

SERIES TITLE: BIBLE ANSWERS

PART TWO: ABOUT PARANORMAL ACTIVITY

TEXT: 1 JOHN 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

This series addresses some frequently asked questions. The four subjects are: The Tribulation, Paranormal Activity, Predestination, and Hell. We will look at what the Bible has to say about each of these topics, and how the truth applies to our lives today.

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

The first letter of the Apostle John was written shortly after his Gospel during a time of great difficulties for the early church. Persecution, martyrdom, and schisms were common. The audience for this sermon, written as a letter, was the Christian community of believers living in this trying time. Because of the challenges they faced, John exhorts his listeners to cling to the original gospel over heresies and innovative theologies advanced by false prophets.

FOCUS QUESTION

Why is our culture so fascinated with the paranormal?

EXAMINATION

Consider these three questions to help evaluate the paranormal:

1. Is it rational? Rationalism is the view that what is true must be logical. Read Acts 23:8 and discuss why the Sadducees would be considered rationalists.
 - Why is this insufficient for determining truth?
2. Is it observable? Empiricism is that view that what is true is only what can be observed. Read John 20:24-28 and discuss why Thomas would be an empiricist.
 - What are the shortcomings of this approach for determining truth?
3. Is it biblical? Revelation brings truth that is outside our reasoning or experience. Read Matthew 16:15-17 and share why this is an example of revelation.
 - From Isaiah 8:19-20 how does revelation help evaluate the paranormal?

Since ghosts are spirits of the dead, look at what the Bible says about their reality:

- Where is the soul of a believer when separated from the body by death?
John 11:26
Luke 23:43
1 Thessalonians 5:10
2 Corinthians 5:6-8
- Where is the soul of an unbeliever when separated from the body by death?
2 Peter 2:9
Luke 16:23

According to Acts 24:15 and John 5:28-29, for what are all the dead waiting?

- If the spirits of the dead are not interacting with our world, what is a possible cause of paranormal activity that is not faked? (Consider 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 and Ephesians 6:12)

EXPLORATION

- Deuteronomy 18:9-13
- 1 Samuel 28:3-19
- Isaiah 8:19-22
- Ephesians 6:10-17
- 2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 12-15

APPLICATION.

There are at least 4 dangers of paranormal fascination:

1. It becomes a God-substitute. How and when can this happen? (Isaiah 8:19, Leviticus 19:30-32)
2. It distracts you from the mission. Why? (Luke 4:8)
3. It opens you to deception. How? (1 Timothy 4:1)
4. It steals glory from Jesus. How? (Colossians 1:16)

SUMMATION

- Fact: What is a key truth that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?