

The Devil Is Real But He Is Defeated!

Halloween is big business. The National Retail Federation reported last week that American consumers will spend a scary \$ billion on Halloween candy, decorations, costumes and parties. That's way more than the \$8 billion spent in 2020, during the pandemic, and more than the \$ billion we spent in 2019.

Scary movies are also big business. The supernatural thriller *The Conjuring 3*—about a young man who commits murder after being possessed by a demon—has made \$202 million since it was released in June. And the new film *Halloween Kills* hit theaters last week—the twelfth movie in the Halloween franchise that focuses on the murderous rampages of a deranged mental patient. The slasher films have made a combined total of \$640 million worldwide.

What's ironic is that while films about demons are more popular than ever (a sequel to *The Exorcist* is slated for 2023), fewer people say they believe the devil is real. A 2020 Barna poll showed that only 56 percent of Americans believe Satan exists.

For many people—even many Christians—Satan is a silly idea rooted in medieval superstition. But if you are a follower of Christ, you also need to have a clear understanding of who the devil is and why he's not fiction. Here's a summary of what the Bible really says about Satan:

The devil is not all-powerful. God is omnipresent but the devil doesn't have that kind of influence. Jesus said He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightening (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 he 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.

The devil is a fallen angel. Satan was originally created to serve God (see Ezek. 28) but he was cast out of heaven because of his pride. Hollywood has perpetrated the idea that Satan has horns, a red cape and a pitchfork but this is based on folklore, not the Bible. In fact, the Bible says the devil is a master of clever disguises and that he prefers to appear as “an angel of light” (see 2 Cor. 11:14). Without spiritual discernment, most people don’t even recognize that the devil is working because he is so cunning and attractive.

We can’t blame the devil when we sin. 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, NASB). Don’t blame the devil for what you did; take responsibility and repent.

Christ has defeated Satan. 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. Satan knows his end is near.

The devil will eventually go to hell. Popular artwork often shows the devil running his diabolical operation from a headquarters in the midst of hell’s flames. 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 Revelation 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. The apostle Paul's words in Romans 16:20 (MEV) remind us of our victory: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." If you are strong in faith, aggressive in prayer and filled with the Holy Spirit, you are a threat to Satan's kingdom. {eo}

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