

SIN AND SALVATION IN THE CULTURE OF FEAR / POWER

Introduction – There are three basic cultural perspectives. We have already looked at guilt / innocence and shame / honor societies in the Bible. Usually each society emphasizes one of these cultures, but all three are present in most ancient and modern societies.

A. The Fear / Power Culture

1. This is a spiritual warfare worldview. The world is filled with visible and invisible forces to be feared. There are unseen spirits, demons, and gods that are behind the scenes impacting the seen world.
2. Most ancient societies were fear / power oriented. They used magic, secret rites, incantations, and sacrifices to appease or gain power over these unseen beings.
3. The influence of Christ led to diminished fear of the evil spiritual realm. Modern science has tried to banish this cultural view to mere superstitions.

B. The Bible Affirms the Warfare Worldview

1. There are real evil spiritual forces behind the idolatry in the ancient world (1 Corinthians 10:18-21).
2. Jesus waged war against evil spirits and demons that caused physical and mental illnesses (Matthew 4:23-24).
3. Christians are involved in this spiritual conflict (Ephesians 6:10-12).
4. These evil spiritual forces are created beings with freewill who have rebelled against God.

C. God has triumphed over these rebellious spiritual forces in Christ for our good.

1 John 3:8

Colossians 2:13-15

Hebrews 2:14-15

Romans 8:15

D. The Presence of the Fear / Power Culture in Modern America

1. In the popular culture we see movies and TV programs that appeal to our fear of evil spiritual forces and the need for super human good guys. Our obsession with vampires, paranormal activity, and demonic possession are evidence of our fear of these forces (Supernatural TV program).
2. Evil spirits and demons are real and active in our world. We do not combat them with secret spells, rites, or charms; instead we overcome all evil through believing prayer in Jesus' name and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
3. Americans are fearful of the unseen realm of germs or other things that affect our health and longevity. We seek to gain power over this from modern medicine, health foods, etc.

Conclusion – The ultimate power of God lives in us through the presence of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:13-18).

Discussion Questions

1. How do you see our society influenced by the fear of unseen forces?
2. What do people do today to overcome these feared forces?
3. How has God addressed our need to overcome these unseen forces?