

Very Superstitious? Consider yourself enlightened?

Ten Modern Day Religious Superstitions that Stump the True Bible Scholar

In our hi-tech age, one might believe that there is no room in our thinking to support superstitions. However, such a belief would be stone cold wrong. Although, beneficiaries of the Age of Reason philosophies that flourished in Europe, then America, following the Middle Ages, 21st century citizens are nonetheless, subscribers to superstitions. Think not? Let's see.

Superstition is defined by Merriam-Websters Dictionary as: "a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance, or a false conception of causation." Writing in Reflections on the Revolution in France, Edmund Burke called superstition, "the religion of feeble minds." According to Burke, medieval inhabitants of the earth trying to find ways to explain perplexing natural phenomenon, developed pre-scientific rationales that basically became superstitions.

Perhaps, it's not surprising to learn that superstitions made their way into the thinking of Christians. No? Here are ten superstitions that have found lodging in the hearts of believers.

How many of them are familiar to you?

1. "The Lord helps those who help themselves"

This often-repeated adage suggests that we are capable of meeting our own needs. Never mind that this superstition rejects the sovereignty of God. In truth, if we could help ourselves, we would have no need for God. Never, are we called to be self-dependent. Heaven calls for us to be God-dependent. The Psalmist reminds us in the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want." Paul adds his testimony in Philippians 4:19 "... my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

2. "We're all God's Children"

If only that were so. We are all God's creation. However, the Bible is clear on this point; the children of God have distinctive traits of character:

- "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13) and 2.
- "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (children) of God" (Romans 8:14).

3. "To be absent from the body is to be with the Lord"

Paul's statements in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 have been the source of countless misrepresentations of Scripture. We often hear this saying at funerals, the intention being to convey the idea that at death a believer goes straight to heaven. However, Paul's words asserted no fact, nor the expression of a Biblical doctrine.

He did say, in 2 Corinthians 5:6 and 8: "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord," and "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." Paul's meaning is readily apparent. Verse six simply states that as long as we are alive, in these earthly bodies, we are not present with the Lord in heaven. Paul uses verse eight to emphasize his preference. He would much rather be absent from his physical body, and be present with the Lord.

4. The rich man and Lazarus

The parable of the rich man some call Dives (maybe Latin for "rich") and Lazarus has been spun into a very interesting superstition. Christian communities around the globe teach this story as if it is evidence that upon death, Christians and non-Christians alike go directly to their reward.

However, this parable has nothing to do with the whereabouts of the dead or their general state. For starters, Lazarus dies, but doesn't go to heaven. Instead, he goes to Abraham's bosom. That is the first clue that this is not a factual story, but a figurative story.

The key to the passage is found in the words of Jesus in Luke 16:31. "Dives" begs Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn Dives' brothers of the perils of being lost.

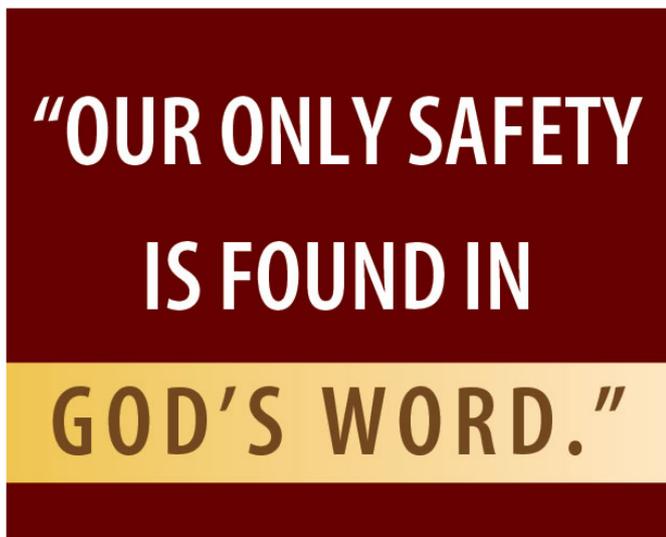
Jesus, finishing the story for the listeners gives Abraham's response, and the parable's dramatic point: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

Jesus was not talking about the death of the rich man or Lazarus. His parable foretold of the Jewish unbelief that would greet His resurrection.

5. The Bible guarantees that children raised in a Christian home will keep the faith.

The primary text to support this is Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child..." Maybe superstition is a little strong here, however, this passage should not be taken as a blanket promise regarding the salvation of our children. What the Bible offers is this truth: train the child in the ways of the Lord, and as they grow up they will not depart from the knowledge that has been instilled in them through the training they received.

6. "Once saved, always saved"



Perhaps no superstition is as deadly to our salvation than one that promises once saved, always saved. This superstition promises the salvation even of those who don't want to be saved. This teaching is contrary to the Bible. Matthew 24:13 admonishes us to "endure to the end." Hebrews 10:23 counsels us to "hold fast the confession of our hope." And, Revelations 3:16 cautions that if we should become lukewarm, Jesus will spit us out of His mouth.

7. We have never-dying souls to save

This superstition mis-educates the living about the state of the dead. The Bible explains that we don't have souls, we are living souls (Genesis 2:7). Furthermore, we're informed by Ezekiel 18:20 that "the soul that sins shall die." And, how many have sinned? Romans 3:23, "...All have sinned..."

8. "Moderation in all things"

Imagine moderation in drug use, alcohol intake, and promiscuous intimacy. Moderation in all things is a concept borrowed from the Greek philosopher Aristotle. While it is true that Philippians 4:5 says "Let your moderation be known...", the actual meaning of the Greek word translated moderation is gentleness or mildness. The believer's rule of faith for living is better expressed by 1 Corinthians 10:31, "...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

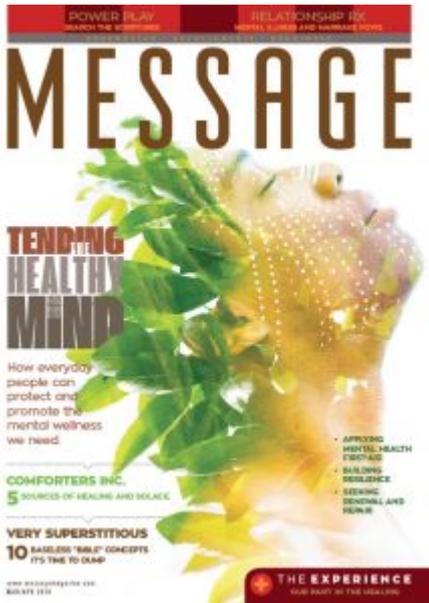
9. "To thine own self be true"

Some mistakenly believe these words are from Scripture. They are in fact, taken from Shakespeare. We are not called to be true to ourselves. The redeemed answer to a higher authority. We have been made for God's glory (Isaiah 43:7). In Malachi 2:6, God proclaims that Levi had truth in his mouth and no iniquity on his lips.

10. Dead ancestors speaking to the living

This superstition is significant, if only because it leaves the hearts of God's people open to the false narrative that psychics, tarot card readers, and practitioners of the occult are able to carry messages between the dead and the living. Absolutely false. There is no dialogue between the living and the dead. Ecclesiastes 9:5 teaches that the "dead know nothing." Then, Psalm 115:17 instructs us that "the dead praise not the Lord."

Ten superstitions that 21st century believers have been deceived into accepting as "thus says the Lord." Have we no protection from these superstitions infecting our faith? We do indeed. The answer is simple. We must study to show ourselves approved. Our only safety is found in God's Word.



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