

What Our Society's Obsession With 'Stranger Things' Says About Spiritual Warfare

On July 4, the third season of *Stranger Things* premiered—and if you're a Netflix subscriber, there's a good chance you've already seen it. Netflix claims over 40 million member accounts worldwide viewed *Stranger Things* within the first four days of its release—an original series record. So why is everyone obsessed with *Stranger Things*? Russell Moore believes it's due to the show's unique mix of nostalgia and paranoia—and the way people are drawn to those characteristics says a lot about our society today.

"There's a reason I think why people enjoy nostalgia, and a reason why people are drawn toward some forms of paranoia, and that shows up in *Stranger Things*," Moore says. "...With the release of *Stranger Things* season 3, we'll have just another pop culture nostalgiafest. Maybe it's an indication that people are really searching for signposts for something deeper, something better."

But it's not just *Stranger Things* that points to this drive. The rise of social media conspiracy theories demonstrates our culture's growing impulse toward nostalgia and paranoia.

"As one sociologist puts it, nostalgia is history without guilt," Moore says. "And that's the reason why you can have people who can hearken back to this golden age that never really existed. Nostalgia can be really bad. Conspiracy theories can be really bad. We've seen that with Pizzagate, with the Seth Rich stuff, with ways that these conspiracy theories can actually lead people to act in crazy ways, sometimes even violent ways."

Yet Moore says nostalgia and paranoia aren't necessarily bad. In fact, they're rooted in a very true spiritual reality which Christians must always keep in mind.

"If you think about nostalgia, C.S. Lewis talked about joy," Moore says. "[He] talked about this sense of longing, this sense of almost pain that can come with thinking back to a time in one's past, because it's rooted in looking forward to something that God has created us to see shadows in the things that we experience as blessing. And a sense of conspiracy, I think, is rooted fundamentally in the fact that there is a conspiracy. We're living in enemy-occupied territory where things are going on around us that are not the way that they are supposed to be."

Watch the video to see Moore's full explanation of the spiritual forces behind the rise of *Stranger Things*.