

End-Time Tricks and Lies



SABBATH—DECEMBER 3

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Matthew 7:21–27; 1 Kings 17:22–24; Hebrews 9:25–28; 1 Samuel 28:3–25.

MEMORY VERSE: “That comes as no surprise. Even Satan himself pretends to be an angel of light. So it doesn’t surprise us that Satan’s servants also pretend to be serving God. They will finally get exactly what they deserve [punishment]” (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15, NlrV).



Hollywood makes many movies about religion and miracles. But most of these movies are filled with lies and false teachings that don’t match Bible truth.

MODERN LIFE is filled with books, entertainment, movies, and news stories about strange and surprising happenings. These “miracles” include secret knowledge about ghosts, visitors from outer space, and messages from dead people. Hollywood makes many movies about religion and miracles. But most of these movies are filled with lies and false teachings that don’t match Bible truth. These movies tell us the same lie that the snake told Eve: “ ‘You will not die’ ” (Genesis 3:4, ERV). This lie also is in some of the most-read books and popular computer games. For sure, Satan wants to turn our attention away from God. Satan uses many tricks and lies to do that. Sometimes Satan even “hides” his lies with science.

One of Satan’s biggest tricks is “near-death experiences” (NDEs). An NDE is an experience that someone had after he or she “died.” Then this person comes back to life with stories about heaven. Many people say that NDEs are proof that the spirit never dies and lives forever!

This week, we’ll look at some of Satan’s end-time tricks and lies. We should know about these dangers.

BUILDING ON THE ROCK (Matthew 7:21–27)

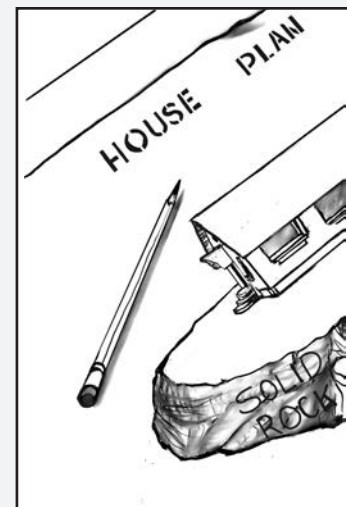
One of Satan’s end-time lies is mysticism. Mysticism is a religious experience that includes many different teachings. The basic belief is that a person’s spirit joins with a Higher Power. Sometimes the person who has this experience looks as if he or she is asleep. But he or she can move, talk, answer questions, and follow commands the same as a person who is awake. Sad to say, this worship experience is part of some Christian churches today. The Christians in these churches always replace Bible truth with their own feelings and experience. So, this religious experience really tries to make a person “God.” This religious experience puts Christians in danger. Mysticism doesn’t keep a person safe from Satan’s lie.

In Matthew 7:21–27, Jesus talks about building our houses “on rock” or “on sand.” What does Jesus mean?

Today, many Christian churches say that Bible teachings are not important. They say that the most important thing is not **what** you know but **who** you know. So, they replace Jesus’ teachings with Jesus Himself. These Christians feel that Bible truth is old-fashioned and not very popular. They say that some Bible stories or teachings can’t really be true. Why? Because they believe Jesus would never let things happen the way the Bible says. So, these Christians don’t pay attention to some Bible stories or teachings. One of these teachings is obedience to God. We can’t have strong faith when we remove some of God’s laws. We must “build” our faith the same as a house on a strong rock.

So, people are in danger who think they only need to believe in Jesus. Remember, Roman Catholics who killed Protestants during the Dark Ages also believed in Jesus. The people who cast out demons in Jesus’ name believed in Jesus, too (Matthew 7:22). “One of Satan’s biggest lies is the idea that our beliefs are not important. Satan knows that when we accept Bible truth, the truth will make us holy. So, Satan always tries to substitute false ideas, false stories, and false Good News for Bible truth.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 520, adapted.

How can we fight against the feeling or wish to do things that God’s Word warns us not to do?



We must “build” our faith the same as a house on a strong rock.

NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES (1 Kings 17:22–24)

In modern times, people say that “near-death experiences,” or NDEs, are proof that the spirit never dies. That is what Raymond A. Moody, Junior talks about in his book. Moody’s book is named *Life After Life: The Investigation of a Phenomenon: Survival of Bodily Death* (Atlanta, GA: Mockingbird, 1975). In his book, Moody talks about his five-year study of more than 100 people who “died” and then came back to life. These people said they met a loving person covered with light. Some scientists say that these stories are “exciting proof that the human spirit continues to live after the body dies” (back cover).

Read these Bible stories about people who wake up from the dead: 1 Kings 17:22–24; 2 Kings 4:34–37; Mark 5:41–43; Luke 7:14–17; and John 11:40–44. How many of these stories talk about a person’s spirit staying alive during the time that the person was dead? Why is this answer important?

All near-death experiences, or NDEs, happen to people whose doctors say they are dead. But the people are not **really** dead. That’s different from the story about Lazarus (John 11). Lazarus really died. He was dead for four days. His body started to rot (John 11:39). But Lazarus never talks about any experience he had while he was dead. The other Bible stories show the same thing. None of the people who died talk about any experience they had in heaven or in hell. If Bible writers had NDEs, they would talk about it. But they don’t write about NDEs in the Bible. So, we must pay attention to the Bible truth about what happens when we die (read Job 3:11–13; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:10)!

But what about NDEs that happen today? If we accept the Bible teaching that the dead sleep, then there only can be two explanations for these reports. (1) The NDEs today must be caused by natural chemical experiences in the brain that come from stress. These chemical changes make a person think the NDE is real when it isn’t. Or (2), the NDE is a lying trick from Satan (2 Corinthians 11:14). No doubt Satan causes many of these NDEs because some of the people who “died” say they talked to their dead family members! We must reject any experience that goes against Bible truth.

Many NDEs are accepted by scientists as “proof” that the spirit doesn’t die. Why must we be careful to trust science only when it agrees with the Bible?



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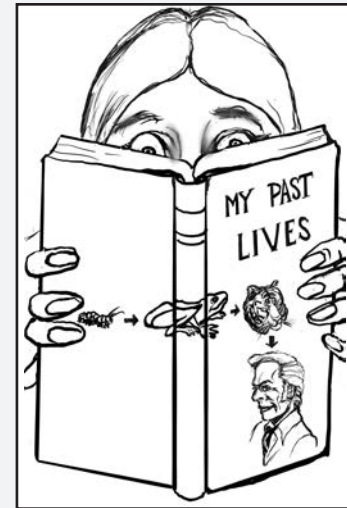
BORN AGAIN WITH A DIFFERENT BODY (Hebrews 9:25–28)

During Bible times, pagans believed that a person's spirit continued living after his or her body died. Pagans worship nature, planets, or many false gods. Sad to say, many Christians today believe in pagan ideas. These Christians believe that when a person dies, he lives in heaven or in hell. This idea came from pagan teachings. Pagan religions also teach reincarnation. Reincarnation is the false idea that a person's spirit is born many times on this earth.

Some people believe that reincarnation is the same as spiritual evolution. Evolution is the teaching that all life came from slow changes that happened over a very long time. So, reincarnation is a way for a person's spirit to become wiser and better each time it is born. People who believe in the Hindu religion teach that there are six groups of life on this earth. The lowest group is (1) life from the sea. The group above that is (2) plants; (3) then animals with cold blood and insects; (4) birds; (5) animals; and, finally, (6) the highest group is humans.

Read Hebrews 9:25–28 and 1 Peter 3:18. Jesus needed to die only “one time” (Hebrews 9:28, ERV). All humans die only “once [one time]” (Hebrews 9:27, ERV). So, why do some Christians believe in reincarnation? As we already learned, reincarnation is the false idea that a person's spirit never dies but comes back many times again on this earth.

If we accept the Bible, there's no way we can believe in reincarnation. Here are five reasons why: (1) Reincarnation goes against the Bible teaching that the spirit dies and that God will wake up the body from the dead at the Second Coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). (2) Reincarnation teaches that we are saved by our good behavior and that we don't need Jesus to save us (Ephesians 2:8–10). (3) Reincarnation goes against the Bible teaching that we choose to accept or reject the gift of everlasting life by the decisions we make in this life (Matthew 22:1–14; Matthew 25:31–46). (4) Reincarnation makes people feel that Jesus' Second Coming is not important (John 14:1–3). (5) Reincarnation says that you get more chances after you die to correct your mistakes in another life (Hebrews 9:27). These are four reasons why Christians can't accept reincarnation.



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COMMUNICATING WITH DEAD LOVED ONES (1 Samuel 28:3–25)

Necromancy is one of Satan's tricks from Old Testament times. Necromancy is communication with dead people. The word "necromancy" comes from two Greek words: "**nekros**" (dead) and "**manteia**" (fortunetelling). Often people practice necromancy to get from the spirits special knowledge about the future. Satan also invented the belief that we should pray for dead family members and worship them. People believe the spirits of their dead loved ones can change their lives. Many people today accept these lies because they miss their dead loved ones.



God forbids His people to talk with witches, wizards, magicians, fortunetellers, or evil spirits.

Read about Saul's experience with the witch of Endor in 1 Samuel 28:3–25. What does this story teach us about why we shouldn't try to communicate with "dead" spirits?

God forbids His people to talk with witches, wizards, magicians, fortunetellers, or evil spirits. God commanded His people to kill these people with stones (Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:9–14). So, King Saul killed all these evil people (1 Samuel 28:3, 9).

Later, Saul went to the witch at Endor after God rejected him (1 Samuel 28:6, 7, 15; compare with Joshua 17:11; Psalm 83:10). Endor was a city in the land of Canaan. Saul asked the witch to wake up the prophet Samuel from the dead. A prophet is a special messenger from God. The witch "woke up" an evil spirit who pretended to be Samuel. The evil spirit talked with Saul (1 Samuel 28:13–19). The spirit told Saul, "Tomorrow, you and your sons will be here with me" (1 Samuel 28:19, ERV). The evil spirit told a powerful lie. He made Saul think that a person's spirit stays alive after his body dies.

More than 200 years later, Isaiah wrote about people who communicate with the dead in secret and ask them for advice. Isaiah says, "Why don't we ask God first?" Why should people ask the dead for advice? Then Isaiah tells the people to put their faith in the teaching and the Law. "If they [people] do not speak what this word says, it is because they have no light [Bible truth] in them" (Isaiah 8:19, 20, NLV; also read Isaiah 19:3).

How often do we do bad things, as King Saul did, when we feel stressed? Why are faith, prayer, and obedience to Bible truth the only things that will keep us safe?

CAN THE DEAD COME BACK TO US? (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15)

Sometimes demons pretend to be our dead loved ones, friends, or family members. The demons appear to people who knew the dead loved ones when they were alive. The evil spirits make themselves look and talk the same way the dead person did. All these lies are Satan's tricks. Satan uses these tricks to fool people who don't know Bible truth. Ellen G. White warns, "In the end times, lying spirits will pretend to be Jesus' followers who woke up from the dead. These spirits will reject Bible truth and teach lies. Satan Himself will pretend to be Jesus."—*The Great Controversy*, page 624, adapted.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15 and Ephesians 6:10–18. What do these verses tell us we should do to protect ourselves from Satan's tricks and his lying demons?

Paul warns us that "our fight is not with people. It [our fight] is against the leaders and the powers and the spirits of darkness [evil] in this world [earth]. It [our fight] is against the demon world [group] that works in the heavens" (Ephesians 6:12, NLV). We can be protected from these lying demons only when we put on the whole battle suit that God gives us (Ephesians 6:13–18).

These lying demons can try to scare us. But they can't trick or fool the people who are protected by God and who know and trust Bible truth. As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe the Bible truth that the spirit doesn't live forever. We know that the Bible teaches that the dead can't communicate with us or appear to us. So, we must reject any evil spirit who pretends to be a dead loved one. The dead loved one may look very real. He or she may act and talk the same way our loved one did. But we must always stand firm on the teaching that the dead are asleep in the grave.

Let's say that you lost a loved one. Then this loved one appears to you. He tells you how much he loves you and misses you. He says things that only your dead loved one knew. Then he says that he is now in heaven. Can you see how much danger a person will be in when this happens if he or she doesn't know Bible truth? He or she could believe the lie. Worse, he or she may want to believe it.

What does it mean to put on God's battle suit? How do we do this day by day in every part of our lives?



We can be protected from these lying demons only when we put on the whole battle suit that God gives us.



“Spirits who pretend to be friends and loved ones sometimes appear to the people who knew the dead family members or friends when they were alive. The spirits talk about the same things the dead people talked about when they were alive. The spirits also do the same things the dead people did when they were alive.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Dealing With False Science, Cults, Isms, and Secret Societies,” pages 602–609, in *Evangelism*; and “Spiritism,” pages 86–93, in *Confrontation*.

There is a business that is inventing a way for people to communicate with the dead. The website for the business says that when humans die, they go to another place forever. But their spirits continue to live. The spirits have the same personality they had when they had a body. Many other things about the spirits are the same, too. So, they can communicate with their loved ones.

The business’s invention will allow communication between the living and the dead in three ways. First, the business’s invention will allow the dead and the living to communicate with each other by texts. They can have conversations with each other about any topic they want. Second, the invention will allow the living to talk with their dead loved ones who are living in another part of forever. Third, the business says it will allow the living to hear and see their dead loved ones, too.

This invention is scary. What’s worse is that the business tries to show that the dead loved ones are really who they say they are. The business says, “A sad parent may ask his or her dead son or daughter the following question: ‘Did you have a dog named Snoopy when you were a child? Did we give you a pocketknife for your tenth birthday?’ ” This warning from Ellen G. White helps us understand the terrible danger from the business’s invention: “Spirits who pretend to be friends and loved ones sometimes appear to the people who knew the dead family members or friends when they were alive. The spirits talk about the same things the dead people talked about when they were alive. The spirits also do the same things the dead people did when they were alive.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 684, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Many Christians accept popular beliefs because they learn about them from TV. What Bible rules should help us to know what to accept and what to reject from TV and the news? (Read Psalm 101:1–8; Proverbs 4:23; and Philippians 4:8.)
- 2 How can we help people to stay safe from Satan’s end-time tricks and lies? At the same time, what must we do to keep ourselves safe from these tricks and lies while we help other people?

A BRAVE WITNESS FOR JESUS

On the first day of class, a classmate asked Sandra for her permission to let him take a picture of her class notes with his cell phone. “I saw you are writing in English,” he said. “I want to improve my English skills.”

Classes at the university in the Middle East were not taught in English. But English was Sandra’s first language. So, it was easier for her to take notes in English. “Here you are,” Sandra said, holding out her notebook.

The next day, the classmate again asked for her permission to take pictures of her notes. After he asked to take pictures for several days, Sandra decided to start writing her favorite Bible verses at the bottom of the pages of her notebook. The next time the classmate asked to take a picture, Sandra felt worried. Would he stop asking to see her notes when he saw the Bible verses? Sandra prayed for God to use the Bible verses to bring honor and praise to His name.

At first, the classmate didn’t pay attention to the Bible verses. But after a couple of days, he saw that Sandra’s notes had information that the teacher hadn’t talked about during the class. The classmate went to Sandra and pointed to a verse at the bottom of a page. “Is this a verse from the Bible?” he asked.

“Yes,” Sandra said as she wondered how to explain it.

The classmate asked, “Is this how you help yourself study?”

Sandra smiled. “Exactly. I write my favorite verses in my notebook. They are really helpful and useful for my life.”

After that day, the classmate asked Sandra many questions about her religion and beliefs. Sandra taught him about the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When the class ended, the classmate asked to make a copy of Sandra’s whole notebook. He wanted to share the notebook with his family.

Sandra hasn’t had another class with her friend since that time. But they stay in touch. He often asks her for advice about life. Sandra prays for her friend. She thanks God for helping her to be brave enough to write the Bible verses at the bottom of her notebook pages.

This story shows two parts of the “I Will Go” Plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Growth Task Number 1 is: “The church will serve God and support His work worldwide. The church will make supporting God’s work its way of life.” Church Growth Task Number 2 is: “The church will help the Adventist Church grow strong in new ways in large cities. We will share Jesus with people who do not know Him in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.” Read more at IWillGo2020.org.

INSIDE
Story
by RICK McEDWARD



“Is this a verse from the Bible?” he asked.

