

## Can the Dead Talk With Us?



### SABBATH—JUNE 1

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 6:5; John 11:11–14; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 31–34.

One of Satan's biggest lies is that the spirit can continue to live after the body dies.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud [strong and powerful] command, with the voice [command] of the archangel, and with the trumpet call [sudden blast] of God. And the people who have died and were in Christ will rise [wake up from the dead] first. After that we who are still alive at that time will be gathered [collected and picked] up with those [people] who have died. We will be taken up in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, ERV).

**NOT LONG AGO**, people started to have near death experiences (NDEs). During an NDE, a person dies, but he comes back to life. After he wakes up, he tells stories about all the amazing things he saw and heard while “dead.” Millions of people believe these stories prove that the dead aren't really dead. One of Satan's biggest lies is that the spirit can continue to live after the body dies.

This lie started back in Eden with the snake. The snake lied to Eve, “ ‘You will certainly not die’ ” (Genesis 3:4, NIV). This lie is the false promise that life continues after death. This lie was part of a false religion that started in the 1800s with the Fox sisters. The Fox sisters said they got answers to their questions from dead spirits. (Later the sisters confessed that they lied. The spirits never communicated with them at all.)

The Bible is our only safety against Satan's big lie.

## THE DANGERS OF TALKING WITH SPIRITS (Ecclesiastes 9:5)

Some people believe that death is the start of a new part of life. This idea is a lie. The lie comes from the false teaching that the spirit continues to live after death. Roman religions taught this lie. How did this teaching start in Christian churches? The Roman government wanted to make Christianity more popular with its citizens. So, early on, Christian leaders taught the lie that the spirit lives forever to help Roman citizens accept Christianity and join the church. “The idea that the spirit lives forever was a false religious teaching. Roman leaders ‘borrowed’ this false idea from their own religion and made it part of Christianity.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 549, adapted.

**“Do not fear people who can kill the body. They cannot kill the spirit. But fear the one who can destroy both spirit and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28, WE). What does this verse say about the lie that the spirit lives forever?**

The Lord warned His people not to do magic: “ ‘Don’t let anyone try to control others [people] with magic. Don’t let them be mediums [fortunetellers] or try to talk with the spirits of dead people’ ” (Deuteronomy 18:11, ICB). Anyone who used magic was killed with stones (Leviticus 20:27). We may think this punishment is mean. But God commanded witches, fortunetellers, and magicians to be killed to protect Israel from worshiping false gods.

Demons control magic and the people who use it. When we use magic, demons trick us into false worship. When we use their magic to talk to the dead, we are really worshiping the demons. The belief that we can talk with the dead is part of Satan’s big plan to make people his slaves. But Jesus makes us free from the demons and their magic.

**Read Ecclesiastes 9:5; Job 7:7–9; and Isaiah 8:19, 20. What do these Bible verses teach us about death and communicating with dead people?**

The belief that the dead go to heaven right away when they die has been around for a long time. People use a few Bible texts in the wrong way to support this idea. But this belief leaves people with no protection against Satan, now or in the end times.



**The belief that we can talk with the dead is part of Satan’s big plan to make people his slaves.**

## DEATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Psalm 6:5)

**What do Psalm 6:5; Psalm 115:17; 1 Kings 2:10; 1 Kings 11:43; and 1 Kings 14:20 teach us about death?**



**We can be sure that the dead family and friends who visit us are really evil spirits.**

The Old Testament does not teach that the spirit lives forever after the body dies. Or that the saved fly off to heaven to live there forever. The Bible doesn't teach that sinners will go to hell in the middle of earth after they die. Or that they will burn forever in everlasting fire. The Bible teaches us that death is sleep. The King James Bible uses sleep as a word picture to talk about death. When a king died, he "slept [died] with his fathers and was buried in the city of David" (1 Kings 2:10, KJV; for an example, read 1 Kings 15:24). The poet who wrote Psalm 13 also believes that death is the same as sleep: "Look on me and answer, O Lord, my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death" (Psalm 13:3, NLV; compare Psalm 90:5). Job compares death to sleep, too: "So people lose their lives, never to live again. The skies will all pass away before they rise [wake up] from death. The skies will all disappear before anyone wakes up from that sleep!" (Job 14:12, ERV). The poet who wrote Psalm 17 adds, "I shall be satisfied [happy] when I awake [wake up from the dead] in Your likeness [with the same form or appearance as God]" (Psalm 17:15, NKJV).

When the Assyrian army was destroyed, the death of the soldiers was named their "final sleep" (Psalm 76:6, CJB). So, the idea that the dead float around in the sky and wait to communicate with us is not from the Bible.

If we don't understand Bible truth about death, we may easily believe Satan's lies. "Many people will meet evil spirits who pretend to be dead family members or friends. These spirits will teach false ideas. They will try to touch our hearts with words and actions. The spirits also will work miracles to support their false teachings. We must be ready to stand against them with Bible truth. The Bible says the dead don't know anything. So, we can be sure that the dead family and friends who visit us are really evil spirits."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 560, adapted.

**What do Daniel 12:2 and Job 19:25–27 say about death?**

When we die, we rest in sleep until the Second Coming. At that time, Jesus will wake us up from the dead.

**DEATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (John 11:11–14)**

**Read John 11:11–14,21–25; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:51–54; and 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17. What do the New Testament writers say about death? How do their words compare with what the Old Testament says?**

The word “sleep” is used at least 53 times in the Bible as a word picture for death. Bible writers agree that the spirit does not live forever. Also, the Bible says that the spirit doesn’t continue to live after the body dies.

The New Testament talks about what happens to the dead at the Second Coming. Jesus will wake them up.

The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament. The Gospels teach us that Jesus is the only One who can give us everlasting life. All the demons in hell can’t steal this gift from us. On the cross, Jesus won the fight against death. When Jesus woke up from the dead, His life was a promise: He will resurrect or wake up all His followers from the grave at His Second Coming.

Look at these words from Paul: “If dead people are not raised [resurrected], then Christ was not raised either [also]. If Christ was not raised, then what you believe is no good. Your wrong ways have not been forgiven. If that were true, then the people who believed in Christ who have now died, are lost” (1 Corinthians 15:16–18, WE). How can we understand these verses if the dead are already in heaven? How can they be “lost” if they are alive with God in heaven right now?

Paul’s message is that we can trust in Jesus’ promise to resurrect us because He woke up from the dead. If Jesus never woke up from the dead, then “what you believe is no good” or useless. Worse, our sins can’t be forgiven. All the dead will stay in the ground. They will never wake up from the dead. But thank God, Jesus woke up from the dead! So, we can trust Him when He says He will wake us up, too.

Peter says, “Now we hope for the blessings God has for his children. These blessings are kept for you in heaven. They cannot be destroyed or be spoiled or lose their beauty” (1 Peter 1:4, ICB). If the dead are already in heaven, why does Peter talk about the blessings kept for us in heaven? New Testament writers looked with joy to the time when Jesus will resurrect the dead at His Second Coming. This promise filled the New Testament writers with hope and courage during hard times.



**When Jesus woke up from the dead, His life was a promise: He will resurrect or wake up all His followers from the grave at His Second Coming.**



## SATAN'S END-TIME MIRACLES: PART 1 (Matthew 24:5, 11, 24)

**What are some of Satan's end-time tricks and lies? Read Matthew 24:5, 11, 24; 2 Thessalonians 2:7–9; Revelation 13:13, 14; and Revelation 16:13, 14 for the answer.**



**The devil will use miracles and signs to trick many people just before the Second Coming.**

The devil will use miracles and signs to trick many people just before the Second Coming. Ángel Rodríguez explains how the demons will trick so many people in the end-times: “What is the secret to the demons’ success? Will they convince people to worship Satan because of their powerful messages? No, they will do powerful miracles and signs. These miracles will touch people’s hearts and not their minds. The miracles are not from God. As the worldwide war between Jesus and Satan ends, demons will control almost everyone. Almost everyone on earth will believe Satan’s powerful lie that the dead can talk to us.”—“The Closing of the Cosmic Conflict: Role of the Three Angels’ Messages,” unpublished manuscript, page 6.

**Why must we not trust our feelings to help us decide what is truth? What part do feelings have in our faith experience? How does Satan try to control our feelings? How does he cause us to think that our feelings are more important than what the Bible tells us to do?**

“For a long time, Satan has gotten ready for his final effort to trick the people on earth. . . . Little by little, he has gotten people ready to accept his lie that the dead communicate with us. Satan’s work isn’t finished, but he will have everything ready just before earth’s history ends. . . . We must have faith in God and the Bible. God and Bible truth will protect us from Satan’s lies. Without faith in God or the Bible, we will get tricked by Satan’s lies. Satan is tricking the people on this earth right now. They think they are safe when they are not. They will understand the truth only when it is too late.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 561, 562. For sure, only Jesus and the Bible can protect us from Satan’s lies.

**What are some of Satan’s tricks and lies that Jesus protects us from because we believe the Bible?**

## SATAN'S END-TIME MIRACLES: PART 2 (Matthew 24:23–27)

Jesus gives us hope. He will save us. He invites us to accept His death on the cross for our sins. Soon Jesus will come back to take us home. Titus 2:13 says the Second Coming is our “blessed [wonderful] hope” (NIRV).

Satan wants to destroy our hope. He will do miracles and signs to keep people from accepting Bible truth and God’s saving mercy.

“This is why God’s people must be patient. They are the ones who keep the laws of God and believe [have the same faith] in Jesus [that Jesus had in God the Father]” (Revelation 14:12, WE). In the final fight, Satan will do everything he can to prevent people from keeping God’s commandments or having the same faith Jesus had. So, we need to check if any teaching goes against God’s commandments or the faith of Jesus. God’s end-time church will keep His law and have the faith that Jesus had.

**Read Matthew 24:23–27; 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14; and 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12. What do these verses tell us about Satan’s lies and how he will work in the end times?**

At the end of earth’s history, Satan will work one last time to trick people: “Soon we will see strange sights in the skies. These things will be a sign that demons are at work. The demons will do miracles. The spirits of devils will go to the kings who control the earth. These devils also will go to people everywhere on earth to try to trick them into joining Satan in his fight against the government in heaven. The demons will trick both leaders and their people alike. Men will pretend to be Jesus. These men will say they are the King of kings and Lord of lords. They will accept the worship that belongs only to Jesus. These men will do wonderful miracles. They will heal the sick. They will say that they have new truth from God in heaven. But their messages will go against Bible truth.

“What will be Satan’s final act in his play of lies? Satan himself will pretend to be Jesus. The church has waited for Jesus to come for so long. Now Satan will make it look as if Jesus has really come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will appear as a bright and shining person. He will look the same as the picture of Jesus that John saw in his dream in Revelation. Revelation 1:13–15.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 624, adapted.



**“Satan himself will pretend to be Jesus.”**



**“Our Savior would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than allow Satan to take control of one person who trusts in Him.”**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Lee Strobel wrote a book about NDEs, or near-death experiences. In his book, *A Case for Heaven*, Strobel talks about “dead” people who have NDEs after they die. Strobel says NDEs are proof that the dead stay alive in some way after they die. One example: “A girl had an NDE during heart surgery. She said she met her brother during her NDE. The girl was surprised because she didn’t have a brother. When the girl ‘woke up’ from the dead, she told her father what happened. Her father told her for the first time that she did have a brother. But he died before she was born.”—Lee Strobel, *The Case for Heaven* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Books, 2021), page 69, adapted. Strobel’s idea about the afterlife doesn’t agree with Bible truth. We get our final reward only when Jesus comes back.

“Just ahead of us is the ‘time of trouble; the time to test everyone is about to come to the whole world [everyone on earth].’ Revelation 3:10 [NLV]. Anyone who does not have faith in Bible truth will be tricked. They will fail the test. Satan will ‘use every kind [trick] of evil’ to get control of people [2 Thessalonians 2:10, ICB]. Satan’s tricks and lies will continue more and more. But Satan can only control people if they will let him. He cannot get control of people who seek to know Bible truth and obey it. When we obey Bible truth, our hearts become clean. Our obedience helps us get ready for the fight ahead. God will defend His obedient people against Satan. Jesus promises them, ‘You have obeyed my word and been patient. So I will keep you safe in the time of trouble’ [Revelation 3:10, WE]. Will Jesus leave anyone alone who trusts in Him? Will Jesus allow Satan to take control of this person’s life? Of course not! Our Savior would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than allow Satan to take control of one person who trusts in Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 560, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What tricks and lies does Satan use today to control the minds of people? How does Satan use TV shows, movies, and social media to control people?
- ② Let’s say you had a friend who just lost a loved one. Your friend believes that the loved one is in heaven. What would you say to help your friend? How would you share your faith with your friend? What should you say? What should you NOT say?

## **A TOWN IN NIGERIA WITH NO ADVENTIST CHURCH**

The Nigerian town of Umuacha is located in an important place in southeast Nigeria. The town has a big market. Crowds from nearby towns visit the market every day. But there was no Seventh-day Adventist church in Umuacha.

More than 70 years ago, Adventist churches had been started in all the towns around Umuacha. But Umuacha had no church.

Why? The first Christian church opened in Umuacha more than 80 years earlier. The members of this church wanted to be the only church in town. As the years passed, the townspeople sold their land to people from other towns and other Christian religions. These new people built their own churches. The first church accepted these new Christians. But the first church announced that they would never welcome Adventists in their town because they worshiped on a different day.

Adventist members from churches in a nearby town tried to start a church in Umuacha. When the Adventists tried to hold meetings, no one in Umuacha would rent them a building. Then the church in the nearby village of Mba held meetings for two weeks outside the town of Umuacha. After the meetings, the church members from Mba started a Sabbath School class. But the class closed after only three months. Later, young people from Mba held Bible studies that brought several Umuacha families to the church in Mba on Sabbaths. But the families stopped going when their neighbors threw stones at them.

In 2021, church leaders made new plans for meetings in Umuacha. Again, they had trouble finding a place for the meetings. One landowner agreed to hold the tent meetings on his property. But then he changed his mind all of a sudden.

Then a Seventh-day Adventist church member named Christian tried to find a place for meetings. As Christian searched for a place, he met Chilaka, who was the owner of a school. Chilaka offered his school for the meetings. Christian accepted with a thankful heart.

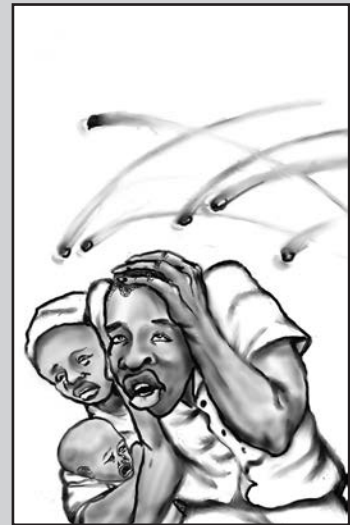
For a month, Adventist pastors preached the Good News about Jesus in Umuacha. A medical team joined the pastors. The team offered medical care to the sick. At the end of the meetings, 29 people were baptized. Then someone gave land to the Adventist church, and a church opened in Umuacha.

Caleb Ucheena Onyendi is a church leader in southeast Nigeria. Caleb said, "Today, the church is growing."

Caleb added, "God does everything right on time, just as He says He will in Exodus 9:5: 'The LORD has set the time for this to happen. He said, 'Tomorrow the LORD will make this [thing] happen in this country' " (ERV). That's just what He did in a town in Nigeria.

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**The families stopped going to church when their neighbors threw stones at them.**