



THE BIBLE STANDS

*The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.*

Answers to Special Passages on Death

There are seventeen Bible passages which appear not to support the great truths that man is mortal and, after death, unconscious while awaiting the call of the Life giver, Jesus Christ, who will call His faithful ones from the grave at His Second Advent.

These seventeen passages are discussed in this present study. In the process of preparing this material, it is an impressive fact that most of these problems arise from one of two causes: (1) Passages which are metaphors or metaphors which are treated as though they were literal. Metaphors should never be used as a basis for doctrine, because, first, they are not literal, and second, not every part of the metaphor can be treated as equivalent to reality. (2) Passages, which in the original Hebrew or Greek, taught the correct view have been mistranslated. The obvious solution to both is to translate each passage so that it agrees with all other verses on the same subject. That is what we have attempted to do in this present study, which is based on analyses by earlier writers.

Let's now look at these seventeen Bible passages and what people say they mean.

Passage #1

Matthew 10:28: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

This proves the soul and the body are two different things; the body can be destroyed and the soul remains; and therefore, after the body is destroyed, the soul lives on forever.

1. This text teaches that both soul and body can be destroyed in hell. That is correct. Those who believe the immortal-soul doctrine, think that the soul is immortal and will live forever. But this passages shows that idea to be false.

2. This text does not teach that the body and soul are two different entities, for this reason: Here, as in every other place in the New Testament, the word translated "soul" in the KJV is from the Greek word, psuche. But an equal number of times, psuche was translated "life." That is what should be in this verse; "life," not "soul." To clarify this, here is Matthew 16:25-26

"For whosoever will save his life (psuche) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (psuche) for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul (psuche)? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul (psuche)?"

Psuche should have been translated "life" in both verses. When the word, "life," is substituted for "soul" in Matthew 10:28, there is no problem. The day is coming when the wicked will have their entire lives destroyed; they will be annihilated and not live forever.

Passage #2

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16.

Therefore the soul is the real part of man, is different than the body, and improves as the body perishes.

A. Paul is not suggesting a separate, immortal soul. Consider these points:

1. We also believe that there is a difference between the body and the spirit, or the body and the soul.
2. Paul wrote about his being "absent in body but present in spirit" at the Corinthian church. 1 Corinthians 5:3. But no one suggests he meant flying away from his body and going there.
3. Paul speaks elsewhere about the "inward man" (Eph. 3:16-17; Col 3:9-10), but there is no hint of an immortal soul.

B. What is this "inward man," or "inner man"? It is the new nature, the "new man," the new heart and spirit within us which increases, as our old nature is daily crucified with Christ. Galatians 2:20 explains:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Passage #3

Stephen said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7:59. Jesus said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23:40.

Therefore, the real part of man, his immortal spirit, leaves the body.

1. "Spirit" is translated from pneuma in nearly every verse in the New Testament, including these. It means "wind, air" and "life." There is nothing in the word to suggest a material, conscious entity.
2. Stephen did not pray, "Receive me." That is significant, since surely, the real man, not the bodily shell, is praying. Just before death, he gave his life back to Christ. He knew his life was a gift from God, as Job said: "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4. The great gift was about to leave him, and he wanted it to return to God who gave it. Stephen recognized the great truth, later penned by Paul: "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Colossians 3:3-4. On the resurrection day, Stephen knew he would receive back that life--immortalized forever!
3. The same points would apply to why Christ spoke as He did.

Passage #4

"But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Hebrews 2:22-24.

Therefore man has a spirit, which is the real man, and we shall have fellowship with this spirit in heaven. So disembodied spirits are in heaven.

1. The primary objective of the book of Hebrews is to show that the new covenant relationship is better in every way than what the Pharisees had to offer. Paul is here describing a company of believers here on earth, not in heaven.

"Ye are come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." Jesus will not be their Mediator later when they are in heaven.

We come to the ministry of angels (Heb 1:14), to the assembly of believers, and to God the Judge. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." Hebrews 4:16. We do that right now. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the utter most that come unto God by Him." Hebrews 7:25.

2. While here on earth, attending church, pleading with God for help, and receiving the ministry of angels,--we associate with fellow believers. They are spiritually-minded men and women, for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:6. But there is nothing airy or immaterial about these spiritually minded men and women.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:5-8.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:6-7.

Passage #5

"I knew a man . . . (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven." . . . 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.

Therefore Paul could be out of the body, and this proves an immaterial spirit, independent of the body.

1. It is generally recognized that Paul is speaking about himself in this passage. According to soul-immortality believers, the departure of the soul occurs at death. That did not occur here. Otherwise, Paul died at that time! But Paul is not saying that he does not know whether he died fourteen years ago.

2. Paul is speaking of receiving "visions and revelations." What he saw and heard was so vivid, he seemed to have been transported to heaven to receive it. Yet he would not affirm it. What better way to describe the experience of seeming to be in a far-away place, without actually going there.

3. Paul said something similar in Colossians 2:5: "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." Today, we say something similar, "I'll be with you in spirit."

Passage #6

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

According to this, the righteous go to heaven at death, instead of lying in the grave until the Second Advent.

1. The context of this verse says the opposite:

(1) Verse 13: They need not sorrow as the pagans which have no hope.

(2) Verse 15: The living saints would not prevent [go before] them which are asleep.

(3) Verse 16: How those who are asleep will be awakened.

(4) Verse 17: As soon as Jesus returns, they will both be caught up together to meet Jesus in the air.

(5) Verse 17: After that, they will ever be with the Lord.

The righteous dead are not coming down with Christ at the Second Advent, for they go up to meet Him at that time. (Someone might reply that the immortal spirit comes down to unite with the resurrected body, but that would assume what is to be proved--an immortal spirit.)

2. The righteous dead are described in these words in this passage: Verse 13: "Them which are asleep." Verse 14: "Them which sleep in Jesus." Verse 16: "The dead in Christ." By what rule of language can we say that, in verse 14, Paul is speaking only about the souls of the faithful, whereas in verses 13 and 16 he is speaking only of their bodies? The interpretation of verse 14 must be incorrect.

3. Throughout this passage, Paul is trying to assure his readers of the certainty of the resurrection--Christ's resurrection, and ours at His Second Advent. 1 Corinthians 15:14-23 and onward.

4. Just as surely as God raised Jesus, so also He will raise His people. And He will do it because He raised Jesus. "Even so them also which sleep in Jesus" in the grave "will God bring with Him"--that is, raise them through His power.

Passage #7

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." John 11:26.

Therefore, those who die in Christ go directly to heaven. In support of this is Paul's statement that Christ "abolished death." 2 Timothy 1:10.

1. Both in the Old and New Testaments, those who died in Christ went to the grave to await the resurrection day. Hebrews 11:39-40 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. All await the future resurrection at Christ's Second Coming.

2. Paul spoke of how Christians do not have to "sorrow," as "those who have no hope." 1 Thessalonians 4:13. Their hope is in the future resurrection. At that time, the living righteous will not precede to glory "those who are asleep."

3. "Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Revelation 14:13.

4. What then does Jesus mean when He says, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (Jn 11:26) and "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death" John 8:51. Here is the answer:

(a) Before man sinned, he was warned that he would be condemned to death that day. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17. Christ declares, when you accept and obey Me, you are entering into eternal life. Adam did not die the day he sinned; we do not attain immortality the day we begin our lifelong walk with Christ.

(b) Christ is also referring to avoiding the second death: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Revelation 2:11. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." Revelation 20:6. The first death does have power over the righteous, but not the eternal death. Revelation 21:8. Instead, they are to experience eternal life.

(c) To the unbelievers, Christ declared, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (Jn 5:40), but the Christian has it.

Passage #8

"But, as touching the resurrection of the dead,... I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Matthew 22:31-32.

Therefore the souls of those patriarchs must be in heaven.

1. Jesus is here speaking of the resurrection. He is replying to "the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection." Matthew 22:23 (cf. Mk. 12:18; Lk. 20:27). Christ immediately proceeds to offer proof that the dead will be raised. Mark says it this way: "And as touching the dead, that they rise" (Mk. 12:26), and Luke puts it thus: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed" (Lk. 20:37).

2. If Christ simply proved that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then living as immortal souls in bliss, He did not thereby prove that there would be a resurrection. But the question here was: Will there be a resurrection? If Christ meant that the patriarchs were now alive in heaven--He would be denying the point He was making.

3. In the Bible, God sometimes speaks of the future as though it were already present: "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." Romans 4:17. And that statement was made in relation to Abraham!

Here is a similar statement by Paul: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living." Romans 14:7-9.

Why are God's children still the Lord's, after they die? Because they "sleep in Jesus," and the "dead in Christ shall rise" in the "resurrection of life." 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16; John 5:29. The Creator is still the God of His people, even while they are dead.

Passage #9

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Therefore that spirit is a conscious entity.

1. If this spirit is a conscious entity when it "returns" to God, then it was a conscious entity when it came from God. It would be illogical for the believer in immortal souls to declare that the "spirit" needed to gain access to the body to be conscious. That "spirit" would then lose consciousness upon leaving the body.

2. If the "spirit" which returns to God is a conscious entity, and thus the "real man," then all men, whether good or bad, go to God at death. But the Bible clearly states that the judgment is still a future event. Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 22:12.

3. Regarding the creation of man, we are told: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4.

During life: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3. At death: "If He [God] set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Job 34:14-15. The spirit returns to God because it came from God, and God gathers it to Himself. It is God's spirit, not man's spirit.

Passage #10

"Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Ecclesiastes 3:21.

Therefore man, in contrast with the beast, has an immortal spirit that soars heavenward at death.

1. The preceding points (regarding Ecclesiastes 12:7) apply to this one.

2. Surely, no one believes that all men go to heaven at death! Yet that is the reasoning here. The soul-immortality advocates teach that the wicked go "downward" to hell, not upward to heaven.

3. It is not true that there is a seeming contrast in this verse between man's immortality and the beast's mortality, for, only a few verses earlier, Solomon said there was no difference regarding their destination:

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Ecclesiastes 3:19-20.

"All have one breath [spirit]." "All go unto one place." "All turn to dust again."

4. In the American Revised Version, verse 21 reads: "Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?" The question mark here harmonizes this verse with 19 and 20. Solomon is not stating that the two go to different places, but only asking whether they might, in view of the facts stated in verses 19 and 20. He is challenging anyone to prove that they do not both go to one place.

Passage #11

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. . we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." 2 Corinthians 5:2-9.

Therefore the righteous dead go to heaven immediately at death, and man therefore possesses an immortal spirit.

The complete passage is this:

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked, For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." 2 Corinthians 5:1-9.

1. We have here a series of extended metaphors. It is not wise to try to prove doctrine from metaphors.

2. Using metaphors, Paul here deals with three possible states:

(a) "Our earthly house." "At home in the body." "Absent from the Lord." "This house can be 'dissolved.'" "In this we groan".

(b) "Unclothed." "Naked."

(c) "A building in the heavens." "House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Our house which is from heaven." "Clothed upon." "Present in the Lord." "Absent from the body."

If the "earthly house" means our present mortal body, then our heavenly house is the immortal body. Then "naked" and "unclothed" would be death.

"The earnest [pledge] of the Spirit" is what will bring God's faithful ones to the desired third state. Verse 5. The resurrection will occur through the Holy Spirit: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Romans 8:11. The resurrection will occur at the Second Coming of Christ. 2 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

3. The desired change comes when "that mortality might be swallowed up of life." 2 Corinthians 5:4. The American Revised Version of this verse puts it this way: "that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." In other words, "what is mortal" loses its mortality at the resurrection. That is exactly what Paul elsewhere teaches. 2 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

When "This mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

4. "Being present with the Lord" occurs when he is "clothed" with the heavenly house. This will occur at the resurrection, when we are "caught up to meet the Lord" and "so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Passage #12

"Her soul was in departing." Genesis 35:18.

This description of the death of Rachel shows that, at death, her soul flew to heaven.

A parallel passage is this: "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." 1 Kings 17:21-22. The same explanation applies to both.

1. It cannot be true that the "soul" that departed from Rachel was the real person that soared away from the body at death; because it does not agree with the child's death. Elijah did not pray that the child return and reenter the body, but "let this child's soul come into him again." "And the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." "Elijah took the child, and brought him . . ." This is the pattern all through the Bible. Here is a typical passage about the death process:

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19.

If, when the child died, he really departed, why should the prophet pray that his "soul come into him again"?

2. In the case of the child, what was this "soul" that departed and came back again? The word, "soul," both here and regarding Rachel, is the Hebrew word, **nephesh**. The primary meaning of **nephesh**, according to Gesenius, a leading Hebrew scholar, is "Breath." An example of this would be Job 27:3, where **nephesh** is translated "breath."

Therefore, when Elijah prayed, the breath came back into the child, and when Rachel died, she had no more breath.

3. **Nephesh** can also be translated "life," as in Genesis 1:30. "To every beast of the earth . . . wherein there is life [nephesh]." If **nephesh** within the child proves he is an undying soul, then all the animals are also.

Passage #13

"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Revelation 6:9-10.

Therefore, the souls of the righteous dead are in heaven.

1. If, at death, the souls of the righteous soar away to heaven and eternal happiness, why are these souls imprisoned under an altar and in distress?

Why would they cry for vengeance on the wicked, if the wicked are already burning in hellfire?

We have here another metaphor, and doctrine should not be based on it.

2. Most Bible commentators do not believe this passage should be interpreted literally.

Passage #14

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better," Philippians 1:21, 23.

Paul believed he would go to heaven as soon as he died.

1. If that were true, it would make the apostle contradict himself in other places, Paul clearly spoke of the resurrection at Christ's Second Advent and declared that the dead would not rise until then. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55. It would be incredible that Paul would say such things, if he himself were going to heaven at death.

Paul was giving his wish list. He would rather be with Christ in heaven. However, it is also true that--as far as he is aware--a brief moment after Paul's death, he will arise from the dead at Christ's Second Coming. So for Paul, and all of God's faithful ones, death will quickly bring the resurrection, though, in reality, it does not occur until centuries later.

Paul said that Christ would not return to raise the dead until "the last trump, 1 Corinthians 15:51-55. As his own "departure" neared, he said that he would not receive the crown of righteousness until "that day" when God would give it to "all them also that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:8.

2. It is not unusual for the Bible to couple together events which occur far apart. Isaiah 61:1-2 contains a compact prophecy of Christ's First and Second Advents. In Luke 4:17- 19, Christ only quoted the portion which referred to His First Advent ministry, and not His Second Advent vengeance on the wicked.

Another example would be 2 Peter 3:3-13, in which is described both the Second Advent and the destruction of this world by fire.

Therefore, the mere coupling together of the event of Paul's dying, with His being with the Lord, does not mean one immediately follows the other. From other Bible passages, we learn the two events are widely separated in a point of time.

Passage #15

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water," 1 Peter 3:18-20.

According to this, there is an immaterial spirit, the real person, which departs from the body at death.

1. We again are confronted with another metaphor. Oddly enough, if we are to treat it as literal, then this means the Bible proves purgatory and a second probation after death! That is what a literal interpretation of this passage requires: Christ going to preach to dead people, to get them to change their ways so they could still go to heaven.

2. If Christ only went to preach to lost dead people, why did He only preach to those who were "disobedient" in "the days of Noah"?

3. But, instead, the truth is that the "longsuffering" patience of God "waited in the days of Noah," and gave the wicked time to repent.

4. When did Christ preach to those people? He "preached Unto" them "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." He did it in the days of Noah while they were still alive. He did it through Noah, a preacher of righteousness 2 Peter 2:5. God's Spirit preached through Noah for a pre-stated probationary period of 120 years. Genesis 6:3. It is in such preaching, by the living to the living, that the prison house of bondage to Satan can be opened. Isaiah 42:7; 61:1; Luke 4:18-21.

5. It is of interest that, in the Dark Ages, Catholic leaders said this passage proved purgatory. But, when the 16th century Reformation began, the Reformers said it did not mean that.

"But at the time of the Reformation the chief authorities expounded them [these words of Peter as meaning] of the preaching of Christ's Spirit through the ministry of the patriarch [Noah]," Dr. J. Rawson Lumby, The Expositor's Bible, 1 Peter 3:17-22.

Passage #16

"Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Luke 23:43.

According to this, Christ told the thief he would be with Christ that same day in paradise.

It is of interest that we are told that, as soon as He died, Christ went to preach to the spirits in prison, but also that He went immediately to Paradise. But both concepts are incorrect.

1. "Paradise" is where God's throne is (Rev 2:7 with 22:1-2). Therefore, if Christ went to Paradise that day, He went immediately to heaven where God the Father is.

But, on Sunday morning, He told Mary that He had not yet ascended to the Father. John 20:17.

In addition, the Bible says He rose from the dead on Sunday morning, and, after He rose, the women said, "Come see the place where the Lord lay." Matthew 28:6. It is clear that Christ was in the tomb from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning.

2. Note the punctuation of Luke 23:43. The early Bible manuscripts did not have the comma, but, instead, read words together like this: insteadranwordstogether. Later translators used their best judgment in deciding where to place the commas, but they were certainly not inspired as were the original writers.

The commas are not more than 400 years old, whereas the inspired Writings themselves are nearly 2,000 years old. The location of the comma can change the meaning of the sentence.

In accordance with other information given about the death and resurrection of Christ, this comma ought to have been placed after "to-day," instead of before it. This would give the "to-day," a deep meaning: On the day of Christ's greatest humiliation, He could announce that the thief would be in heaven with Him! Thank the Lord!

Passage #17

"Seek me [Saul] a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. . .Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel . . . I saw gods ascending out of the earth . . . An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle . . . And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" 1 Samuel 28:7, 11, 13-15.

Therefore, Samuel was conscious in death.

1. Repeatedly, the point is made that Samuel is to be brought up from below, "out of the earth." How can this be harmonized with a belief that, at death, the immortal soul of the righteous flies to heaven?

In this entire passage, we have a description of Satanic sorcery, and we should not expect it to agree with doctrinal truths.

2. It is said that "Samuel" is brought up. But no Christian believes that the devil has power to raise the dead. Certainly, God was not at the bidding of this witch! Instead, He had commanded that witches be slain, as utterly evil. Leviticus 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:10-11.

3. After this incident, Saul committed suicide. 1 Samuel 31:4. But "Samuel" foretold: "To morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Where did Samuel dwell, if an evil, unrepentant man who had committed suicide would be living with him the next day?

4. Saul never saw "Samuel." He believed the words of the witch and the demon who appeared. Saul said "What sawest thou?" "What form is he of?" The witch gave the name and described his appearance. Then, "Saul perceived that it was Samuel, But the Hebrew word here is different than "saw." Saul was relying on what the woman and the devil said to him.

The problem here is the words of a witch and the demon who appeared at her call. If we do not believe them, there is no problem here.

5. Notice that the Bible says that Saul was slain because he went to the witch. That in itself should show that Saul did not meet Samuel there.

6. The Bible says that Saul inquired of the "familiar spirit," not of the Lord. Therefore what was presented to him was from the devil, not from the Lord.

"Saul died for His transgression which he committed against the Lord, . . . for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him." 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 (italics ours).

So that should clarify several puzzling passages in the Bible.