

Can We Really Talk To The Dead?

A True Story by Joe Rose

(Discipleship Lesson 29)

Read the entire lesson and then answer the questions that follow.

I grew up in a little coal mining town in Pennsylvania called Scranton. Horoscopes, astrology and tarot cards were the accepted way of predicting things to come. At night, my mom and grandma would have séances in our living room. They would read tarot cards and talk to the spirits of those who had died years before. Mom and grandma said they would “get messages” from spirits. Sometimes I would hear knockings, and other strange noises, and even actual voices of the spirits in our living room. One night my grandma said she saw “Lucky Lucy” going down. The next morning we read in the paper that a plane named “Lucky Lucy” crashed shortly after my grandma said she saw it go down. We saw spirits materialize, tables levitate, and spirits talk through people in trances. Friend, can we really talk to the dead? Can we really tell the future by reading tarot cards and communicating with spirits? Are these kinds of things for real?

What I have learned by studying scripture is this: in Luke 16:19-31, Jesus tells the story of a rich man and a beggar. “There was a man who always dressed in fine clothes and was so rich that he was able to feast and party every day. One day Lazarus, a diseased beggar, was laid at his door. As he lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. Finally the beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham in the place of the righteous dead. The rich man also died and was buried, and his soul went to hell. There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham. ‘Father Abraham,’ he shouted, ‘have some pity! Send Lazarus over here if only to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in these flames.’ But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm separating us, and anyone wanting to come to us from here is stopped at its edge; and no one over there can cross to us.’ Then the rich man said, ‘O Father Abraham, then please send him to my father’s home—for I have five brothers—to warn them about this place of torment lest they come here when they die.’ But Abraham said, ‘The Scriptures have warned them again and again. Your brothers can read them any time they want to.’ The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham, they won’t bother to read them. But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.’ But Abraham said, ‘if they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even though someone rises from the dead’” (LB). In this story, Jesus clearly tells us that neither those in hell or those in heaven can return to earth and communicate with us but that we have Moses and the prophets in the Bible, which is God’s Word.

In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, the Bible says, *“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you”* (NIV).

In 1986 I realized that necromancy (attempting to talk to the dead), consulting with familiar spirits (devils), predicting the future by tarot cards, and reading horoscopes are all abominations to God. Jesus is calling each one of us personally into a relationship where we look to HIM for direction and guidance. We don't need to ask familiar spirits (devils) what we should do. We have a loving and all powerful God, who is calling out to you to accept Jesus as your personal Savior, repent from your sins and receive eternal life (Romans 6:23, and 10:13 *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,"* and [13] *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"*).

Please consider calling on Jesus to be your personal Lord and Savior. He will give you eternal life with Him in paradise (Romans 10:9-10: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. [10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"*). He will also give you the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13 *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"*).

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Answer the following by reading the corresponding discipleship lesson and using your Bible.

1. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-12 (verse 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. [10] There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, [11] Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. [12] For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."* We see from reading these verses that God is the only source of information that we need. Going to witches and trying to consult the dead or familiar spirits are all a _____ unto the Lord.

2. Read Luke 16:19. *"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."* Jesus said, there was a certain rich man who always wore expensive clothes and lived in luxury every day.

True or False.

3. Read Luke 16:20. *"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores."* There was a certain beggar named Saul, who was laid at the gate of the rich man's house, was covered with sores.

True or False.

4. Read Luke 16:21. *“And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.”* Lazarus (the poor man) wanted to eat the small pieces of food that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs came and licked his sores.

True or False.

5. Read Luke 16:22. *“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.”* It came to pass that the beggar died, and that was the end of him.

True or False.

6. Read Luke 16:22. *“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.”* The rich man also died and his body was buried.

True or False.

7. Read Luke 16:23. *“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”* Although this rich man’s body (which included his eyes) was buried, in hell he had eyes and could see.

True or False.

8. Read Luke 16:23. *“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”* Even though the rich man’s physical body was buried, he was still able to feel.

True or False.

9. Read Luke 16:24. *“And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”* Even though the rich man’s physical body was buried, he could still speak.

True or False.

10. Read Luke 16:25. *“But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”* The rich man could remember the things that had happened on the earth (during his lifetime).

True or False.

11. Read Luke 16:26. *“And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”* After death there is a place of comfort (like heaven) and a place of torment. No one can cross over from one place to the other.

True or False.

12. Read Luke 16:27-28. *“Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: [28] For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”* The dead rich man had a request that someone might go to his father’s house on earth (to the living) and testify to his brothers.

True or False.

13. Read Luke 16:28. *“For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”* The dead rich man had five living brothers on earth. He wanted them to be “testified” to so that they might escape the place of torment he was in. The word “testify” means to confirm a thing by testimony and cause it to be believed. What did he want his brothers to believe?

14. Read Luke 16:29. *“Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”* Abraham told the rich man that his brothers needed to hear (take heed) Moses and the prophets. This is another way of saying that they have the Word of God and can read it anytime they want.

True or False.

15. Read Luke 16:30. *“And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.”* What did these brothers need to do to escape the torments of hell? _____

16. Read Luke 16:31. *“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”* If people won’t listen to the Word of God, neither will they be persuaded if one comes from the dead.

True or False.

17. Can you see how important it is to listen to and obey the Word of God?

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(Discipleship Answer Key)

Do not look at the answer key until you have completed the questions.
Compare your answers with the following answers.

1. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-12 (verse 12). We see from reading these verses that God is the only source of information that we need. Going to witches and trying to consult the dead or familiar spirits are all **abominations** unto the Lord.

2. Read Luke 16:19. Jesus said, there was a certain rich man who always wore expensive clothes and lived in luxury every day.
True or False.

3. Read Luke 16:20. There was a certain beggar named Saul, who was laid at the gate of the rich man's house, was covered with sores.
True or **False. (His name was Lazarus.)**

4. Read Luke 16:21. Lazarus (the poor man) wanted to eat the small pieces of food that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs came and licked his sores.
True or False.

5. Read Luke 16:22. It came to pass that the beggar died and that was the end of him.
True or **False.**
(Angels came and carried Lazarus to a place of comfort, something like heaven.)

6. Read Luke 16:22. The rich man also died and his body was buried.
True or False.

7. Read Luke 16:23. Although this rich man's body (which included his eyes) was buried, in hell he had eyes and could see.
True (In hell he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus.) or False.

8. Read Luke 16:23. Even though the rich man's physical body was buried, he was still able to feel.
True (In hell he was in torment.) or False.

9. Read Luke 16:24. Even though the rich man's physical body was buried, he could still speak.
True (He cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me.") or False.

10. Read Luke 16:25. The rich man could remember the things that had happened on the earth (during his lifetime).

True (Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received good things and Lazarus bad things.") or False.

11. Read Luke 16:26. After death there is a place of comfort (like heaven) and a place of torment. No one can cross over from one place to the other.

True (Between the place of comfort and the place of torment is a great gulf or chasm, so that no one can cross over to the other place.) or False.

12. Read Luke 16:27-28. The dead rich man had a request that someone might go to his father's house on earth (to the living) and testify to his brothers.

True or False.

13. Read Luke 16:28. The dead rich man had five living brothers on earth. He wanted them to be "testified" to so that they might escape the place of torment he was in. The word "testify" means to confirm a thing by testimony and cause it to be believed. What did he want his brothers to believe?

That there would be a future judgment (hell) so that they would turn or return back to God.

14. Read Luke 16:29. Abraham told the rich man that his brothers needed to hear (take heed) Moses and the prophets. This is another way of saying that they have the Word of God and can read it anytime they want.

True or False.

15. Read Luke 16:30. What did these brothers need to do to escape the torments of hell?
Repent (to have a change of heart that turns a person to God).

16. Read Luke 16:31. If people won't listen to the Word of God, neither will they be persuaded if one comes from the dead.

True or False.

17. Can you see how important it is to listen to and obey the Word of God?
_____.

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