Do They Really Exist? And How Should We Guard Ourselves Against Them?

In many African traditional belief systems, *mizimu* refers to the spirits of deceased individuals—souls believed to return to the land of the living. These spirits are thought either to return of their own will or to be summoned by someone with the intent of resolving unresolved issues, offering guidance, or even seeking revenge for wrongs suffered before death.

But what does the Bible say about these beliefs?
Do the spirits of the dead (mizimu) truly exist and operate as some claim?

Biblically, the answer is no.
There is no Scriptural support for the idea that human spirits can return from the dead or be called upon by the living to solve earthly problems. Once a person dies, their soul departs permanently from this world and enters eternity—either in the presence of God or in separation from Him.

Hebrews 9:27 (ESV) clearly states:

> *“And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.”*

This passage affirms that death is final in terms of earthly existence. There are no spiritual “visitations” from the dead—no second chances or lingering presences of human souls on earth.

What About the Story of Saul and the Spirit of Samuel?

Some might point to the Old Testament account in 1 Samuel 28, where King Saul, in desperation, sought out a medium (the witch of Endor) to summon the prophet Samuel. The spirit appeared and rebuked Saul, foretelling his impending death.

While this incident is unique, it does not legitimize necromancy or the belief in roaming spirits. In fact, the Law strictly forbade any interaction with the dead:

Deuteronomy 18:10–12 (NIV) says:

> *“Let no one be found among you... who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft... or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord.”*

Moreover, after Christ’s death and resurrection, all authority over death and the grave was transferred to Him. The enemy no longer holds the keys to the realm of the dead.

Revelation 1:18 (NIV):

> *“I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”*

So What Are These Apparitions That Look Like the Dead?

If the dead cannot return, then what are people seeing or experiencing when they claim to have encountered a deceased loved one?

The answer is: these are deceiving spirits—unclean demons that impersonate the dead.

The Bible warns us that Satan and his demons are masters of disguise.

2 Corinthians 11:14 (ESV):

> *“And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”*

If the devil can appear as an angel, how much easier is it for him or his demons to mimic the voice or appearance of a departed family member? These spirits aim to deceive, mislead, and ultimately draw people away from the truth of the Gospel.

Many cultures end up venerating these apparitions, believing they are honoring their ancestors, when in fact they are unknowingly engaging with demonic spirits. This opens the door to spiritual oppression and bondage.

Psalm 106:37–38 (NIV):

> *“They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to false gods. They shed innocent blood... whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood.”*

Though we may not physically sacrifice today, spiritual deception and worship of false spirits is just as defiling.

How Can We Guard Ourselves?

The only true protection from these deceiving spirits is found in Jesus Christ. Outside of Christ, people are vulnerable to spiritual deception and the influence of demonic forces.

Ephesians 6:11–12 (ESV):

> *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

If you have not yet received salvation through Jesus, now is the time. Only in Him is there true authority over evil spirits and power to discern truth from deception. Those who are in Christ are covered by His blood and protected by the Holy Spirit.

Let us be vigilant. Let us seek biblical understanding, lest we unknowingly give worship to Satan while thinking we are honoring God.

Hosea 4:6 (NKJV):

> *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”*

May the Lord bless you and give you discernment.
Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus.

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