

# What Does the Bible Say about Talking to the Dead?

Can we or should we talk to the dead?

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## Persuasion:

### I. Why do people want to talk to the dead?

A. Why is talking to God not enough?

1. I suspect that people want an immediate reply

2. that they can understand.

a) Whereas in prayer, we do not hold a conversation,

b) as we would with a human.

(1) In prayer, we have to wait and interpret things.

(2) In a séance, people have what we want immediately, allegedly.

B. How do they know they are truly speaking to the dead?

1. The leader plays tricks on the people in attendance.

2. The leader knows how to ask broad questions.

C. Also,

1. praying to God requires something or everything from us, but

2. consulting the dead requires nothing, except the fee for the medium.

### II. What does the Bible say?

A. Deuteronomy 18 shows the Lord considers it an abomination,

**10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a sooth-sayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you (Deu 18.10–12).**

1. Second Kings 21 shows that Manasseh provoked God's anger with these,

**6 Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger (2Ki 21.6).**

2. Leviticus 19 warns in two ways and gives two reasons why,

**31 "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God" (Lev 19.31).**

- a) Do not give any regard to them, wondering if they are true.
  - b) Do not even seek them.
  - c) Warnings given because:
    - (1) They will defile you.
    - (2) Jehovah is our God.
3. Warning is clear:
    - a) do not seek psychics, tarot readers, astrologers, et al., because
    - b) it is an abomination and
      - (1) they will defile you and
      - (2) provoke God's anger.

B. What are familiar spirits and wizards?

1. Familiar spirit — "a supposed demon or evil spirit that acts as a personal servant" for someone.
2. Wizard — "a magician; a conjurer (summons [dead] spirits); a sorcerer."
3. Isaiah 8 defines more of what they are and the deception they use,

**19 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? (Isa 8.19).**

4. First Samuel 28 shows their purpose, but also shows it to be false or fake,

**3** Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. **4** Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. **5** When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. **6** And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. **7** Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor." **8** So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you." **9** Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" **10** And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." **11** Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." **12** When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!" **13** And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." **14** So he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. **15** Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." **16** Then Samuel said: "Why then do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? **17** And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David" (1Sa 28.3–17).

- a) Verse 3–7 after Samuel was dead,  
(1) Saul inquired of God, but

(2) when he did not receive an answer he sought a necromancer.

b) Verses 8–14 show the woman's surprise, for

(1) she knew that she could not really conjure up the dead.

(2) How did Samuel appear?

(a) God did this because Saul had a hard heart.

(b) He gave him a strong delusion (Isa 66.3–4; 2Th 2).

c) Verse 15–17 serve as the main lesson,

(1) once God has spoken that is it,

(2) do not seek anything or anyone else.

C. How to detect these false prophets.

1. In Isaiah 8, the prophet just spoke of talking to the dead,

**19 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa 8.20).**

2. Samuel said God is the One with answers.

3. Abraham told a rich man in Luke 16,

a) that the Scriptures have everything we need to know.

b) In verses 29–31, Abraham explained that hearing from the dead will not help,

**29 Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." 30 And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." 31 But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16.29–31).**

### III. What about talking to the "saints"?