. At times, certain of these self-proclaimed prophets have stated that their writings equal if not supersede the Bible!

How does one know whether visions received by an ecclesiastical leader, or a dreamer, are of God? Should one follow such a person, if the visions seem authentic? What if their predictions occur?

Centuries ago God warned ancient Israel, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder *come to pass*, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou has not known, and let us serve them; *thou shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet*, or that

Throughout history whole religious movements have started because some man or woman had startling dreams . . .

VIEW AT YOUR OWN RISK

Audience reaction to what may be called "devil movies" can be profound. Viewers, in many cases, take them *very* seriously.

Interviews with patrons leaving the theater allow little doubt about the films' impact. Some viewers have been *terrified*, shivering with fright. A few have been sick physically, some having fainted or thrown up in the theater. Many have spoken about the reinforcement of their belief in the supernatural, and demons in particular. Some have said they want to study further into the mysteries of the occult and the spirit world. And some, of course, have attempted to laugh it off.

Psychological reactions are not the only potential effect of devil films. While there has been considerable interest in the "pop

religions" of mysticism and occultism, large segments of society remain biblically illiterate. For all they know, the pseudo-biblical pretensions of some of these films are *pure biblical truth*, when in fact they are riddled with biblical inaccuracies, and misconceptions. So there can be adverse *spiritual* as well as psychological consequences in viewing devil movies.

Some theologians, consequently, have accused the writers and producers of these films of unwittingly playing into the hands of the very devil whose existence they in most cases deny. By perverting and fictionalizing the Bible—popularizing a false picture of Satan and his intentions—Hollywood, these critics charge, may be rendering Satan's *real* activities unrecognizable.

What more could Satan want than a distorted popular image?

These charges may indeed be valid, though many theologians themselves are in disagreement on the subject.

There are often much more immediate personal dangers in devil movies, however, than mere scriptural inaccuracies. Despite the unfounded assertions of “enlightened” modern-day psychologists and philosophers, there really is a spirit world. There are such beings as demons. There is a devil.

The Bible calls him “the god of this world [or age]” (II Cor. 4:4) and “the prince of devils [demons]” (Mark 3:22), who has “deceived the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). He is pictured as “a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour” (II Pet. 5:8).

Satan’s power or spirit, however, is limited. He can do only what God allows him to do, as is clearly seen in the book of Job. The movie industry’s portrayal of a great conflict between God and Satan—which God, on occasion, loses—is clearly unbiblical.

Numerous cases of

demonic possession are found in the Scriptures, as well as cases of “exorcisms”—casting out of demons by the servants of God. In nearly all cases, God’s servants (such as Paul in Acts 16) simply rebuked the evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ, “and he came out in the same hour.” The elaborate Latin incantations and arduous “rites of exorcism” depicted in some of the recent films are not based on Scripture.

Demonic influence and, in some cases, actual possession still occur—yes, even in our modern, sophisticated world of the twentieth century. Opening one’s mind to demonic influence through a preoccupation with occultism and interest in the supernatural is therefore fraught with potential dangers.

Nearly 2000 years ago, the apostle Paul admonished: “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . .” (Eph. 5:11). The apostle James warned: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

We must guard the doors to our minds!

dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:1-3).

Notice the connection between some visions with evil spirits: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep [or chatter], and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:19-20). Jeremiah 23:28, 32; 27:9 and Zechariah 10:2 describe more about the dreams of false prophets.

If a message or vision of a leader or dreamer contradicts the clear instructions of God, then one should not follow that person. If they claim to know God, but do not keep his commandments, then there is no truthfulness in them (I John 2:4).

But, some will say, “Was it not prophesied that in the last days young men would see visions, and old men would dream dreams?” Indeed, it was. The prophecy is found in Joel 2:28-32. Peter quoted part of the prophecy on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This was partially fulfilled on that day, but most prophecies have a dual application—that is, they have a former and a latter fulfillment. The day of the pouring out of the God’s Holy Spirit upon all flesh is yet to come.

We read in Hebrews 1 that God spoke in different manners in times past to the fathers of the faith, through the prophets. Most of these revelations were through direct communication or through visions. But, in these days God speaks by his Son, who is the Word, and his words are recorded in the Bible. This does not mean, as some claim, that we are living in a dispensation of

If a message or vision contradicts the clear instructions of God, then one should not heed it.

“no dreams and no visions.” Christ continued to give some dreams and visions to his select apostles long after his resurrection while Scripture was being written (Acts 9:3-9; 26:12-19 and the whole book of Revelation). More direct revelations may come in the future as the prophet Joel foretold, but God will do it decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40) through people subject to his government, who keep his commandments.

The latter half of the first century witnessed a great deception, prophesied by Jesus Christ in the famous Olivet prophecy: “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many . . . and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:11, 24). The Christian world became greatly deceived by false teachings and apparitions.

Perhaps now you can see that it is important that you be not deceived, and that you obey God’s injunction to “try [or put to the test] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

Did God Create a Devil?



Throughout history, the devil has been a recurring figure in religion, art and literature. But is there a literal, active Satan the devil? Certain churches say the devil is the ruler of "hell." Others believe the devil is "the god of this world." What, in fact, does God's Word reveal? Believe it or not, the Bible pictures the world under the sway of an evil, invisible devil. But where did this devil come from? We offer you a startling booklet. It takes a fresh look at the question of Satan and his origin and examines exactly what he is doing today. For your free copy, simply send your request to our office nearest to you.

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