

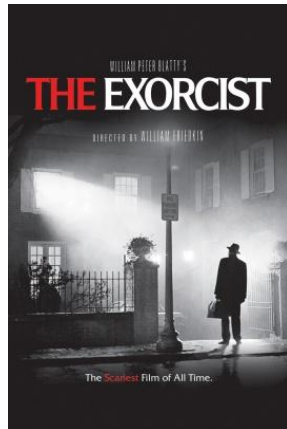
Demons Under Every Bush

Demons are real—and demonic oppression is real.

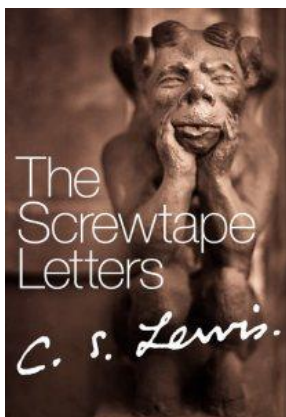
- I have encountered it in Inner Mongolia.
- I have encountered it in suburban America.
- I have encountered it at a Baptist encampment.

The Bible certainly paints a clear picture of the work of demonic forces. Some folks want to explain away the biblical account. *Jesus wasn't casting out demons, He was dealing with mental illness (or epilepsy) in a way the people would understand.* That viewpoint is just wrong. My own experience affirms the biblical record.

I find it interesting that Hollywood is more willing to address the work of Satan and his demonic forces than the church is. Hollywood has long embraced the spiritual battle of good v. evil. Of course, they get most of it wrong and they typically go over the top in their portrayal of demonic activity, but nevertheless, popular culture is not reticent to admit spiritual forces are at work.



I am NOT endorsing Hollywood's skewed version of spiritual warfare, nor do I think we should be consumed with thoughts and fears of demonic activity. We don't need to be looking for a demon under every bush, but neither should we bury our heads and pretend these things only happen in remote parts of the world or in the overactive imaginations of screenwriters.



In his introduction to *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis wrote:

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy

interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight" (C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (originally 1942; this edition: Harper Collins, 1996) , ix).

As I wrote in a previous blog, we need to know our enemy. As children of God and heirs with Christ, Satan cannot control us or overpower us. But he will seek to tempt us, influence us, and even oppress us. The things we fill our minds with can easily open the doors to the oppressive thoughts that come from his spiritual forces of evil.

How do we stand against demonic forces? We fill our minds with the things of Christ.

1. Take captive every thought. "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We ... take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

2. Take on the mind of Christ. As believers, we are indwelt by His Holy Spirit, and we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:8).

When we focus on Christ and let His Word fill our hearts and minds, we have no room for the oppressive lies and half-lies Satan's army seeks to use against us.

In three weeks, I will address the great arsenal we have been given in Christ to stand against spiritual attacks, but let me leave you with this one great truth:

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Focus on Christ.