

THE DEVIL KNOWS US WELL

A review of the book, "The Secret"

Christians often get scoffed at for believing in a Devil. There's a book being marketed at full bore of late, though, called 'The Secret' by Rhonda Byrne, that echoes the Devil's sales pitch in the Bible so closely that even a hardened cynic might blink and wonder.

'The Secret' is touted as a hidden formula that only a few in history have known and used, that our thoughts have the power to attract what we think about. If you want to make a lot of money, for instance, then you just think about being rich and it will happen. We can, by the power of our thoughts, bring into existence anything we want. We control our destiny. We are gods. It's heady stuff.

It's also a repeat, almost word for word, of the sales pitch the Devil used on Adam and Eve. Eat off the forbidden tree, he told them, and they would become gods and masters of their destiny. And they fell for it hook, line and sinker.

It turned out to be a complete sham, however, because Adam and Eve had a miserable life of tragedy and hardship. They're kicked out of a beautiful garden that would have supplied all their needs with ease. Cain kills Abel. They had to work extremely hard to survive. They weren't masters of their destiny at all. It was a lie.

It was a rough reminder, and a warning to all who followed after them, that anyone trying to sell us on the idea that we are gods and masters of our destiny is a delusional liar.

But that's exactly the idea being promoted in 'The Secret.' It offers us god-like control over what happens to us.

It tells us, for instance, that we can rid ourselves of anything we don't want in our lives by the power of our thoughts willing into existence only what we do want. So, if I want a cancer-free life and a war-free world, I simply think healthy, peaceful thoughts and the wheels of the Universe automatically crank into gear to make me healthy and the world peaceful. The entire Universe is at our command.

If that's true, then it's amazing. It means I can will a missing leg into existence, or by the power of my thoughts make a bloodthirsty, suicidal, religious maniac into a peace-lover. But would you like to tell our troops in Afghanistan that all they need do is think peace and the killing will stop, or tell a child he can end his terminal cancer if he just thinks about being healthy?

To make us believe we have that kind of power is setting us up for horrible disappointment. But it never fails to sell because we're suckers for anyone offering us god-like control over life.

It worked so well for the Devil that he thought even Jesus would fall for it. So, he takes Jesus to the top of a mountain and tells him he can be master of all he surveys. It would require Jesus transferring his allegiance to the Devil, but in return Jesus would receive power to make everything turn out exactly as he wanted. And how tempting it is to us humans to be offered such a promise. But it's a lie, which Jesus well knew because he sent the Devil packing.

One has to ask, though, why 'The Secret' seems to work for some people and why they get what they wish for?

Well, it's true that our minds can make things happen. We can concentrate our creative energy on amazing projects and bring them to reality. But we can't bring everything we think about into reality.

We don't have the power, for instance, to stop death. Even those who supposedly knew 'The Secret' died in the end. So, why didn't they think positive thoughts about living for ever?! If the principle of getting what we think about works like clockwork in everything else, as 'The Secret' would have us believe, then why not apply it to death, too? Because we can't; our powers are clearly limited.

That's why Jesus told the Devil to get lost, because only God has the kind of powers 'The Secret' is promoting. The Devil would like us to think we have the power, but that's because he'd like people to worship him, not God. So he trundles out the same old lie over and over again and, suckers that we are, we lap it up with nauseous regularity. It's the same old delusion the Devil sold in the Garden of Eden, but the chance to become healthy, wealthy and wise by any means other than depending on God always brings people flocking to the Devil's altar.

'The Secret,' therefore, is really no secret at all because the Devil's been peddling the promise of god-like control to us humans since the beginning of our history. But look at our history! We're a mess, and we always have been. The evidence is overwhelming, that we don't have any god-like control over our destiny whatsoever. It's a total delusion.

The real secret to having any control over our destiny is the one Jesus told the Devil. It was very simple, too. It's serving and worshipping God (Matthew 4:10). Because if anyone can will something to happen by the power of thought, God can.

He does have the power, and over death, too.