

It's Halloween Are there Ghosts? An Exposition of Matthew 14:22-32
Desert Light Christian Church (BIC), February 24, 2019



How should Christians handle Halloween? Should we shut our doors and send out a bible verse? I remember Steve Rodriguez in 3rd grade wasn't allowed to trick or treat, his family being Jehovah's Witnesses. So on November 1st when we brought candy to school after Halloween, he'd hit us all up and beg for the candy that we collected and he didn't because he was against it. Is Halloween something real, with witches, warlocks, goblins, monsters, vampires and ghosts? Witches and warlocks do exist, but not always like in the movies.



Nobody cares about goblins anymore. Some defensive linemen like Aaron Donald, and MMA fighters like Stipe Miocic, heavyweight champ are scarier than monsters. The IRS is worse than any vampire! But about ghosts, what does the bible say?

Church Street Café in Old Town Albuquerque is supposed to be haunted by ghosts that



move things and make noises, testified by owners, employees and guests. The 18-room hacienda from 1709, was known as Case de Ruiz for 200 years. Rufina G. Ruiz died in 1991 at 91, the building was purchased and renovated by the Church Street Café. The new owners said Sara Ruiz, Rufina's mother, a healer, or "curandera." yelled at the new owners to "Get him out of here, now!" referring to a contractor. Sara was seen wearing a long black dress. However, when Sam

Hatchell, a follower of Jesus would be at work there, none of these things happened. *It wasn't a ghost it was a poser demon* (kind of like the wizard of OZ behind the curtain). Ghosts are a big hype today. The Travel Channel, once with shows about exotic and interesting destinations, foods, and ethnic peoples, has gone over to at least 90% of its shows about ghosts and paranormal. There have been 45 reality shows about ghosts in the last couple of decades. Have you ever feared the dead, been spooked? People do have experiences, but it doesn't mean the spirits they saw are dead people.

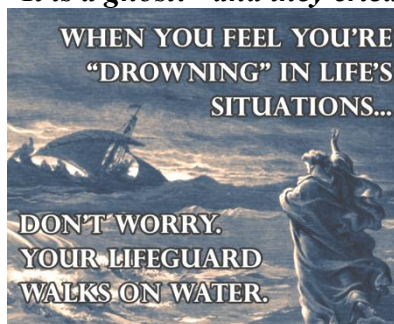
The bible says no to ghosts, the truth is, **"It is appointed men to die once, and after that comes judgment"** (Hebrews 9:27). The bible speaks of, especially toward the end of time, **"great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect"** (Matthew 24:24). Jesus said there'd be deception, demons, and hallucinations that explain ghosts, aliens, and paranormal phenomena. There is even a show, *Paranormal Caught on Camera*. Do you fear the invisible you don't understand or can't control? Have you had weird noises, strange things happening, and eerie

sights that fit ghost stories or paranormal events? When Jesus walked on water His disciples panicked when they couldn't control the boat or weather, and seeing Jesus, *they resorted to their belief in ghosts*. You may not believe in classical ghosts- but do you freak out when things get out of control? Do you have dark fears from your past? Are you in a scary situation now? Is the future scary? As He did for the disciples, in the dark and dread Jesus will show up for us. Let's remember- It is Him, not something from our dark imaginations. Jesus said to them, ***“Cheer up and do not fear!”*** We will deal with our dark fears and then look at how Jesus takes over. **Cheer up! Jesus is God, do not be afraid of your ghosts!**

1 . Cheer up! Jesus is God, do not be afraid of your ghosts! When things get weird, pray.
22 “Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.”

The disciples had to go to the other side, the crowds sent away, Jesus goes to pray. Most translations are soft. It's much stronger language, saying Jesus MADE his men get in the boat and for the crowd, saying, “dismissed, better said, “shooed away.” Time to pray, away from people and alone with God. Why so stern? Jesus just fed 5,000. From John's gospel, the crowd wished to make Him king over bread! Things were unacceptable. Have you had that feeling when you know it isn't right? Time to pray! Jesus went to Father before events got out of control. Prayer brings myself under divine control. Jesus sent His men *to the other side*, no longer the dark side, to attack their occult superstitions by walking on water. When things need to go in a different direction, and when we're not in “hands on” control we need to be alone with God. He can turn the tide of things when they need to be turned. So do we trust Him or our own plans and even manipulations of events and people? Let's stop now and pray.

2 . Cheer up! Jesus is God, do not be afraid of your ghosts! What does the Bible say about the dead? “but the boat by this time was a long way from the land beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear.”



When you feel you're drowning in life's situations, don't worry, your lifeguard walks on water. 2nd time Jesus sent His men in the boat to the other side, and there would be a storm and they'd be terrified. This time Jesus wasn't in the boat but He showed up. He's never far in our storms. When confused, we often freak- and see ghosts instead! Through prayer we get rid of ghosts- of our past, our present, and our future. Our ghosts are what we believe instead of the Lord when we should be seeing His power and love at work. In computer terms, wrong default mode, in

their case panic. When things go out of control core beliefs come out. Angry people outburst, talkers talk, controllers control, workers work, drinkers drink, potheads smoke, people resort to what makes them feel some control or comfort. If they can't, they panic. The disciples' fear was deep in their culture, ghosts. Jesus calmed a storm, cast out a legion of demons, healed a blood flow, raised a girl from the dead, and fed 5,000.

They feared the dead- The occult was in their culture.

The disciples had gone on a mission, healed the sick, cast out demons and instead of firm confidence in Jesus' control they feared dead people. They also believed in the Zodiac. The recesses of the human soul look to stars, fear the dead, try to appease them, contact them or get them to help. People say about the dead, "My guardian angel looks down on me." If one who died is in heaven, they're up looking at Jesus, not down at us. If not in Jesus, their problems are worse than yours and mine. But the occult was so deep in their culture many were demon possessed. All of those demon possessed people Jesus set free just didn't pick their demons going to the corner store for loaves and fishes. They participated in secret and occultic things, probably not to do evil but to get some kind of supernatural help for their daily lives. They were a gentile influenced culture in Galilee, it was called, "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matthew 9:1). They wandered from dependence upon God, and saw the spirits as available and then when it was too late, they were slaves of the dark spirits.



Zodiac Mosaic from a
Synagogue

Even their synagogues had zodiacs! Jesus' adopted home town of Capernaum had a zodiac in the synagogue floor. Jesus' disciples believed in ghosts! Some churches ask dead followers of Jesus to pray for us. If these 12 chosen men who saw Jesus do miracles and heard Him teach believed in things that weren't true, it's for sure people today who love Jesus will believe in some strange unbiblical things also. He wants us to lay those things aside and look to Him and the bible for our deep bottom of the soul beliefs.

Why Consult the dead?

God says don't go to the dead. ***"When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?"*** (Isaiah 8:19).

What does the Bible say about the dead? Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 20:27, Deuteronomy 18:10-11, 1 Samuel 28:8 prohibit to try to contact dead people. 1 Samuel 28:15-19 condemns Saul to death for doing so. Luke 16:19-31 says we'll recognize people in the world of the dead. In that same passage a dead man wants someone to be a ghost to warn his brothers but is told they need the scriptures, not a visitation from the dead. From Luke 9:28-36 Jesus can talk to the dead, since He's the Lord of life and death. Matthew 22:31-32 says the dead aren't married. In a strange passage with no explanation, Matthew 27:50-53 the dead walked out of tombs among the people in the city of Jerusalem. In John 8:56, they rejoice, Revelation 6:9-11 they complain, and in Revelation 14:13 they rest. From Hebrews 7:25, and 1 Timothy 2:5 Jesus intercedes for the living, not the dead. From 2 Corinthians 5:8 we know that until the resurrection the dead are absent from the body. For the believer in Jesus from Philippians 1:21 death is a gain, a promotion. Philippians 1:23 says they are with the Lord. Jesus is the bridge between death and life! What appear to people as ghosts are poser demons. Do not fall into the trap of believing ghosts or that the dead are available for us to meet. When it did happen, with Samuel, Moses and Elijah, Abraham, the Martyrs, it was a special act of God.

Has someone passed away that you are missing so bad and wish you could bring them back just for a minute to hear their voice, see their face? When we've lost someone so dear and it seems there is nothing to take the pain away. This is also true in other kinds of suffering. It is at these times that God has provided us something so amazing. It is called divine comfort. Let's hear what the bible says: ***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father***

of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too" (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

3 . Let Jesus be our only supernatural experience.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Be of Good Cheer, I am is Here, Do not Fear

The word, "immediately," means, be of good cheer, Jesus is near and soon, so don't fear. Literal Greek for, "*It is I*" is "**I AM.**" Jesus is claiming to be God in the storm, and His command to "*take heart*" is "**Be of good cheer**" in the old King James Bible. Jesus is here, "Whoo, yay, yeah!" It's an attitude He wants us to get so that when we're in a difficult time, Jesus will be there, even when we think we left Him behind. He commands no fear, in scripture 365 times.

Now Peter, he had great moments of spiritual high. In Matthew chapter 16 He declared Jesus the Son of God in a spiritually high moment. Jesus said that Father God gave Him that special understanding. But right after that high, he sunk to a spiritual low when Jesus said he had to go to the cross. Peter said, "Lord, I forbid it!" and the Lord called him Satan (Matthew 16:16-23). Here, in the storm, Peter saw Jesus walking on the water and trusted Him. He had a short moment of vision that Jesus was in control and would do the supernatural.

Then he took his eyes off the Lord, saw the storm instead of the Lord and his high went low and wet, but Jesus rescued him. My longing is to not be inconsistent, have great vision and faith, and keep my eyes on Jesus. When we fall, His hand is stretched and He'll lift us but we might get soaked. Now forget about ghosts, and anything else. Jesus is our companion in the storms. We need not doubt. He is awesome above our superstitions. He is greater than even the scariest circumstances.

Worship

The outcome was worship of the Son of God. Let whatever happens to us lead us to worship the Son of God, and we will turn out ok. Jesus died, He is resurrected so we have complete contact with the One who has been on both sides of death, a mystery more intriguing than any ghost story, for you and I! Have you met the Lord of death and life? He can take away your fear of death. Introducing Himself to His followers, He says "It is I..." in a literal translation, "I AM." the name of God.

Jesus has 4 things to say when your storm is heavy, you're getting nowhere, it is dark, and your darkest fears overcome you. **1)** "Cheer up! **2)** Jesus is God! **3)** Stop giving in to fear! **4)** Worship!" They were amazed, but ideally they should have simply thanked Him. Can you worship and say, "Truly you are the Son of God!"



Halloween doesn't need to be a problem for Christians. If it is something someone doesn't want to participate in, we are free to say no to it. If someone can participate without compromise, and that's important- no compromise, it is part of our freedom in Jesus to do so. For someone who knows Jesus, there is no need to fear kids coming to the door in costumes asking for candy. We need not fear anything because Jesus is our great reality.

From Fear to Cheer by Eric Villanueva

*On the sea there sits me / Rowing in my troubled boat/ Knowing it won't stay afloat / The pounding, sounding of each wave/ My heart floundering...who will save? / Then a form on the water appears/ The storm brings out my greatest fears / What I dread, fear the most/ To meet the dead, to see a ghost / Blocked out by my superstition/ Unlocked by a recognition / His voice I hear, one I know and adored/
"Be of good cheer" hey, it's the Lord! / "Do not fear!" out of the gray/ "Be of good cheer!" I hear him say / "I AM" is here- the storm goes away.*