

Bewitching Spirits - Lesson 9 of 21 - Landmarks of Prophecy

Welcome, friends, to this presentation of 'Landmarks of Prophecy.' And we have a very important study tonight that really does affect everybody here and everybody that is watching. And the title of the message is 'Bewitching Spirits.' We're going to be talking about what happens when you die. It might not sound like a positive study, but it really is. So listen, I think you'll be encouraged by it.

How many of you will admit that you've walked through a graveyard before and read some of the tombstones? Might not have even been a funeral. And you can learn a lot by doing that. You know, even Solomon said, 'Better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting, for the living will take it to heart for that is the end of all man.' Ecclesiastes 7. In other words, we all know that our lives eventually will be summed up by a dash between two dates and it's important for us to realize what we do with our lives and what happens when they end? Is that it? And some tombstones you read and it's very sad. You'll see that a person's life was very short and then right next to it is a tombstone of a baby - same date of death as the mother.

Some people actually have a sense of humor that they put on their tombstones. I was just preparing for the message and I saw one and it said, 'William Bender - went to glory on a fender.' And I thought, it's kind of sad but somebody, I guess, had - I heard about a boy that was walking through a cemetery one day on his way home from school and he saw this one tombstone - John said he's actually got a picture of this tombstone. I think he said it was in Maine. And it said, 'Stop, my friend, as you go by, as you are now, so once was I. As I am now, you soon will be, so prepare yourself to follow me.' And the boy saw that and he looked to the right and left and he pulled a dark crayon out of his bag and he wrote a little subscript and it said, 'To follow you I'm not content, until I know just where you went.'

Well, you know, death is a serious subject. You just almost have to laugh because it's something we know we're all facing. It's something people don't want to think about. It's something that we ought to understand and the Bible actually addresses it. And so, in our presentation tonight, we're going to be talking about bewitching spirits. You'll be surprised that prophecy does address this subject and we need to be aware of what the Bible says.

Lesson #9 - and it tells a story about King Saul. The lesson title is 'Bewitching Spirits.' King Saul was the first king of the joined kingdom of Israel. He was from the tribe of Benjamin, but he was an unusual king. He was, the Bible says, a head and shoulders taller than any of the other men - handsome, striking - and when God first called him to be king he was a good king. But, over time, he began to reject the counsel of God and the prophets of God and he began to spiral down because pride and power can sometimes corrupt people, just like it did Lucifer. And over a period of time, eventually king Saul grieved away the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us that there was a war between the Philistines and the Israelites and, in desperation, because they were greatly outnumbered, King Saul tried to get the prophets to talk to him. And there was no word from God from the prophets and he consulted in the temple - or the Urim and the Thummim to see if there'd be any kind of guidance. And there was no guidance from God. God was silent because Saul had continued to reject God. He'd killed the priests of God. He was trying to kill King David, the anointed of God, and now, in a battle, he thought at the last minute he could pray, but God wouldn't speak to him. Just like Jesus did not speak to King Herod, because he had killed John the Baptist, he'd grieved away the Holy Spirit.

So, in desperation, Saul said to his attendants, 'I need some advice. Find one of the local witches.' And they said, 'Well, King, that's illegal according to the Word of God, but we do happen to know there's a witch here in Endor.' He said, 'I need to talk to her. I need some message. Maybe if she could conjure up the Spirit of Samuel the prophet and tell me what I'm supposed to do.' So he did that. And he went to the witch and she went through her incantations and threw some gun powder on the fire and smoke

came up and she cried out and he said, 'What do you see?' 'Oh, I see an old man.' And all of a sudden she gave this very discouraging message that, ostensibly, was from Samuel the prophet that she claimed to have power to call up from the dead. And he - the prophet, actually, or this apparition - this spirit - gave some truth and he mixed it with some error but gave an utterly discouraging message to King Saul and basically said 'Why did you call me up? Tomorrow you're going to be with me because you've rejected God. And you and your sons are going to die in the battle tomorrow.' And Saul fainted from discouragement. Sure enough, the next day, when he went into battle, they lost the battle. They were soundly defeated and - you ever hear the expression that a person 'falls on their sword?' That's what happened to King Saul. In the battle he took his own life. He committed suicide, just like Judas did.

Now, here's the question: Was it God that gave him that message? Was that coming from Samuel the prophet? Does a witch of the devil have the power to resurrect a prophet of God? These are very important questions. Some people think that that was really Samuel the prophet. By the way, it says here, "So Saul died, and his three sons" (Samuel 31:6) in the battle that day.

So let's go to question #1 in our study - and let's ask some very important questions so we can understand. Now, the reason that this is important is in the last days, Satan is going to have a deception that is so effective, if possible, it will confuse even the very elect. We need to know what the Bible says about the subject of death.

Question #1: Was this form that Saul saw actually Samuel the prophet? You find your answer in 1 Kings chapter 22, verse 22, "And he said, 'I will go forth, and I will be a' - what's the word? - "Lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." Can the devil send evil angels that give false messages a lying spirit? Are all messages from the spirit world true or does the devil have fallen angels that can masquerade as the dead if he wants? So don't believe everything you see. Revelation - I told you it's also a prophecy study. Revelation 16:14, "for they are the" - what? - "the spirits of devils" - doing what? - "working miracles." Or if we stop right there, you've got the whole point. The devil has fallen angels that can work miracles and it says the beast power will go so far in the last days as to even bring fire down from Heaven to deceive people. So we need to know, are these dead people or are they fallen angels that are supposedly appearing to everybody in the last days? What does the Bible say about death?

Question #2: Do dead people come back to converse with or to haunt the living? Ever been afraid of like a haunted house? Alright, we've got a number of scriptures for you. Job 14:21, speaking of a person that dies, Job says, "His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." So when a person dies, they're not looking down from Heaven and watching what's happening to their family. Now, I know some people are going, 'Wait, Pastor Doug, I've always felt the presence of my grandma watching over me.' Or something like that. Well, you may have those memories in your mind and you may have a lot of fond affection, but the Bible says that people in Heaven are not spying on the people on Earth. First of all, if your grandma died and went right to Heaven before the judgment, and before the resurrection, and she's looking down on Earth at all the trouble you're getting into, and all the pain and suffering on Earth, how happy is she, really, in Heaven?

See, the Bible says that once the Lord comes and we go to Heaven, we're - everlasting joy, pleasures at His right hand forever more. It's not worry and concern. Let me give you a couple more Scriptures here - Ecclesiastes 9, verses 5, 6 and verse 10 - this is written by Solomon, "The dead know not anything," - the living know they'll die but the dead know not anything - "neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished;" and it goes on to say, "neither have they any more a portion forever in anything done under the sun." - Meaning in this life. The dead are not coming back and forth from Heaven to Earth. It says, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." - Where you're going - there's no knowledge, no wisdom, nothing's happening in the grave.

See, death, the Bible says, is a dreamless sleep with no consciousness of time. And again, let me give you

a few more, Psalm 115, verse 17, "The dead praise not the Lord." Now, if you go right to Heaven when you die, what would be the first thing you do? 'Praise the Lord! I'm here!' It says the dead don't praise the Lord, they're asleep. Psalm 6, verse 5, "In death there is no remembrance of thee." Psalm 146, 'Put not your trust in princes and neither in the son of man in whom there is no help. In the day that he dies, his breath goes forth. His thoughts cease.' So a person isn't thinking anything when they die.

Job 7, verse 10, He "shall return no more to his house." Do you have to worry about when someone dies in a house coming to haunt you? Or does the Bible say they don't go to their house anymore? They're asleep. Now, the reason this is important is because some people, they won't believe the Bible, but if a spirit of the dead comes and talks to them - ooh, that'd be very important. It's kind of, when you think about it, we've even heard about international leaders that have mediums that consult the astrology to find out how to set the schedule. Nancy Reagan freely admitted that after the assassination attempt of her husband, she had someone doing a horoscope to help set his schedule because she wanted supernatural guidance. Hilary Clinton had a friend that was a medium that, ostensibly, brought back Eleanor Roosevelt to give her guidance, as a first lady.

That just kind of seems strange that you would want to consult the dead. How do you know it's really them and you're not getting counsel from fallen angels that are masquerading as the dead? Isaiah 38, verse 18, here the prophet says, "Death cannot celebrate thee." Psalm 146 - I quoted this earlier - "His thoughts" - speaking of the dead - "perish." They're not thinking. They're not doing anything. They're not praising. They're not celebrating. They're not haunting the house.

Question #3: According to the book of Revelation, who has the keys of death and the grave? Who's the one that can answer these questions that we're wondering about? Revelation 1:18 says, speaking of Jesus, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore...; And have the keys of hell" - that word 'hell' there means 'the grave' - "and of death." And so, Jesus is the one who can answer these questions about death for us. There's a lot - not only in the Old Testament - there's a lot in the New Testament that will make this subject, I think, very clear.

Alright, question #4 - To understand what happens when you die, it's probably a good idea to understand - how did God make man in the beginning? And so, let's look at this. You go to Genesis chapter 2:7 and it gives you the answer. "And the Lord God" - what? - "Formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" God formed man from the elements of the earth, breathed in him the breath of life, and man did what? He became a living soul. the Lord took the ground and he formed Adam and there was Adam, perfectly formed, and God breathed within him the breath of life - and there's something special about the breath of God's life because it took what was nothing more than clay and revived it and gave it vitality. You've probably been to a funeral before and most of you have, at some time, done a viewing - you've seen a dead body in the casket - I know it's not pleasant. And you know that there's something very important missing. They may be all intact there, but there's no life, there's no consciousness - they're dead. They don't have that breath of life. You notice it doesn't say God gave man a soul? When you combine the spirit of life with the elements of earth, he became a soul. The two together create a soul. A soul - it doesn't say God put a little soul in man. He put the breath of life in man, okay?

Let me just illustrate it this way. You've got two components. You've got nails here. You've got a few planks of wood here. You assemble them and you make a box. You don't have the box when you take the nails out and you take the wood and you separate them. You say, 'Where did the box go?' It stops being a box when you separate the two. When you have the elements of earth that are in the human body and you've got the breath of life, you put them together, he became a soul.

When you die, what happens? It's sort of like creation in reverse - and that's question #5: At death, what is it that happens then? Ecclesiastes 12, verse 7, it says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was:" we know when a person dies they return back to the basic elements - decompose. The dust shall

return to the earth as it was "and" - it goes on to say - "the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." 'Oh there you have it, Pastor Doug, the spirit returns to God.' Well, that word 'spirit' there is the word in Hebrew, it's 'ruach' and it simply means 'the breath' returns to God. It doesn't mean there's this little ethereal ghost that jumps out of a person when he dies and flies off consciously to God. It's simply saying the power of life returns to God who gave it. Because in the Bible, it also says that any creature that dies, the spirit returns to God who gave it. It's talking about the spirit of life in all of God's creatures. You know, everything breathes. Worms breathe. Fish breathe. Lobsters breathe. Worms - insects breathe. Plants breathe. It's this breath of life that God gives his creatures. When you unplug a light you say, 'Where'd the electricity go?' Back at the power plant where it came from. So that's all that it's saying here.

Let me give you some more proof for that. You look, for instance, in Job , verse 3, "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils?" Now, if the spirit is this ghost of a person, have you ever thought about, Lord, please fill my nose with your spirit?' I mean, do we ever think that way? What's it talking about - what's Job talking about the spirit here? It's the same word - it's breath. All the while the breath is in me and the wind of God, is what he's saying, is in my nostrils, that's all that means.'

Now, what about people, Pastor Doug? They die on an operating table. Maybe they - during heart surgery - there's a car accident or something, and they said, 'I came back and I was being caught up and I hovered around. I could hear the doctors talking and' - or - 'I had this experience where angels spoke to me and God spoke to me, and I went to Heaven and I got a glimpse of Heaven'. Or some have died and they've had these 'O.B.E.S' - they're called 'out of body experiences' and they say, 'I was down in the grave and I was in hell and I heard people shrieking and I saw my old boss there.' And they have all these experiences and they write books and they sell like crazy. And there are people who are basing their theology about death and life - excuse me - on these visions that people have when they're in the operating room and they die. Is that safe?

You know what's interesting? It doesn't matter what country you go to. If you go to India where you have principally Hindu people, they have near-death experiences when they die - or almost die. You know they don't usually die, their heart stops beating, the oxygen is robbed from their brain, and they hallucinate. Matter of fact, I've got a - Dr. DeRose - you might want to ask a question about this and he could say more about the science that's behind it. April 7, 2010, 'Near-death experiences, sometimes known as N.D.E.S, are reported in between eleven and twenty-three percent of heart attack survivors, according to previous research. But what causes these near-death experiences is strongly debated. Some pin it on the mechanism of the physical and psychological reasons, while others see transcendental forces. Researchers in Slovenia, reporting on Thursday in a peer-reviewed journal - this is a medical evaluation they did called 'Critical Care' investigated fifty-two consecutive cases of heart attack in three large hospitals. The patients' average age was fifty-three. Forty-two of them were men. Eleven patients out of that group had near-death experiences, but there was no common link between these in terms of what their age was, their sex, education, religious beliefs, fear of death. What they found was the common association was high levels of CO2 in the blood and a lesser degree of potassium.' When your blood is robbed of oxygen, you will hallucinate.

Now, the thing is that, in India, when they have a near-death experience, they don't go to Heaven, they are reincarnated. When you go to other religions of the world, they don't have Christian hallucinations. Your hallucinations that you have in a near-death experience, are going to be based upon your experience. And so - 'Oh, but Pastor Doug, it was so real.' I'm not denying that God may have spoken to you in a dream. God might speak to you in a near-death experience. The question is do we build our theology about what truth is based on a person's experience or dream when their heart stops beating on an operating table? Is that the criteria that God wants us to use for things like that?

Question #6: Where do the dead go when they die - according to the Bible? You read in Job 21, verse 32,

"Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb." Where do they go? They're brought to the grave - we knew that - and they remain - till when? - Till the resurrection. Listen to what Jesus said - John 5:28 and 29, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Now that, to me, is what they used to call a 'slam-dunk Scripture.' That means that's really hard to argue with. Jesus said when He comes there'll be a trump, there'll be a shout of the archangel, the voice of the Lord, and all that are where? In their graves - they hear - from their graves - they hear and they'll come forth. So where are they when He comes? Are they floating around in heaven or are they in purgatory? Are they in limbo? Are they in Abraham's bosom? They've got all these ideas. Are they in some transcendental state waiting to be reincarnated? No, Jesus said they're in their graves.

Now, let me pre-empt a question some of you are going to ask. 'Pastor Doug, doesn't the Bible say 'To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord'? Yes. Let me read this verse - by the way, it's 2 Corinthians chapter 5 - I'll start with verse 5 - I'll start with verse 6. "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith and not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased, rather, to be absent from the body and be present with the Lord." Oh, they're saying, 'Doesn't that mean that as soon as you die, the next thing you're conscious of is the presence of the Lord?' That's a trick question.

Let's suppose you're saved - I hope you are - and you should die. What is the next conscious thought you're going to have? Coming out of your grave with a glorified body and being in the presence of the Lord. Because you and I live in a dimension of time. God, He lives in all dimensions of time at the same time. The resurrection hasn't happened yet, for those of us that are in this world. Those loved ones, they're still in their graves. They don't know it. The next thing they know is being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, but it hasn't happened yet. See what I'm saying? So, of course, it's true. For those that we love, you can rejoice for them because - I've done funerals - many funerals - and, let's face it, no one at a funeral ever wants to say, 'Well, we know this poor brother, he's doomed.' Everyone says the nicest things they can say at a funeral, right? And sometimes it's hard because you have to talk about other things. But I've done some funerals where you know the person's a saint. They just loved the Lord, their testimonies are thrilling - and I remember I did the funeral for the wife of the pastor who baptized me. She was a saint. Lived into her nineties - just kind of fell over in her garden. And I thought to myself, 'I'm jealous. I'd like to trade places with her.' Because, wow, just think about it, her next thought - she's not going to be an old lady anymore. She's going to come out of the grave with this glorified, powerful vital body and be in the presence of the Lord forevermore. No more pain or sorrow. And you could rejoice.

So when you have your friends say, 'Well, they're with the Lord now.' You know what they mean, but are they technically with the Lord right now? Because there has not been a judgment yet and there has not been a resurrection yet. We're rushing things, see what I'm saying? Walk through a tombstone - a tombstone - walk through a graveyard, you'll notice on the tombstones you'll see contradictory inscriptions in the same Methodist or Baptist cemetery. One will say, 'Our dearly beloved mother, R.I.P.' - you know what that stands for? Rest in peace - 'she's sleeping sweetly in Jesus.' Two tombstones away it will say, 'Our beloved mother is walking on golden streets, singing with the angels.' You know, which is it? And so there's a lot of confusion, even among Christians, about what happens when you die? Alright, let's move along.

Question #7: The Bible makes it plain that King David will be saved. Do we all agree? This is a good king, David, killed Goliath, man after God's own heart. Is he in Heaven now? No. This is from the New Testament. Peter says, Acts chapter 2 - and keep in mind, this is after the resurrection of Jesus. David's still not in Heaven yet. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you regarding the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." - His tomb. Keep reading - he says, "for David" - verse 34 - "for David is not ascended into the heavens." Now somebody say 'Amen' if that's clear. David's going to be saved. Is he there yet? David died 3,000 years ago, approximately. He, evidently, seventy years old, he had congestive heart failure, he couldn't get warm - like me right now -

and - matter of fact, they found a young lady to be his wife - a beautiful young Shunammite girl named Abishag - to cuddle him because he was cold. And they'd put blankets on him and he couldn't get warm and they said, 'Find a young healthy virgin with good circulation to hug him.' You know, the Bible says - they had no electric blankets back then. So they got this girl called Abishag. You know what that means in Hebrew? Pretty little hot water bottle. No, I made that up. So - but then, you know, the last thing that David remembers is that he died - had a heart attack - went to sleep and Nathan the prophet said, 'You will sleep with your fathers.'

Now, does it seem like 3,000 years for David? Next thing David knows, he died and he's going to hear the trumpet and he's going to see the Lord, and he's going to come out of his grave. It's going to seem like seconds to him. Any of you ever had a long day of work and you went to sleep? You set your alarm and you think you're getting six or seven hours of sleep and two minutes later the alarm goes off. And you thought, 'Oh, the alarm malfunctioned.' You realize, no, I slept six hours. I had no idea.' You ever have one of those nights? David is not in Heaven.

Now is anybody in Heaven now? Yeah, there are some. Let's take a look at what the Bible says, just so you know there are some in Heaven. For instance, Mark chapter 9, verses 1 through 8, two individuals appear to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Who were they? Moses and Elijah. Are they in heaven? The Bible tells us how they got there. There are exceptions. Elijah went to Heaven in a fiery chariot, in 2 Kings chapter 2, you can read about that. Then you can read, regarding Moses, in the book of Jude, verse 9, it says, "Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses," - Michael came to resurrect Moses and the devil said, 'You can't have him!' And Michael said, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' And Moses received a special resurrection. It's not in the Bible, but Jewish tradition says it was three days later.

Then there were some others around the time of Christ's crucifixion. You can read about this in Matthew 27, verse 52 - when Jesus died, it says there was a great earthquake. "and the graves were opened; and many" - not all - "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep" - this was a local resurrection around Jerusalem - "were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city" - Jerusalem - "and appeared to many." A number of the patriarchs and prophets and saints that had lived and worked among God's people, that were buried around there, as a trophy, the firstfruits, the Lord raised some of them. Maybe like Isaiah the prophet - I think he was in that group - who had foretold the coming of the Messiah - who died at the hands of King Manasseh. He was martyred for his faith. I think the Lord brought him forth and maybe many others - maybe Jeremiah the prophet - and He took them on to Heaven with Him. So some are there, but the general resurrection of the dead has not happened yet. That's still in the future.

Question #8: But isn't it true that the soul is immortal and that only the body dies? Now, I'm going to take the risk and I'm going to ask the director to give me an audience shot. Oh, this is live TV - I'm going out on a limb here. Can you show me a verse in the Bible that says we have an immortal soul? How many of you have heard people talk about our immortal souls? In spite of the fact there is no verse. We always hear about it. People sing about it, they preach about it, but you know what the Bible says about immortality? You read in Ezekiel 18, verse 4 - you know what immortal means? It means you can't die - "The soul that sinneth, it shall" - what? - it'll "die." This is like a dictionary definition. What is the penalty for sin? You see, this is the first lie that the devil told Adam and Eve. God said, 'If you disobey, you'll die.' And the devil said, 'Don't listen to Him. You don't really die. You will not surely die.' The sad thing is, there are even some Christian pastors that are preaching what the devil said in the garden. God said, 'You sin, you die.' Furthermore, Job 4:7, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" What kind of man? Mortal. Man is mortal. That means we die. We know that.

Timothy 6:15, here's one from the New Testament. There's many more. "The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality." God, who only has immortality - speaking of in our world. We don't

have immortality. It's a gift for the righteous that we receive when the Lord comes and this mortal will put on immortality. It's at the resurrection. We don't have it yet. So the idea that people die and go right to Heaven and get immortality before the resurrection is not what the Bible teaches. We need to know that so we're not deceived by seducing, bewitching spirits in the last days.

Question #9: when will the righteous be given immortality? Corinthians - I actually just quoted this. I get excited and I run ahead of the lesson - 1 Corinthians 15:51, "We shall all be changed," - when does this happen? - "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, ...and this mortal must put on immortality." That's when it happens, when the Lord comes, amen? It's what the Bible teaches. If we are going to be Bible Christians, let's just make sure we're straight on that. Thessalonians 4:16 - and we've read this several times but do it again. It says, "For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise" - when? - "First." So when the Lord comes, then the dead rise.

Now, I've heard some people say, 'Well that's true, Pastor Doug, but when you die, your spirit goes to Abraham's bosom' - they base this on a parable that Jesus told. And think about - can the soul of everybody in the world that dies fit into Abraham's bosom? It's just a parable. And they say, 'It waits there until Jesus brings the soul back to get their body.' So we are disembodied spirits until the resurrection? Ask questions on that. By the way, there's a whole section in the back of your lesson that explains that - someone's going to ask about 'What about the thief on the cross?' Maybe - make that a Bible question for tomorrow. We'll talk about that.

Question #10: How does the Bible repeatedly refer to death? You can read where it says in John 11, verses 11 and 14, Jesus, speaking of his friend Lazarus that died, he said, "Our friend Lazarus" - what? - "sleepeth;" - and they said, 'Oh good, Lord, he was sick. If he sleeps he'll start getting better.' Jesus says, 'No, he sleeps.' He said, "Lazarus is dead." That's what Jesus said. What word did Jesus use to describe death? Sleep. And they said, 'Oh, Lord, he'll get better.' He said, 'He's dead.' And then Jesus comes to raise Lazarus - he's been dead four days - when he finally gets down to Bethany where he died, Jesus got the news - he was up in Galilee - he tells Martha, 'Roll away the stone.' Martha told the servants to roll away the stone but she said, 'Lord, be aware. He's decomposing already.' I mean, he was really dead. 'By this time' she said, 'there's a bad odor, for he's been dead four days.' He was already turning back into the elements of earth. And it says when Jesus "said these things, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!'" And he who had died came out. His body reassembled. He came shuffling out of the grave wrapped up with his embalming cloth, bound head and foot with the grave clothes. He came back to life by the word of God.

Now, this is one of the things I just don't want you to miss. There are approximately - I'm just doing this on the top of my head - a dozen resurrections in the Bible. There's some in the Old Testament - Elijah resurrected a boy, Elisha resurrected a boy, we just read about Moses' resurrection, several in the New Testament - Lazarus is resurrected, the daughter of Jarius is resurrected. Jesus resurrects - um - I'm having a brain cramp - oh, Paul resurrects Eutychus - there's about a dozen resurrections when you go through them in the Bible. When a person has been dead - just suppose - like Lazarus - today.

Somebody is dead four days and all of a sudden they come back to life. Every news agency in the world would have reporters on the scene. They would all be crowding around and stuffing microphones in that person's face. And you know what they would be saying? 'What was it like to be dead?' 'Where were you?' 'What did you see?' 'Tell us about the other side.' Right? Isn't that the question you'd ask somebody? What was it like to be dead? What does Lazarus say about death? Nothing. In fact, nobody in the Bible who was resurrected ever makes a single comment about knowing or experiencing anything while dead.

Shouldn't that tell us something? There's total silence. Why? Because they were dead and unconscious.

Matthew 27, verse 52, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose." Thessalonians 4:14 - here Paul tells us, "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." That's because they're caught up to meet the Lord in the air so when we get our bodies and we are caught up - we're there with Jesus at that point. You can read Psalm 13, verse 3, "Consider and hear me, o Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." So we need to be really clear on this.

Now, question #11: Since wizards, witches, and psychics cannot contact the dead, whom are they contacting? I remember when I was a kid, we'd have séances in our house. Revelation 16:14, it says, "They are the Spirits of devils," - doing what? - Working miracles." I grew up in a family where, even though we were agnostics, my mother she was doing horoscopes - she wrote a song about the twelve horoscopes - love songs about whatever your sign is and - any of you remember a TV Show - I'm really dating myself. I'm going back like thirty-five - forty years - there used to be a TV Show called 'Dark Shadows'. Do you remember that? The cast on that show - at least two members of the cast - were friends of our family. We'd go to their house, they'd go to our house, and they really were into spiritual things. But a lot of that stuff goes - a séance - real things happened. We'd have séances - try and contact Abraham Lincoln and these dead people. Strange things would happen. We had Ouija boards and - there are other forces out there where just eerie things happen.

But is that the dead talking to us or is the devil taking advantage of our misunderstanding to manipulate us? You see, if we don't understand these things - otherwise, when stuff starts happening, just say, 'Get behind me, Satan!' Someone appears and says, 'I'm your great-grandmother. I've come with a message from beyond.' You say, 'Get behind me, Satan, grandma's in her grave.' Now, I want to be sensitive, because I've lost loved ones. Death is - it's serious business and my brother, in particular, you know from the time I'm born - he was my older brother - I don't ever remember a time when my brother wasn't there. On my phone I had him on auto-dial - Falcon - just call him, I'd talk to him, he'd tell me how stupid I was and then - but I always felt good, you know, when I talked to my brother. And so we loved each other. It was just he and I with the same mother and father and when he died, I still had his - I saved his voice mail for a long time, just to hear his voice. And I forgot once or twice that he wasn't there and I went and grabbed the phone and I hit the auto-dial and thought, 'Oh, I forgot he died.' Because I was in California, he was in Florida and it was such a shock.

Whenever you have anyone in your life - how many of you have known husbands or wives and their spouse dies and they forget and they'll call down the hall, 'Jack!' And then they remember they're gone. Whenever you spends years with somebody, you fill your memory and your mind with this person and there's that sense that they're there because they've saturated your memory and your life. You're going to have those feelings. But you can know, biblically, they're sleeping a peaceful sleep right now.

But how often we've heard people say, 'We sense they're with us right now?' And, you know, you're just - everybody says something about funerals. They all say these things and - when Robin Williams recently - he died - it was a tragic suicide and at his funeral everybody said, 'Yep, he's up telling God jokes in Heaven right now.' And, you know, you hear all these stories and people love to play on that side of it, but is that what the Bible says? Does the Bible say people go right to Heaven or right to Hell when they die? Think about that for a moment. What if - Lazarus was dead how long? Four days - what if, right when you die, you go immediately to Heaven - before the judgment - that would be weird. You know, you're up in Heaven, you're singing on the golden streets and you're talking to the - you know - the patriarchs and you're getting ready to reach out for the Tree of Life and an angel stops you and says, 'Wait a second, you can't do that.' 'Why not?' Judgment's coming up and we've got to make sure you deserve to be here.' 'What am I doing here if - you mean this may be an accident? You guys had a computer failure or something?' 'No, just gotta wait for the judgment day.'

Or to take a person in Hell - as soon as you die they go right to Hell. And there they are, screaming in Hell - lake of fire - and you pull them up and say, 'What? Oh thank God I'm paroled.' 'No, it's not a parole.

Time for judgment. Yep, sure enough, you're guilty. Back!' Is that how God does things? Or to tell people in Heaven, 'Hey, we hope you're enjoying this. This was just a preview. You've got to go back to your grave because we're getting ready to resurrect you. Hurry up! You're going to miss it. Get back to the grave!' What good's a resurrection if they're already in Heaven? Who would want to leave Heaven and go back and get into a body and - it just - it's not biblical.

Can you imagine if you're Lazarus? Assuming he's Jesus' friend - let's assume he's saved. He was a good friend of Jesus. He's been dead four days. He's up in Heaven. He's having a great time. He's got his glorified, immortal body. He's getting ready to take a trip to another cosmos and the angel says, 'Wait a second. Don't go anywhere yet. We've just got word. Jesus wants you back on Earth. In fact, He's going to put you in a grave, get back in your grave clothes again. You've got to go back to a mortal body.' And all of a sudden Lazarus wakes up and he's wrapped up in grave clothes. And he says, 'Thanks, Jesus, some friend.' Right? I mean, would you do that to your friend? Pull him out of Heaven and put him back in a grave? Lazarus didn't know anything. He was asleep.

Question #12: Why does Satan want us to believe that the spirits of the dead are really alive? Answer: It says in Matthew chapter 24, verses 24 and 25, Jesus said, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew" - not just any kind of sign but - "great signs and wonders;" - how convincing are they? - "Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." That's why we're doing this study, friends. What's going to prevent us from being deceived? According to the law and the prophets - according to the Word of God - if they don't speak according to His Word, there's no light in them. If you see apparitions, if you get feelings, it doesn't mean that this is a message from God. By the way, what I'm telling you right now, this is not some new unique theology. If you're a Protestant, this is what Martin Luther believed. If you like the English translation of the Bible, the guy who translated it - William Tyndale - this is what he believed.

This used to be what all Christians believed. That's why the old cemeteries said 'R.I.P.' - Rest in peace. But the more popular version of people going right to their rewards before the judgment and before the resurrection, has sort of eclipsed what the Bible actually teaches about death. And you know what? The devil is exploiting that today and the media is filled with it. You know, it's all the movies and the television programs - they're all talking about the afterlife and we're being communicated with.

Just even recently there was a best-selling New York times book called 'Heaven is for Real.' I don't know if you heard about that. They turned it, then, into a movie. Todd Burpo, this pastor - they had a son named Colton - 4 years old. He didn't die, he was having emergency surgery for appendix and it was very serious and grave and he came back and he started having this - these visions and talking about things and people he saw - dead people that he saw in Heaven. And everybody started talking to the boy and trying to get information on Heaven and he was having these supernatural experiences.

Now I don't question the sincerity of the family, I don't question the sincerity of the boy. What I question is can you trust the devil not to use a child and give them impressions and information? Does the devil know about your loved ones that died? He's got a really good database. It doesn't go down. The devil - don't underestimate him. He was just underneath God in power and he's got all of his angels - his fallen angels. And the Bible says man is made lower than the angels. They're very clever. They know what your grandma sounded like. They know what she looked like. They know what she smelled like. They know all their little nuances. They know little secrets in the family nobody else would know - because we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but there are spiritual forces that are around us. There's a whole spirit world that we don't know anything about.

Can you imagine trying to explain to the apostle Peter, a smart phone? And when all of a sudden it lights up with a message and so 'Oh, I'm getting a text.' 'What's that?' 'I'm getting word.' 'How'd it get in there?' 'It went through the air.' 'The message when through the air? How?' 'Waves.' 'What are waves?' They did not understand the science of radio or television waves or microwaves, did they? It would have

seemed like supernatural stuff to them. Well, God is telling us, even though our scientists have not discovered it yet, there is another whole dimension that is around us. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but there are spiritual powers out there and we need to be aware they're very real.

Question #13: In a - oh, this is another verse - oh, I hit the wrong button, pardon me - #13 - How effective will Satan's use of these evil spirits be in the last days? Revelation 18, verse 23, this is kind of frightening, "By thy sorceries were all nations deceived." How many nations? All. All. When Saul decided to see a witch, did that end well for him? We've got to stay away from these things that God condemns. Revelation - pardon me one second - alright - Revelation , verse 2, "Babylon the great is fallen, ...and has become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." So is it clear in Revelation that there are spiritual powers, that they work miracles, that they deceive the nations? And we don't want to be among that group. And God brought you - you've tuned in because He wants you to be aware of what the Bible really teaches. The reason this is important is because there are many Christians that don't understand these things, and it does matter. Alright, another Scripture, Revelation 12, verse 9, it says, "That old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth" - how much of the world? - "The whole world."

So question #14: How does God regard these miracles by evil angels? What does He say? It's as serious as it can get. Leviticus 20, verse 27, it says, "A man also or woman ...that is a wizard," - or a witch - "shall surely be put to death." Now I'm not suggesting that we resort back to the theocracy and witch trials, you understand? I'm just telling you that among the people of Israel, when God was in their presence, if people started dabbling with these spiritual forces and witches, they weren't even supposed to be allowed to live. They were either to be evicted or exterminated, but God did not want them worshipping devils. It was the antithesis of worshipping God.

And so, when we start getting involved in these bad spirits that are out there - the media is full of it. There's scarcely - I know I'm going to make you all mad at me now. There's scarcely a Disney cartoon out there, or film, that doesn't somehow dabble in the spirits coming back or things being reincarnated or pantheism - and it's all done so sweetly with such beautiful music and stories that our society has been saturated with spiritualism and so we just shrug it off. But the Lord is warning us that the devil uses this misunderstanding as a vehicle to deceive and we need to be aware. Timothy - the apostle Paul tells us here in verse 1 - 1 Timothy 4, verse 1 - in the last days, he said, "Some shall depart from the faith," - and what happens when they depart? - "giving heed" - listening to - "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." There are diabolical doctrines out there that have found their way into the church, connected with what happens when a person dies. In Ephesians 5, verse 11, there he says, "have" - what? - "No fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

God doesn't want us to be involved in these things. Don't even go to those places. Galatians 5:19, "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these;" - notice - "adultery," - we know that's bad - "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry," - and what is that other one? - "witchcraft." There's a lot of things that people entertain themselves with on television that is really nothing more than glorified witchcraft. You know, whole programs are dedicated to talking to people from beyond and spiritualists. Revelation 21, verse 8 - why is this so important? It says among those that are in the lake of fire are "sorcerers ...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." By the way, that is going to be our study in our next presentation; we're going to be learning the truth about that final furnace. And a lot of misunderstandings on that subject and I really hope that you come and find out. Maybe some Christians haven't understood that as well as they should either. The subjects of death and hell are grossly distorted by many Christian religions and we need to know what the Bible says.

Question #15 - and this is our last question - What glorious power does God offer His people? I don't have to be afraid of death. The Bible says in Philippians chapter 3, verse 10, "That I might know Him, and

the power of His resurrection." Now, I think we all know that from the cradle we are on a conveyor belt that we cannot stop. We age. I'm reminded every year. I do all I can to prolong my life, but I know, even with my best efforts, that ultimately it'll catch up with us. What I'd like to do is die like Moses. He was 120, he climbed a mountain, he felt great, and then he died. That's - that's the way to do it. But do we need to be afraid of death? The Bible says, 'He that has the Son, has life. He that has not the Son, has not life.' You can have eternal life. I've got good news for you. Listen carefully, Christians do not die. You might say, 'Pastor Doug, wait a second. Christians don't die?' When Stephen, the first martyr was stoned, it says he went to sleep. Christians go to sleep. We don't have to be afraid of death any more than we have to be afraid of going to sleep. Matter of fact, if you're a believer, you can actually be excited about it because if you sleep the sleep of death, your next conscious thought is a glorified body and the presence of the Lord, amen? But that'll happen because you have a trusting relationship with Jesus.

Do you know Him? And He wants you to know the power of His resurrection. You can make a decision tonight to say you want to have that relationship with Jesus. I'd like you to pray about that now as John sings. And we'll close with a word of prayer.

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,

Just to take Him at His word,

Just to rest upon His promise,

Just to know 'thus saith the Lord.

Jesus, Jesus how I trust him,

And how I've proved Him o'er and o'er.

Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus,

Oh for grace to trust Him more.

Friends, our subject tonight I know, for some of you, has been a new one. And I hope I've presented it in the Spirit of Christ, graciously. It's a very serious subject because we know that we have a temporary amount of time during this probation of life. The main purposes of life are to know God and His love and to share God and His love. You can have eternal life right now. The Kingdom of God is at hand now - you don't have to wait until Jesus comes, but it comes from trusting Jesus - laying your life down in His hands and knowing that He will never let you down. He'll save you from your sins and He can give you eternal life. You know, we do all we can to stay alive in this world, and this life is nothing compared to the one that He's offering.

People spend a fortune buying auto insurance and life insurance and health insurance and they neglect eternal life assurance. And that's what Jesus is offering you - as a gift. And yet, people procrastinate and they wait to accept that gift. You can accept that gift tonight, friends. You do it just by saying, 'Lord, take me. I don't even know how I'm going to follow You, but I want to start tonight.' You just come as you are. Don't worry about 'Will I be able to live the right kind of life tomorrow?' You just begin where you're at. Tell the Lord your weakness. He already knows. And you come and say, Lord, I want to give my heart to You. I accept that gift of everlasting life that Jesus is offering. Would you like to have that gift? I'd like to pray with you before we close tonight. And also, for those of you who are watching, that we can experience that eternal life. You can pray along with us as we close.

Father in Heaven, Lord, we've all, in some way, been touched by death. Loved ones - it may have been a grandparent or spouse or even a child. We see it on the headlines. We know that there is so much pain and suffering and death in this world, but we're looking forward to that life and that world where there is no more death, there is no more pain. And we know the only access, the only portal, the only way is through Jesus - He is the door. I pray that each person right now will hear Your spirit tugging at their heart and they will yield - they will surrender - and they will give themselves to You - they'll accept the gift that You've offered. Thank You, Lord, for hearing our prayer. We believe You'll do it because You promise when we ask in faith in Your name, You'll answer. And it's in the name of Christ we pray, amen.

Thank you so much, friends, and for those that are watching, when is our next presentation? Tomorrow night. Tomorrow night. And we're going to be talking about that final furnace and you're going to find it's very interesting. Serious subject, but you may even smile a little bit. God bless you. Don't forget, you can watch the programs at 'Landmarksofprophecy.com' - still not too late to e-mail your friends and tell them about it. God bless you and you have a good evening.