

# Zarah & Pharez

## Part Eight

### Questions & Answers

***\* Since sonship does not teach that the Scriptures were God's final word to mankind, does that mean that it allows for, or endorses the practice of such things as channeling or automatic writing in the communication of spiritual truth?***

We would be careful to clarify the fact that while the Scriptures are not God's final word to man, they *do* represent the touchstone against which everything else must be judged. In other words, every writing or utterance that is attributed to God must line up with the absolute teachings found in the canon of Scripture. Otherwise, they should be recognized as coming from another source.

As a starting point for our discussion, let's take a look at Hebrews 1:1. Here, it says that *God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son....*" What this is basically saying is that God has summarized all that He has ever said in Christ. Our Lord Jesus was the perfect embodiment of truth, the Word made flesh, Who dwelt among us. He incorporated every divine principle in the Scriptures in a walk that could be observed by men. Therefore, by examining the pattern Son in the Gospels, by viewing His life and teachings, we can understand exactly what was implied through the multitudes of prophecies, types and shadows found in the Old Testament. Regardless of how deep and mysterious some of them may have seemed, every one of them pointed to Jesus, and to the simple spiritual principles which He laid out, and lived out before us over the course of His earthly sojourn.

Another thing this verse speaks of is the internal ministry Christ is presently fulfilling in the hearts of believers. He is our great High Priest, carrying out His priestly duties behind the veil of human flesh. And, as High Priest, He acts as mediator between God and man. Not only does He make intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27; Heb. 7:25), but He also takes of the things of God, and shows them unto us (Jn.

16:14). He now abides with us as the Spirit of the Son sent into our hearts, Who is leading and guiding us into all truth (just as He promised that He would do; Jn. 16:13; 14:16-18). Therefore, because of His indwelling Spirit, we can expect Him to speak to us, not just about doctrinal matters, or about things which pertain solely to the Spirit, but about any subject with which we are faced. He *really will*, you know! But this is not to say that He no longer speaks through prophets or by means of prophecy. This would be in stark contradiction to other New Testament passages, such as I Cor. 14, I Thess. 5:20, Eph. 4:8-14, and others like them.

Without a doubt, prophecy has played a large part both in the decisions made by, and the direction of the New Testament Church. From the earliest days of church history, down to the present time, there have been numerous occasions where God has settled issues, or guided the saints through difficult situations which required nothing less than a direct Word from heaven. Not only has this been true for the church at large, but also for local congregations and individuals, as well. The Lord has spoken very precisely to those who've sought His assistance. Sometimes He has done this through random individuals, moving upon them to express what needed to be said at the moment. At other times, He has brought forth a word through certain individuals who were specifically called to the office of prophet or prophetess within the Body of Christ. (We might also add that sometimes, God speaks prophetic words during prayerful times of discourse between the spirit of an individual and the Spirit of the Lord. He then instructs that individual to record the exchange, to date it, and to make it available to others for the purpose of edification, exhortation, and comfort. This written form of prophecy is commonly referred to as journaling.) Those who claim that prophecy ceased with the decease of the apostles have simply denied the operation of a very valid gift given by God. When, pray tell, was the Lord supposed to have taken it back? We find nothing in scripture to suggest that such a retraction ever transpired.

Now, while the advocates of sonship defend both the office of the prophet, and the operation of prophecy as being legitimate means through which God communicates present truth, this is not to say that they accept all prophets and/or prophecies as being true. Neither do they consider to be valid everything that is presented as being a form of biblical prophecy. This, of course, brings us back to the question about channeling and automatic writing.

Those who are involved in New Age teachings would have us believe that channeling and automatic writing are both tenable expressions of prophecy. From their perspective, the Bible is full of examples of their operation, and they proclaim such individuals as Moses, David, Elijah, and even Jesus as being channelers. But there are fundamental differences between biblical prophecy and channeling.

Biblical prophecy occurs when the Spirit of God moves upon an individual, and inspires that individual with a divine utterance, whether it's expressed in spoken or written form. Channeling generally occurs when an entity *other than the Lord* takes possession of, and expresses itself through the individual (some might argue that *A Course in Miracles* would be an exception. Its author, Helen Schucman, claimed that the channeled entity

which spoke through her was Jesus. However, the entity's own testimony attests otherwise). According to their own claims, these entities include, not only the spirits of the dead (or the spirit of someone who once lived upon the earth, but who is thought to have entered into a heightened state of enlightenment), but also fairies, sprites, elves, polytheistic gods and goddesses, extraterrestrials, animals (usually dolphins), and even plants.

In order for an individual to channel, he generally has to enter into an altered state of consciousness. This state of mind can be reached in various ways, and at varying levels of control. Some channelers will have complete control of their bodies, while speaking the message of the spirit guide. Others will completely lose consciousness (referred to as a deep trance state), in order to allow the entity to speak through them without interruption. Those who enter into this level claim that once they have regained consciousness, they seldom (if ever) recall anything that has transpired. When it comes to automatic writing, those who practice it say that they usually remain completely conscious, but that they voluntarily yield control of their bodies so that the channeled entity may freely use their hands to transcribe messages.

(A good description of trance channeling would be like a ventriloquist's act where only the dummy is visible, and does all the speaking!)

With biblical prophecy, the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. While the Spirit of God speaks through them, they are at no time "out of it." They are fully aware of their surroundings, and are aware of the fact that the issuance of God's Word through them requires their complete cooperation. When Paul gave the instruction, "*quench not the Spirit*" (I Th. 5:19), the natural implication is that it is quite possible to do so (see also 2 Pet. 1:21). However, as we have stated above, this is not necessarily so with channelers.

That being said, therefore, it should be pointed out that THERE IS NOT ONE INSTANCE IN SCRIPTURE WHERE A DECEASED INDIVIDUAL, CELESTIAL BEING, OR SUPPOSED EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTITY EVER TOOK POSSESSION OF, OR SPOKE THROUGH A HUMAN ORACLE. (The closest thing we find to this is when the legion of devils spoke out of the man who dwelt among the tombs of Gadara). You would think that if this was something which the Lord intended to use in the communication of His will, He would have at least given one example of it in His Word. However, its absence is quite telling, to say the very least.

For the sake of those who may be unfamiliar with the background of channeling, and the course through which it acquired its current notoriety, we'll mention a few things about it. But for those interested in looking into the subject to a greater degree than we have done here, one of the best resources available (if not *the* best) is Jon Klimo's book *Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources*. Klimo claims that the earliest documentation for the practice can be dated as far back as the writing of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In it, details are given concerning the ability of the human spirit to leave the physical body, and to communicate with departed spirits.

Later, around 2000 BC, the Chinese were seen to have been involved with what might be regarded as the prototype of the modern Ouija board. Guidance was sought from ancient ancestors, who were thought to be able to see things mere mortals could not.

It was Edgar Cayce, during one of his psychic trances, who first associated the word *channel* with metaphysical practice. Dubbed "the sleeping prophet," Cayce is undoubtedly the most widely recognized channeler of recent times. Thousands of his transmissions have been cataloged, and have been made available to the general public. Whenever the subject is broached in conversation, his name is invariably brought up.

Cayce described channeling in the broadest of terms. He avoided using the word to simply describe contacts between the living and the dead. Nor did he confine its usage to just describe encounters between human personalities and the various realms of "Infinite Mind." According to him, channeling is something that we've all done at one time or another in our lives, and more often than we would imagine. That which has become fadish these days (that is, the kind of channeling that's usually broadcast on TV, or performed at New Age fairs and seminars) is but an advanced form of a very common phenomenon. In his opinion, there are as many ways of channeling as there are individuals.

Cayce taught that a channel is merely a means of transmission. It receives something beyond or outside of itself and passes it along. An illustration he used was this. When a thought comes to an individual, and that individual shares the idea with someone else, he or she has become a channeler of that idea. This is the way in which Cayce sought to present channeling. He wanted people to think of it as being as normal as waking up in the morning, and taking a walk in the park. However, we suspect that the real reason for this demystification was to remove the "fear factor" associated with paranormal phenomena, and to obtain greater public acceptance of it.

For sure, channeling of one form or another has been around for a long time. Its practice has been recognized in the most ancient of cultures, as far back as history has been recorded. But, as we'd pointed out in Part 2 of our series, it's been since the latter part of the nineteenth century, and throughout the twentieth, that channeling has enjoyed the popularity it has today. Beginning with the Fox Sisters, and the tapping noises which they claimed were coming from a dead peddler (and which, incidentally, they later confessed to have manufactured themselves), interest has risen steadily in this field, and channelers and mediums of all shapes and sizes have come out of the woodwork. What's more, the messages communicated through these individuals have become increasingly more detailed, describing, in no uncertain terms, exactly what it is that they want to say to this generation.

We have previously written about Madame Blavatsky's involvement in the Spiritist movement, and how channeling played such a major role in the writing of her books. According to her biography, visits from the other side were almost as common with her as were visits from her neighbors. And even though she attributed the majority of the contacts made during seances to an illustrious group of individuals who she called the

◦Ascended Masters," she nevertheless allowed for the possibility of communications with the dead (it should be noted, however, that in her view, death is but an illusion).

At any rate, one of the earliest mediums in the twentieth century to acquire a reasonable amount of notoriety was a student of Blavatsky's, Alice A. Bailey. An early leader in the Theosophical Society, and later the founder of the Arcane School of Esoteric Studies, Bailey published what she claimed to be channeled information from a Tibetan Master named Djwhal Khul. Because of the particular type of detailed information provided in her books (she wrote some twenty-five of them in all), D.K. became extremely popular among those in the metaphysical community. It was through his words that the troops were called (who he referred to as *the New Group of World Servers*; and it was also there that a New Age vision began to develop for universal enlightenment (the term, "New Age," in the context of which it is used these days, was first employed by Bailey). The thing that made Ms. Bailey's books so intriguing was the fact that their contents were supposedly coming from a channeled entity, rather than from Bailey herself.

For the next half-century, interest continued to percolate among those who were predisposed to metaphysical leanings. But it was not until the sixties and the seventies that channeling found its broadest acceptance among the general population. Of course, many reasons for this acceptance could be factored here, and many details are intentionally being left out (mainly due to the constraints of space); but part of it may be attributed to the first publication of channeled material by a major book publisher. Shortly after its release by Prentice-Hall in 1972, *Seth Speaks* rose to the top of the best-seller list, and sales of the book soared into the millions. From that time forward, Jane Roberts, the channeler of the Seth Material, and other channelers of similar stripe, were sorely pressed to produce more and more details of the spiritual world as described by their alien entities. These demands came from a generation that had rejected Modernism, and was anxious to acquire knowledge of, and to explore spiritual dimensions previously unknown to them.

In our recording of milestone events, we would be remiss not to mention a major one which involved actress Shirley MacLaine. Her five-hour miniseries, *Out on a Limb* (which aired in 1987), made her a key player in the promotion of New Age beliefs, and catapulted her into the limelight as a chief spokesperson for the movement. While there had been occasions where a few channelers had been interviewed on certain talk shows, it can be argued that Ms. MacLaine was the first to actually bring channeling into America's living room via the media of television.

Among channelers, the prime beneficiary of MacLaine's movie was sign-painter-turned-medium Kevin Ryerson. In it, he was given the opportunity to ◦display his gift◦ to millions of viewers, and to obtain a place among the stars. But while Ryerson may have been the channeling ◦headliner◦ in the show, the entire channeling community got a major lift from it. Channelers, such as J.Z. Knight (who supposedly channels a 35,000 year old warrior named Ramtha), Jach Pursel (who claims to be the exclusive channel for a spiritual intelligence known as Lazaris), and Penny Torres (who professes to speak for an extraterrestrial named Mafu), saw a significant increase in popularity, especially

among the rich and the famous. People began to think that if Hollywood celebrities and politicians were endorsing these individuals, there must be something to them.

Lately, Britain's John Edward has become the newest star in the paranormal firmament. His television program, *Crossing Over*, has attracted an enormous following in the USA, insomuch that there is a two year waiting list just to get tickets to the show. While Mr. Edward doesn't exhibit strange contortions or speak with different voices, the information that he provides is obviously enough to convince his guests that he is indeed communicating with their dead loved ones, and that they are in fact sending messages through him.

Be it known that those who promote channeling are not just interested in targeting a particular segment of society. They even attempt to win Christian approval by offering biblical confirmation for their practice. Generally, the first place to which they point is I Samuel 28:5-25, which gives the account of Saul and the witch of Endor. Since this is offered as a proof-text for their craft, we'll take a moment to examine it.

It must be conceded that within the Christian community, there are a number of opinions regarding this event. Some feel that through a sovereign act of God, Samuel was permitted to return, and speak to this rebellious old king. Others believe that the witch merely tricked Saul into believing that Samuel had made an appearance, when, in fact, it was nothing more than a clever impersonation by the woman herself. Still others feel that, while the woman may have been a participant, it was actually her familiar spirit that did the impersonation (so well, in fact, that even the woman was fooled). So, while there is no consensus on the matter in Christendom (much less among those in sonship), we'll simply share a few of our thoughts, and let the reader draw his or her own conclusion.

The scriptures make it plain that God had absolutely refused to respond to Saul's inquiries. Even though Saul had sought the Lord to speak to him by way of prophecy, dreams, and through the Urim, the heavens remained silent to his petitions. Therefore, if God would not speak to him by legitimate means, what makes us think that He would do so through an *illegitimate* one? This is certainly something to consider. It seems clear that Saul was very willfully and knowingly opening himself up to deception.

It should also be noted that, after Saul had failed to receive an answer from the Lord, the Bible states that he then *turned from* the Lord, and sought out someone who could put him in touch with a familiar spirit. This shows that he was no longer even expecting the Lord to speak to him, either directly or indirectly. He was fully expecting to obtain knowledge from another source, particularly, from an evil spirit.

A third thing that should be considered is that Saul never actually saw Samuel. Saul asked the woman to describe the entity which she saw coming up out of the earth to him, and, as a result of that description, he *perceived* that it was Samuel. But not once does Scripture say that Saul ever saw him for himself. He only *assumed* that it was Samuel, from the description given to him from the woman.

(On a personal note, I would find it extremely unsettling to think that, should I go by way of the grave, any old soothsayer that comes along could conjure me at his or her discretion! Even if I could, I would not want to make an appearance at a seance, while some medium was capitalizing off of my loved ones...would you? This is another reason why I find it difficult to believe that God would have subjected Samuel to such an experience. We know how vehemently opposed he would have been to it.)

The fourth point to which we would draw your attention is that Saul's death partly resulted from this act of rebellion. *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the Word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse* (I Chron. 10:13-14). Would it be likely that God would have caused what otherwise could not have been done, and then, turn around and punish Saul for it?

Whatever one's position might be on this scripture passage, the one thing of which we can be certain is that there are few things about which we can be certain. In other words, we have nothing solid upon which to settle regarding whether or not it was actually Samuel that appeared. And we have yet to hear an argument that has proven otherwise.

The same is true about the event which transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration. There are those who think that Jesus rescinded the statute against communicating with the dead when He spoke with Moses and Elijah, and, through His participation, made necromancy a perfectly legitimate practice. In fact, William Howitt wrote in his book, *History of the Supernatural*, that Christ broke the law before the very face of the lawgiver, *and by His example taught His disciples, the future proclaimers of His new law to the world, to do the same...* Adding to this, he went on to say that *the disciples, admitted to a convocation which would have brought the penalty of death upon their ancestors, found it so good for them, that they desired to build tabernacles, and remain with those illustrious dead.* (Volume I, pg. 197) So goes the argument. However, there is much which needs to be taken into account.

We believe that, in order to properly evaluate the story, it's first necessary to determine its purpose. So let's begin by doing that. Was the purpose of Jesus taking His disciples up the mount, and allowing them to experience what they did, to nullify the law, and to establish a forbidden practice? God forbid! Rather, it was to establish a divine principle, which would govern their understanding in the days to come. You see, Moses's appearance (whether one believes that it was real or not) was to serve as a symbol of the Law; Elijah's appearance was to represent the Prophets. Christ's redemptive work was foretold in both the Law and the Prophets. Both of them provide a foundation upon which the work is based. But when it is all said and done, and our attention is to be directed, it is not Jesus *and* the Law unto which we are to look, or Jesus *and* the Prophets, but JESUS ONLY. This is the message which stands out from the text.

That being said, therefore, we can return to the original question: did Moses and Elijah actually materialize on the Mount, or did they not? The purpose of the event would not

have necessarily required it. But there are two seemingly conflicting testimonies with which we must deal. The first would be something Peter said; the other would be something Jesus said immediately following the event. When Peter made mention of the story in his second epistle, he said, *For we have not followed after cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory...when we were with Him in the holy mount* (II Peter 1:16-18). From this, we know that this was not a fictitious account which was ingeniously manufactured by the disciples. Peter was obviously convinced that they had witnessed something with their eyes that day, which had to do with the power and coming of the Lord. But you may also recall that, on their way back down the mount, Jesus told His disciples, *Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead* (Matt.17:9). What, then, are we to make of these things? Are we to conclude that the accounts given by Peter and Jesus contradicted each other? Not at all. We can say that at least part of what transpired occurred before the eyes of Peter, James and John, while the other part took place as a vision. But which?

While we are left without any plain statements of fact, we should pay special attention to Peter's words. What, exactly, did he say that they had eyewitnessed? **The majesty of the Lord.** From this, we know that at least the first part of the experience had been optimally observed by the disciples. They *did* witness the transfiguration with their own eyes. They beheld Him as He prayed; and they beheld Him as He was changed. But then, as they were looking upon this awesome scene of glory and majesty, our text says that *there appeared* to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him. (It may or may not be of significance to some, but we found it interesting that this is the very same word that was used in Acts 16:9-10, when describing an experience of Paul's. *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* ) We know that, following the discourse concerning the building of tabernacles, and after the cloud overshadowed the mount, the disciples opened their eyes once again, and they saw no man with them except for Jesus. Thus, we may conclude that the vision had now ended, and that they had returned to seeing normally again.

While this may not establish exactly when the visionary part of the experience actually began (some might contend that it began with the overshadowing cloud), it does, at least, raise reasonable doubt as to whether Moses and Elijah were actually manifested on the Mount. So Matthew 17 can no more provide the justification some would desire from it than could I Samuel 28.

Since neither of these passages prove anything in regard to communications with the dead, (as that this was never the purpose in their being included in the scriptures), we must ask ourselves: are there any scriptures which do articulate God's mind on the matter? We believe that there are.

Deut. 18:9-12... *When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be*

*found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, 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. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.○*

*Lev. 19:31...○Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.○*

*Lev. 20:6... ○And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.○*

If we'll be honest about it, we'll have no problem seeing exactly how God views such things. Without reservation, and without any qualification whatsoever, the Lord refers to them as abominations, and means by which an individual may be defiled. He also says quite plainly that He will set His face against those who turn to these practices, and that, in the process, He will cut them off from being associated with His people. Therefore, it's imperative that those who would make concessions for them carefully consider the consequences. As can be seen by these verses, this is no small matter with the Lord. It constitutes a serious breach of spirit (how well Saul learned this)!

For those who accept God's Word as the final authority on every issue, this should settle it once and for all. But there is another angle from which we can determine the mind of the Lord. That would be in regard to the testimony that channeled entities, and their channelers bear. In relation to this, Paul wrote to the Galatians, saying, *○But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed○* (Gal. 1:8). To emphasize how serious he was, the apostle repeated his warning a second time (v.9). And John said that we should *○believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God○* (I John 4:1). The test that he recommended was an examination of the testimony which they provide.

With such vast numbers of channelers, and channeled entities, you would think that there would be a wide variation between their messages. But, after having conducted our own examination into the matter, we found that, with few exceptions, they maintain the same common ideas that exist in almost all New Age teachings. We could offer numerous quotes here, direct from *○the horse's mouth,"* so to speak, but suffice it to say that these would include such ideas as...

\*There are no absolutes which apply to all people; all truth is relative to the individual.

\*Death is just an illusion; rebirth (reincarnation) is the reality.

\*All is One, and the One is all; only our dualistic perception makes it seem otherwise.

\*We are all gods, divine in nature and in essence, but have chosen to exist on the earth as human beings.

\*In this life there are no victims, only karmic consequences. However, we do have the opportunity to change our future.

\*We can alter, and thus create reality by exercising the powers of Universal Mind.

These ideas may be fascinating to consider, even conceivable, if one should attempt to measure them by, say, the Bhagavad-Gita, or the Upanishads. But Isa. 8:19-20 says, *○And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, 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.*** ○ This is said as clearly as is possible that those who bring forth such messages abide in darkness, and are not in any way speaking for the true and living God.

Allow us to say that in regard to those who have died in the faith, Hebrews 11 concludes by saying that *○these all, having obtained a good report by faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* ○ (Vs. 39-40). But were we to accept the testimony of channeled entities and their channelers, we would be inclined to believe that we without *them* (that is, without those who have already crossed over) cannot be made perfect. This will simply not do. We would also add that in the beginning of the twelfth chapter of the same book, we are told that we are encompassed by a great cloud of witnesses (v.1). Keep in mind that this is still referring to those who died in the faith, who did not receive the promises, but who nevertheless saw them afar off (11:13). But nowhere does it say that these witnesses ever serve as messengers. To read that into the text would be to commit a deliberate error (and a dangerous one, at that).

Some may ask, therefore: If this is the general position of those who embrace the hope of sonship, why, then, have they been accused of teaching (or, at least, allowing for) communications with the dead?

One reason is because of direct and deliberate statements made by some who have identified themselves with the message. For these, we make no excuses. We will simply say that they speak for themselves. We categorically deny association with their teachings, and distance ourselves from their claims. They are clearly outside the parameters of scripture, and of sound sonship doctrine.

Another reason is because some have unwittingly left that impression. They have failed to think certain ideas through to their logical conclusions before proclaiming them; and, in doing so, have unintentionally lent support for Spiritism. An example of such a teaching is the one which says that there is no such thing as a special species of creatures known as angels. According to this idea, every angel mentioned in scripture can be shown to be just a man (either one who is living or one who has died). This would

naturally suggest that some who pass from this life to the next are used by God as heavenly couriers, bearing messages for the living. (This line of reasoning is not far removed from the one which suggests that people *become* angels when they die...as is advanced through the TV series, *Touched by an Angel*).

We are aware of the fact that the word *angelos* is a generic word in its original language. It can speak of a terrestrial messenger, as well as a celestial one (the context in which it is used is the determining factor). For instance, Paul could rightly have been referred to as an angel, for he bore a special message from God to His people. In fact, the Galatian church received him as such (Gal. 4:14). Also, the *angels* of the seven churches of Asia, to whom John wrote in the Book of Revelation, were, most likely, the pastors of those particular churches. This is a long-held belief among many theologians, and represents nothing peculiar. So it is entirely reasonable to say that the term angel can refer to either a man or a celestial being. However, regarding the idea that angels are nothing more than men, either those who are alive or those who are dead...the first couple of chapters of the Book of Hebrews sheds much light. Here, we learn that, in Christ, we have a better covenant, with better promises, and a better relationship with the Father than that of angels. Some of the ways in which our relationship is greater are these:

- 1) no angel has ever had it said to him that he is a begotten son of God (1:5).
- 2) will never sit at God's right hand on His Throne (1:13).
- 3) they are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that are heirs of salvation. They are not heirs themselves, nor do they share in the inheritance of the saints (1:14).
- 4) the world to come has not been put in subjection to them (2:5).
- 5) Christ took not upon Himself the nature of angels, but took upon Himself the likeness of the seed of Abraham (2:16). He was made so much better than the angels, as He by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (1:4).

Therefore, we would have to conclude that angels are either a separate class of creatures, uniquely created by the breath of God's mouth (Psa. 33:6), or else they represent a class of men who will never partake of the inheritance that's reserved for those in Christ. We're inclined to believe that the former is the case, rather than the latter. Need we say more?

Another idea associated with this is one which suggests that the angel who spoke with John on the isle of Patmos was the recently deceased Paul. This assumption is based on the fact that the angel forbade John to worship him, saying, *See that thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God* (Rev. 22:8-9). The statement that he was of John's brethren the prophets has led some to believe that it may very well have been Paul. But we find no reason to accept such an idea. The fact of the matter is that angelic beings do have a particular kind of kinship with us in a creative sense (*not* in a begotten sense, you

understand, but in a created one), and this would therefore qualify them as fellowservants and brethren of ours. We needn't read more into his statement than that. (However, we will add this. We would find it strange that, had Paul had any thought that he would be ministering after his decease, he would have said what he did in his letter to the Philippians. You may recall that, at the time of the writing, he had been incarcerated, and was contemplating an uncertain future. He had no idea what was going to happen to him next. He had determined that, regardless of the outcome, he would magnify Christ in his body, whether by life or by death. But he said that he was torn between two choices...having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which was far better for him, or to abide in the flesh, which was more needful for those to whom he ministered. This clearly shows that Paul knew that it was necessary for him to abide in the flesh, if he were going to continue to minister to those on this side of the veil. Otherwise, it wouldn't have mattered whether or not he departed. Either way, his ministry would have continued uninterrupted. We also find that this is in keeping with what Jesus implicitly taught through the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The Lord's refusal to send Lazarus back to speak to the rich man's brothers shows that He has obviously chosen not to use the dead as messengers to those who dwell in the land of the living.)

A third reason why opponents of sonship have accused its teachers of promoting necromancy has to do with a teaching which associates speaking with the dead with communicating with the old man, Adam. This criticism stems from a simple misunderstanding on the part of the critics themselves, and needs only a bit of clarification.

According to the Scriptures, Adam is a dead man. He was crucified with Jesus when He was nailed to the cross. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin* (Romans 6:6). We'll not go into a detailed explanation about it here, but there are three things that Paul says we should know: 1) that our old man *is* (present tense) crucified with Him (that is, with Christ), (in order) that 2) the body of sin might be destroyed; and, therefore, because of these things, we should 3) henceforth not serve sin. In fact, he goes on to say that we are to *reckon [ourselves] to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom. 6:11). The reason for all of this is because of our identification with Christ. He became like us, that we could be like Him (II Cor. 5:21). Paul also wrote to the Corinthian church that *if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* (II Cor. 5:17). Therefore, because the old things (that is, the things which belong to the old man) have passed away, deceased, perished, or however else we might choose to say it, sin should have no dominion over us, and we do not have to yield to the dictates of the flesh and of the mind.

To strengthen this belief in the minds of his students, Paul used an analogy in Romans chapter 7, likening the believer to a woman in the bonds of matrimony. He said that as long as the woman's first husband is still alive, she cannot be joined to another. But if her husband is dead, she is free to marry again. Therefore, if there is any truth to the scripture verse which reads, *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit* (I Cor. 6:17), it

would have to mean that the old man is dead, otherwise our union with Christ is illegitimate.

Looking at it from this perspective, it stands to reason that, should a believer acknowledge or consult with the old man, he or she would be guilty of committing a form of spiritual necromancy. In the eyes of the Lord, it would be no different than a woman seeking to communicate with her dead husband, at the expense of showing disrespect to her living one. Having said that, however, this is not to say that the natural application no longer exists. (Some may have said such a thing, but they obviously do not represent sonship teachings.) Nor is it to say that the spiritual application negates the natural one. (That would be as foolish as saying that, because we understand that there is a spiritual application regarding murder, it is no longer condemned in the natural.) Necromancy is still forbidden as a practice, and no true son of God would ever attempt to suggest otherwise. But that there is a spiritual sense in which this should be taken is quite clear.

Allow us to say that the New Testament does mention the return of those who have died ~~PtPtPt~~ but not as disembodied spirits, who come with information for the living. Nor do they need to come to receive anything from us, either. (Please understand that when Paul said in Hebrews 11:40 that they without us should not be made perfect, he never meant to suggest that *we* would somehow be responsible for *their* perfection. He simply meant that they shall not precede us in its possession. This is supported by every modern translation that we know of, including the Amplified Bible, which renders it, *they should not come to perfection apart from us [that is, before we could join them]*.<sup>o</sup> Let it be clearly understood, then, that their perfection, as well as ours, will be the result of Christ's work, at His appointed time...and we'll not be able to take credit for it.) In I Thessalonians chapter 1, we read that Christ will come with ten thousands of His saints. However, the reason for their return is not for the sake of *communication*...but that they might experience *the resurrection*. After this has occurred, then they, too, will be able to participate in God's aonian purpose, the restitution of all things. But not until then.

It is true that Jesus spoke to the dead ~~PtPtPt~~ but only when He was raising them out from among the dead! After they'd heard the voice of the Son of God, they came to life (Jn 5:25; 11:1-44; Lk. 7:11-15; Mk. 5:38-43). And only then did they ever speak back to Him (also keep in mind that there is a difference between speaking to someone, and speaking with them.). Furthermore, for those who would suggest that since Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth to preach to the spirits which were in prison (I Pet. 3:19-20), we, as priests after the order of Melchizedek, should now be able to do the same, we would but remind them that this was *after* Jesus had given up the Ghost Himself, having been put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (I Peter 3:18). Therefore, until we have done the same, we should but concern ourselves with the reconciliation of those individuals currently abiding in the flesh, and commit the rest to God.

To summarize, then, channeling and automatic writing would both be considered satanic counterfeits by those who embrace the message of sonship. Neither of them find sanction from the Scriptures, nor do they fit the biblical profile of prophecy. However, it's extremely important that God's people understand why they are to reject these things.

None should ever think that they're too spiritual to fall into strong delusion, or that they could never be taken in by those who traffic in it. Experiences can be very convincing, especially if one is being led by the senses. Furthermore, we're persuaded that as we make this great transition of the ages, there will be an onslaught of satanic spirits seeking avenues through which to speak to mankind. Familiar (marginal rendering is ○pythonic○) spirits can extract very private and personal information from the realm of the psyche, which, in turn, can give them the appearance of being someone that they're not. Therefore, we would admonish all who read these lines to take a firm and uncompromising stand against all such contacts, knowing that the eventual outcome will be grievous.

to be continued...

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