

A silhouette of a woman wearing a headscarf stands in profile, looking towards a bed. The scene is set in a room with warm, golden light streaming in from a window, creating a soft glow. The bed has a dark metal headboard and is covered with a textured blanket. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Sam's Story

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Lest we be deceived

Have you ever believed a lie? At one time or another, whether knowingly or not, we all have fallen victim to someone's lie. How did it make you feel after finding out? Mad, Hurt, Confused? For my friend Sam, which at the time was in a severe state of both mental and physical anguish, the moment of truth came not only as a shock but was a personal lifesaver to him directly from the Word of God!

The truth shall set you free

Anyone who knows Sam would surely tell you that he is a jovial and affectionate guy that loves conversing with people. A matter of fact, in my former professional interactions with Sam, I quickly learned that I had to add an extra thirty minutes to every visit, knowing that like a playful puppy pulling at your pant leg, he didn't want to let you go.

On one particular professional visit, I quickly discovered that Sam's jovial personality had been choked off and left for dead in a deep and

dark state of depression. “What’s wrong, Sam?” I asked. His coarse response back to me, “I don’t want to talk about it! Just go do your job.” This obviously wasn’t the Sam I knew, but I proceeded without any further prodding to do my job without him tightly tagging and talking non-stop along the way. At the end of my visit, we sat down together to discuss my findings, but before having him sign my report, I told him, “I’m not leaving, Sam, until you tell me what’s wrong.”

At first, Sam tried to make an excuse for his behavior, but I wasn’t buying it, and I told him to be honest with me. What he then shared with me would have come as a surprise, had I not known what the Bible had to say about his troubling situation.

In quietly and inattentively listening, Sam began to tell me about his mom whom he had great affections for, and how he had been her personal caretaker until her recent death. It was obvious

to me that he was still in a state of grieving, but the mental and physical anguish expressed on his face told me that there was still more to his story.

He then reluctantly began to tell me that he was regularly seeing his dead mother. Her visitations included physically shaking him awake at night, showing up in different places like the inside of his vehicle while driving, and even coming to his workplace. Yet strangely enough, she would never speak, just intently stare at him.

Her visitations had worn out his welcome, his sleep, and now his sanity. Sam just wanted her to go away! In his efforts to get her to move on, he told me that he had numerous one-sided conversations, and even had his orthodox priest come and pray over him and sprinkle holy water throughout his home, yet nothing seemed to really work. Believing that Sam was suffering from some type of physical or mental disorder, his brother a medical doctor, had even made

arrangements for Sam to have a full physical and psychiatric evaluation.

After listening to Sam's very real woes, I told him, "Sam, I don't believe you're suffering from either a physical or mental disorder, but actually a spiritual disorder. If you're willing to come to my house for a Bible study, I'm sure God will free you from what's ailing you." Desperate for anything to bring him relief, Sam agreed to come for the Bible study.

In the days prior to our Bible study, things began to get very strange. Sam told me that on one particular night he woke up to the sound of many voices above him, including the sounds of children laughing and playing. Being that Sam lived on the top floor of an apartment building, he concluded that the voices had to be coming from those in heaven.

When Sam showed up for the Bible study, I could tell that he was not overly convinced that a Bible study was going to be the cure for his trou-

bles, but after a short season of prayer we began to study God's Word. The study began with the creation of Man: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7, KJV). We then turned to the book of Ecclesiastes, which describes how at death, the living soul is no more as the breath of life departs from the body. "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit [breath]¹ will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Furthermore, I showed him that as for any post-mortal thoughts, emotions or actions, the Bible states, "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing. . . . Their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share

1. The word *spirit* in Ecclesiastes 12:7 comes from the Hebrew word "*ruwach*" meaning breath.

in anything done under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). Our study ended with how the Bible describes death as a non-conscious state of sleep (Job 14:10-12, John 11:11-14 and Acts 7:59-60) for both the righteous and wicked until the time of their respective resurrections (see John 5:28-29).

At the end of our Bible study, it was obvious to Sam that what had appeared to be his deceased mother, was not his mother at all. I told Sam, "I believe it's a demon in disguise!" I further warned him, "Even though the truth from the Bible has now set you free, don't be surprised if the demon returns to test your Biblical understanding of the state of the dead, and if that happens, then you will have to confront it in the name of Jesus."

As sure as the sun reappears in the sky each morning, Sam told me that the demon impersonating his mother reappeared about a week later. Remembering what I told him, Sam com-

manded it in the name of Jesus to leave and never return; after which it forever vanished from his life. Praise God! Surely His truth is what sets us free from the devil's deceptions and seducing errors! As for the demon that tormented Sam, I had always wondered why it had never spoke to him, until I read in Luke's gospel where Jesus had cast out a *mute* demon (see Luke 11:14).

Afterword

As for my friend Sam, his Christian upbringing which included the heritage of his grandfather as the head patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt (also known as the Bishop or Pope of Alexandria), was steeped in both Christian tradition and ceremony, yet weak in Bible literacy. The same holds true for many people today who don't make the Word of God their fortified shield and sword against the deceptions and doctrines of devils. Spiritualism (old and new) teaches that the human soul is immortal and that we can have communication with departed souls. This is not only a lie from the father of lies (Satan) but has a bewitching influence

over much of the world today including many Christians.

God calls those who seek after the dead an abomination in His sight (see Deuteronomy 18:9-12), and warns us to not be deceived by the devil's trickery, "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? Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn [in them]." (Isaiah 8:19-20, NIV, emphasis added).

As with Sam's unwelcome visitor, we need not fall victim to the devil's deceptions, including Satan himself masquerading as an angel of light (see 2 Corinthians 11:14). We simply need to cling to God's Word as our source of truth and the standard by which we test every experience.