

FIRE IN MY BONES: 5 Myths & Superstitions About the Enemy

Americans can't seem to get enough of horror movies. Every October, in time for Halloween, Hollywood releases a crop of creepy new films about masked serial killers, flesh-eating zombies, crazed vampires and demon-possessed children who crawl out of television sets to attack us.

No thanks. With spiritual warfare buzzing everywhere like a swarm of attacking cicadas, the world is scary enough—I don't need a horror movie soundtrack to go with it.

Many horror movies can seem quite religious, but Hollywood rarely gets it right when it comes to the devil, demons and the spiritual realm. The result is that many people today have wrong ideas about Satan—and Christians often subscribe to these kooky concepts because we haven't studied God's Word carefully. Here are five of the most common myths about the devil.

Myth 1: The devil is everywhere. God is omnipresent, but the devil doesn't have that kind of power or influence. Jesus said He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning (Luke 10:18)—referring to the moment when our enemy was cast out of the highest heaven. Satan posts his demons in various regions, but the devil is not watching you 24 hours a day. And if you are in Christ, you are hidden in Him (see Col. 3:3) and the devil cannot detect you on his radar.

Myth 2: The devil is afraid of crosses, holy water and religious icons. In the typical Hollywood vampire film, Count Dracula is repelled by a crucifix and demons scream in torment when a priest utters a Latin phrase.

Don't be fooled. Satan is not afraid of religious people. Satan is quite comfortable hanging around religious buildings

as long as the people inside are not preaching the true gospel. That's why Paul the apostle warned us that in the last days people who at one time followed God would fall away from the faith, "paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons," (1 Tim. 4:1). Some of the most demonic heresies were hatched in church buildings when Christians turned away from the truth to follow the devil, the father of lies.

Myth 3: The devil is to blame for all the evil in the world. A lot of Christians have the idea that the devil caused them to sin. "The devil made me do it!" No, the devil was probably nowhere near. The book of James says we must own the responsibility of our sin. "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust," (James 1:14). Don't blame the devil for what you did. Take responsibility and repent.

Myth 4: The devil is all-powerful. We Christians ascribe to Satan way more power than he actually has. The Bible says in Colossians that when Jesus died on the cross, He disarmed satanic powers and made a public spectacle of them (see Col. 2:15). I love the way The Message translates this verse: "[Jesus] stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets."

Satan's authority has been taken from him, and all he can do now is lie, steal, kill and destroy—much like a renegade terrorist army—until the church finishes the job of preaching the gospel to the world. And Satan knows his end is near.

Myth 5: The devil lives in hell. Popular artwork often shows the devil running his diabolical operation from a headquarters in the midst of the flames of hell. But that is not a biblical concept. Ephesians 2:2 describes Satan as "the prince of the power of the air" because he runs his show from a remote heavenly location.

The good news is that he won't be there for long. Jesus said hell has been prepared for the devil and his angels (see Matt. 25:41), and Rev. 20:10 says after the final judgment, God will throw Satan into the lake of fire and brimstone where he will be "tormented day and night forever and ever." That is the horror movie the devil fears most.

If you are a believer in Christ, you have no reason to fear the devil. We should not be ignorant of Satan's schemes, and you should develop discernment to know where he is working, but you do not have to be afraid of him. If you are strong in faith, aggressive in prayer and filled with the Holy Spirit, you are a threat to Satan's kingdom.

The apostle Paul's words in Romans 16:20 remind us of our victory: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

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