

When Do Created Things Become Objects of Trust? A Biblical and Educational Response to Superstition in Contemporary Christian Formation

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Abstract

Background: Superstition remains a persistent religious and cultural phenomenon in both traditional and digitally mediated societies. Although often dismissed as harmless custom, entertainment, or inherited habit, superstition can become spiritually formative when people assign power, fear, protection, guidance, or destiny to created things such as animals, numbers, dates, dreams, ritual objects, charms, ancestral practices, astrology, or religious formulas. **Purpose:** This article offers a biblical-theological and educational response to superstition from a Sola Scriptura perspective. It argues that superstition is not merely cultural imagination but a misplaced form of trust that grants created realities the spiritual authority that belongs to God alone. **Methodology:** The study employs a qualitative theological methodology grounded in biblical-theological analysis, conceptual analysis, and secondary literature review. It engages Scripture, selected scholarship on superstition and religious coping, and contemporary discussions of digital religion, astrology, prosperity theology, manifestation culture, and religious manipulation. **Findings:** The article demonstrates that superstition distorts the doctrine of creation, weakens confidence in divine providence, damages human dignity, increases vulnerability to religious exploitation, and confuses biblical faith with ritual control. It distinguishes superstition from prayer, wisdom, spiritual discernment, and spiritual warfare, showing that biblical faith submits to God while superstition attempts to control outcomes through signs, objects, formulas, or hidden forces. **Contribution:** The article contributes to Christian education, pastoral theology, public theology, and contemporary discipleship by offering a Scripture-governed framework for addressing traditional and modern forms of superstition without mocking those shaped by fear, grief, uncertainty, poverty, trauma, or inherited cultural practices. It concludes that Christian formation must lead believers away from fear-based spirituality and toward confidence in creation theology, divine providence, Christ's victory over the powers, and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Keywords: Superstition and Christianity; Biblical theology; Christian formation; Spiritual discernment; Sola Scriptura; Occult practices; Digital religion.

1. Introduction

Superstition is frequently treated as an ordinary feature of human culture. Many people inherit superstitious beliefs from family, village traditions, peer groups, media environments, or religious communities without ever examining them carefully. One person may believe that greeting a particular neighbor in the morning will ruin the day. Another may fear that an owl near the house announces death. Someone else may avoid a date, number, road, animal, dream, funeral practice, birth circumstance, or social encounter because it is believed to carry invisible danger. In other contexts, people may wear protective objects, consult horoscopes, follow zodiac signs, forward prayer-chain messages, use ritual objects, or give money under pressure because they have been told that blessing or disaster depends upon such acts.

The subject is not marginal. Contemporary public data suggest that practices commonly associated with astrology, divination, and metaphysical insight remain culturally visible. A 2025 Pew Research Center survey of 9,593 U.S. adults found that 30% consult astrology, tarot cards, or fortune tellers at least once a year, even though most do so “just for fun” rather than as primary guidance for major decisions. The same report found that 27% of U.S. adults say they believe astrology can affect people’s lives (Rotolo, 2025). Earlier Pew data also indicated that roughly six-in-ten American adults accepted at least one of four “New Age” beliefs measured in the study, including belief in psychics, reincarnation, astrology, or spiritual energy located in physical objects (Gecewicz, 2018). Such findings do not prove that all participants are deeply superstitious, nor do they translate automatically into Christian theological categories. They do, however, show that late-modern societies have not simply outgrown the search for hidden guidance, spiritualized control, or metaphysical reassurance.

Psychological research also helps explain why superstition persists. Vyse’s work on superstition emphasizes that people often turn to superstitious beliefs or actions under conditions of uncertainty, unpredictability, or perceived lack of control (Vyse, 2014). Oxford’s summary of Vyse’s work notes that superstitions are common across occupations, educational levels, and income groups, and that they can be understood through behavioral research, reasoning errors, social influence, and coping mechanisms. Keinan’s experimental work similarly links stress and desire for control with superstitious behavior, suggesting that persons may engage in magical or ritual acts when uncertainty threatens their sense of control (Keinan, 2002). From a theological perspective, however, the deeper issue is not merely cognitive error or emotional coping. The deeper issue concerns worship, fear, trust, and authority.

This article argues that superstition is spiritually harmful when it assigns to created things a power, authority, or determinative significance that belongs to God alone. It is not the existence of animals, dreams, numbers, rituals, objects, or cultural practices that constitutes the problem. Scripture itself affirms the goodness of creation, the reality of spiritual powers, the significance of prayer, the importance of dreams in certain biblical narratives, and the legitimacy of embodied practices in worship and discipleship. The problem arises when created realities are treated as though they govern destiny, secure protection, reveal hidden knowledge, transmit curse or blessing, or compel divine action apart from humble submission to God.

This distinction is crucial for Christian education and pastoral ministry. If superstition is treated only as ignorance, the response may become contemptuous and culturally insensitive. If it is treated only as culture, the response may become theologically negligent. If it is treated only as psychology, the response may ignore spiritual bondage. If it is treated only as demonic activity, the

response may intensify fear rather than cultivate biblical confidence. A responsible Christian account must hold together compassion, discernment, theological clarity, and pastoral courage.

The article therefore proceeds by conceptualizing superstition as misplaced trust and fear of created things, establishing a biblical-theological framework grounded in creation, idolatry, providence, discernment, and Christ's triumph over the powers. It then explains the study's qualitative theological methodology, examines traditional and modern manifestations of superstition, addresses the occult misuse of animals and objects, develops a biblical-theological response, and proposes pastoral and educational implications for churches, families, Christian educators, and institutions.

Conceptualizing Superstition: Misplaced Trust and the Fear of Created Things

Definitions of superstition vary across disciplines. In psychology, superstition is often approached as a belief or practice that assumes a causal relationship where no empirically warranted causal relationship exists. In anthropology, it may be analyzed within symbolic systems, social meaning, ritual life, and cultural interpretation. In missiology and theology, superstition is often discussed in relation to folk religion, syncretism, spiritual power, ritual manipulation, divination, and everyday religious practice. Hiebert, Shaw, and Tiénou's work on folk religion is useful here because it recognizes that many people do not live only within formal doctrinal systems; they also operate within practical beliefs about protection, blessing, curse, healing, ancestors, spirits, and daily survival (Hiebert et al., 1999). The issue is not merely what people formally confess but what they functionally trust when fear, illness, grief, poverty, uncertainty, or crisis arises.

For this article, superstition is defined theologically as a misplaced form of trust or fear in which created realities are treated as though they possess unauthorized spiritual authority over blessing,

misfortune, protection, identity, or destiny. This definition does not deny the reality of spiritual evil. Scripture speaks clearly about Satan, demons, false prophecy, sorcery, temptation, and deception. The issue is not whether the unseen realm exists. The issue is whether Christians respond to reality through Scripture-governed faith or through fear-driven interpretation of omens, objects, rituals, and hidden signs.

The biblical doctrine of creation is central. Scripture begins, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). Creation is real, ordered, meaningful, and good, but it is not divine. The sun, moon, stars, animals, human beings, numbers, objects, places, and days are creatures. They belong to God. "*The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord*" (Psalm 24:1). Therefore, the Christian should not treat creation as a rival spiritual authority. Creation may witness God's glory, as Psalm 19:1 teaches, but it must not become an independent source of fear, destiny, or hidden control.

Superstition often emerges when the human heart seeks certainty without surrender. It offers an explanation when life feels mysterious, a ritual when life feels uncontrollable, a sign when God seems silent, a formula when obedience seems costly, or an object when prayer requires faith. It is, in this sense, an anxious substitute for providence. Biblical faith receives life from God's hand and obeys God's Word even when circumstances are unclear. Superstition attempts to manage uncertainty through unauthorized patterns, gestures, objects, or interpretations.

This distinction allows Christians to avoid two opposite errors. The first error is secular reductionism, which treats all spiritual concerns as primitive irrationality. The second is fear-based spiritualization, which reads demonic causality into every animal, dream, sickness, accident, or social encounter. Scripture permits neither. The Bible

teaches that spiritual evil is real, but it also teaches that Christ is supreme, creation belongs to God, wisdom matters, and believers must test claims carefully. 1 John 4:1 commands believers not to believe every spirit but to test the spirits. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 similarly calls Christians to test all things, hold on to what is good, and stay away from every kind of evil.

Theoretical Framework: Biblical Worldview, Idolatry, and Spiritual Discernment

The conceptual framework of this article integrates three interrelated theological categories: biblical worldview, idolatry as misplaced trust, and spiritual discernment. These categories are selected because they allow superstition to be examined not merely as false belief, but as a formative system of fear, interpretation, and practice.

A biblical worldview begins with God as Creator, Lord, Judge, Redeemer, and final authority. The world is neither spiritually empty nor spiritually autonomous. It is created by God, fallen through sin, providentially governed, and subject to the lordship of Christ. Colossians 1:16-17 states that all things were created through Christ and for Christ, and that all things hold together in Him. This means that the Christian's worldview cannot be governed by chance, fatalism, ancestral fear, occult power, or hidden omens. Reality is Christologically ordered.

Idolatry provides the second category. In Scripture, idolatry is not limited to carved statues. It includes misplaced worship, misplaced fear, misplaced dependence, and misplaced love. When a created thing becomes the functional source of security, explanation, blessing, or fear, it begins to occupy a place that belongs only to God. Isaiah 44:9-20 exposes the absurdity of trusting what human hands make. Psalm 115:4-8 warns that those who trust idols become like them. Superstition may not always involve formal idol worship, but it often operates idolatrously because it gives creaturely signs,

objects, or rituals spiritual significance that Scripture does not authorize.

Spiritual discernment is the third category. Christian discernment does not mean suspicion of everything, nor does it mean naïve acceptance of every claim that sounds spiritual. It means the disciplined evaluation of beliefs, practices, experiences, teachings, and cultural trends under the authority of Scripture. Isaiah 8:19-20 rebukes those who seek mediums and spiritists instead of seeking God and returning to His instruction. Colossians 2:8 warns believers not to be taken captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition and the elements of the world rather than Christ. Discernment therefore protects Christians from both occult deception and religious manipulation.

This framework also interacts with missiological concerns. Hiebert's well-known discussion of the "excluded middle" identified a weakness in some Western missionary approaches that affirmed God and salvation while failing to address ordinary concerns about spirits, ancestors, curses, illness, protection, and daily crises (Hiebert, 1982). That insight remains valuable. If Christian teaching does not address people's fears biblically, they may continue to confess Christ formally while relying on charms, diviners, ancestors, ritual specialists, or prosperity formulas functionally. The answer, however, is not to validate superstition. The answer is to proclaim the sufficiency of Christ into the feared "middle" of ordinary life: sickness, childbirth, exams, funerals, dreams, animals, business, travel, and vulnerability.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative theological methodology combining biblical-theological analysis, conceptual analysis, and secondary literature review. It does not present original empirical fieldwork, ethnographic interviews, survey data, or experimental findings. Empirical references are used only where they illuminate the persistence

or social location of superstition, astrology, digital religion, manifestation culture, and related practices.

Biblical-theological analysis is used to interpret relevant scriptural passages in relation to creation, providence, idolatry, divination, occult practices, spiritual discernment, Christ's victory, and the indwelling Spirit. Key texts include Genesis 1:1, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 118:24, Proverbs 16:33, Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Isaiah 8:19-20, Isaiah 47:13-14, Jeremiah 10:2, Matthew 6:25-34, Acts 8:18-23, Acts 19:13-20, Romans 8:15, 1 Corinthians 10:21, Galatians 5:19-21, Colossians 1:16-17, Colossians 2:8-15, and 1 John 4:1-4.

Conceptual analysis is used to distinguish superstition from biblical faith, prayer, wisdom, and spiritual warfare. Secondary literature is used to situate the discussion within broader scholarly conversations on superstition, religious coping, folk religion, digital religion, prosperity theology, and African Christianity. This method is appropriate because the primary aim is theological interpretation and educational application rather than measurement of prevalence in a specific population.

Traditional Expressions of Superstition and Their Theological Problems

Traditional superstition often operates through ordinary life. It may appear in greetings, dreams, animals, funerals, pregnancy, birth, death, travel, farming, marriage, business, exams, illness, and family conflict. These practices are not always systematized. They may be transmitted through sayings, warnings, stories, prohibitions, repeated rituals, or inherited assumptions. Their power lies partly in the fact that they are often absorbed before they are examined.

One common example is the belief that meeting or greeting a particular person in the morning can determine whether the day will be good or bad. This belief may appear minor, but it has serious theological and moral implications. It treats a human

being as an omen. It also risks dehumanizing those already vulnerable, such as widows, elderly persons, the poor, disabled persons, socially disliked individuals, or those associated with past misfortune. Scripture grounds human dignity in creation: humanity is made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). No image-bearer should be reduced to a carrier of luck or misfortune. The day belongs to God, not to the first face one sees. *"This is the day the Lord has made"* (Psalm 118:24). If God's mercies are new every morning, as Lamentations 3:22-23 teaches, then a neighbor's greeting cannot cancel the mercy of God.

Another traditional expression concerns "good luck" and "bad luck." In ordinary speech, not every use of the word "luck" amounts to conscious unbelief. Yet Christian formation requires attention to the worldview behind language. Does the believer interpret life as governed by chance, fortune, and hidden signs, or by divine providence? Proverbs 16:33 teaches that even the lot cast into the lap is under the Lord's decision. Matthew 10:29-31 teaches that not even sparrows fall apart from the Father's knowledge and that God knows His people intimately. Scripture does not eliminate mystery, suffering, or lament, but it does not present life as governed by blind chance. Joseph's testimony in Genesis 50:20 is instructive: human evil was real, but God's providential purpose was deeper.

Superstitions also attach fear to numbers, dates, days, and seasons. Some may fear a particular date for marriage, travel, business, childbirth, or public events. Others may treat certain numbers as automatic carriers of wealth, death, blessing, or curse. Scripture teaches that God created days, seasons, and heavenly lights to serve His ordering of creation (Genesis 1:14-19). They are not independent spiritual powers. Daniel 2:21 declares that God changes times and seasons. Psalm 31:15 confesses that the believer's times are in God's hand. The pastoral issue is not whether dates can hold memory. Anniversaries of grief or joy can carry

emotional weight. The issue is whether time is feared as spiritually autonomous. Christians are called to steward time wisely, not fear it superstitiously (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Animals and natural events are another major area. Owls, black cats, dogs howling at night, birds entering a house, snakes, insects, thunder, rain, and unusual weather patterns may be interpreted as signs of death, curse, blessing, or warning. Scripture, however, presents creation as testimony to God's glory and care, not as a coded system of fear. Psalm 19:1 declares that the heavens proclaim God's glory. Psalm 50:10-11 teaches that the animals belong to God. Jesus points to birds not as omens but as reminders of the Father's care (Matthew 6:26). Creation can teach wisdom, but the teaching must be governed by Scripture, not fear-driven speculation.

Dreams require special care. Scripture shows that God can speak through dreams in particular redemptive-historical contexts. Joseph and Daniel are obvious examples. Yet Scripture also warns against false dreams and unauthorized claims of revelation. Jeremiah 23:25-32 rebukes false prophets who misuse dreams. Ecclesiastes 5:7 warns that many dreams and many words can be empty. Christians should therefore avoid two errors: denying that God can providentially use dreams, and treating every dream as revelation. A dream may arise from fear, bodily condition, desire, memory, temptation, anxiety, spiritual attack, or ordinary mental activity. Any dream that leads away from Scripture, holiness, truth, love, repentance, and Christ must be rejected.

Funeral and death-related superstitions can be especially powerful because death exposes human vulnerability. Some fear that the dead can punish the living. Others believe funeral mistakes bring curses. Some treat widows, widowers, or orphans as unlucky. Others seek ancestral mediation or ritual appeasement. Scripture calls believers to honor the dead, comfort the grieving, and care for widows and

orphans, but it forbids consulting the dead. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 explicitly forbids divination, fortune-telling, omens, sorcery, mediums, spiritists, and inquiry of the dead. Isaiah 8:19 asks why a people should inquire of the dead on behalf of the living. Christ's victory also transforms Christian understanding of death. Hebrews 2:14-15 teaches that Christ frees those held in slavery by the fear of death.

Pregnancy, birth, and child-related superstitions require direct pastoral attention. Some children are labeled cursed, unlucky, demonic, dangerous, or abnormal because of twins, birthmarks, disability, crying patterns, birth order, birth date, albinism, or unusual circumstances surrounding birth. Such beliefs can produce deep injustice. African Christian scholars have warned that witchcraft accusations can target vulnerable people, including women, older persons, and children, and that Christian ministry must address these accusations with theological seriousness and pastoral courage (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015). Scripture gives no basis for dehumanizing children. Psalm 139:13-16 celebrates God's intimate knowledge of the unborn. Mark 10:13-16 shows Jesus welcoming children. John 9:1-3 corrects simplistic assumptions that suffering or disability must be directly assigned to personal or parental sin. The church must therefore protect children from spiritual labeling that Scripture does not authorize.

Modern Superstition: Astrology, Digital Religion, Manifestation, and Religious Manipulation

Modernity has not eliminated superstition. It has often repackaged it through technology, consumer culture, therapeutic language, and personalized spirituality. The result is not always traditional fear of village omens, but a digitally mediated search for identity, control, insight, and reassurance. Astrology apps, tarot content, manifestation videos, prosperity formulas, religious chain messages, ritualized affirmations, and social media spirituality

demonstrate that the longing for hidden guidance remains active.

Astrology is among the clearest examples. Scripture does not deny that the heavens declare God's glory; it rejects fear of heavenly signs and dependence on celestial guidance. Jeremiah 10:2 warns God's people not to learn the way of the nations or be terrified by signs in the heavens. Isaiah 47:13-14 exposes the weakness of astrologers and stargazers. Deuteronomy 4:19 warns against being led astray by the sun, moon, and stars. Theologically, astrology reverses the created order. Instead of stars serving as created lights under God, they become imagined determiners of personality, compatibility, destiny, or decision-making.

Digital media intensifies the issue because it places personalized spiritual content into daily rhythms of attention. Campbell and Tsuria's work on digital religion highlights how digital media reshapes religious practice around identity, ritual, community, authority, and embodiment (Campbell & Tsuria, 2022). This is relevant because superstition now travels through algorithmic systems, short videos, apps, memes, and online communities. A horoscope notification can become a daily liturgy. A manifestation video can become catechesis in self-directed power. A chain message can become a fear-based ritual. A digital platform can create the impression that spiritual authority is personalized, immediate, and always available.

Manifestation culture adds another layer. It often teaches that thoughts, declarations, visualization, and emotional alignment can attract desired outcomes. Some forms are secularized self-help; others draw from New Thought, esoteric spirituality, prosperity, religion, and therapeutic individualism. Recent research on TikTok manifestation content has noted how manifestation surged in popularity during the pandemic and became shaped by platform affordances, algorithmic imagination, and emerging spirituality (Reinis, 2025). The Christian concern is

not with disciplined hope, wise goal-setting, or prayerful imagination. The concern is the claim, explicit or implied, that the self can summon reality through thought, energy, affirmation, or vibration. This is not biblical faith. Biblical prayer submits desire to the Father's will. Manifestation often seeks to bend reality toward the self.

Religious manipulation can also become superstition. Prosperity theology, in some forms, teaches that faith, positive confession, and financial giving draw health, wealth, and success into the believer's life. Britannica summarizes the prosperity gospel as a teaching that faith, expressed through positive thoughts, declarations, and donations, draws health, wealth, and happiness into believers' lives. Bowler's historical work shows that the American prosperity gospel developed through streams of metaphysical religion, Pentecostal healing, self-help, positive thought, and therapeutic religion, eventually becoming a major popular religious movement (Bowler, 2013). The problem is not that God cannot bless materially, heal, or provide. The problem is the reduction of faith to a technique for securing outcomes.

Scripture gives multiple warnings against such manipulation. Simon's attempt to obtain spiritual power with money is sharply rebuked in Acts 8:18-23. The sons of Sceva's attempt to use the name of Jesus as a formula apart from genuine submission ends in public humiliation (Acts 19:13-17). Jesus warns against empty repetition in prayer (Matthew 6:7-8). These passages show that biblical faith cannot be reduced to verbal formulas, objects, money, or technique. God is not manipulated by spiritual technology.

Digital chain messages are a popular contemporary form of religious superstition. Messages such as "Forward this prayer to ten people and God will bless you," "Type Amen and receive your miracle," or "Ignore this and something bad will happen" attach blessing or curse to online action. Such

messages may use Christian vocabulary, but they function through fear, guilt, and promised reward. 2 Timothy 1:7 teaches that God has not given believers a spirit of fear. Galatians 5:1 announces freedom in Christ. Colossians 2:20-23 warns against human regulations that appear wise but lack true spiritual power. If a message must threaten believers into sharing it, it does not reflect the freedom of the gospel.

Occult Misuse of Created Things and the Supremacy of Christ

A biblically faithful treatment must acknowledge that witches, magicians, diviners, sorcerers, mediums, and occult practitioners may misuse animals, objects, symbols, powders, charms, rituals, words, or created things in practices that Scripture condemns. Biblical faith is not naïve about darkness. Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Leviticus 19:31, Galatians 5:19-21, and Revelation 21:8 speak seriously about sorcery, divination, spirit consultation, and occult rebellion. Nevertheless, biblical discernment must not become a superstitious fear. An animal or object misused by darkness remains a creature under God's sovereignty. The believer's confidence is not in counter-charms, ritual protection, or anxious avoidance, but in Christ, who has disarmed the rulers and authorities and triumphed over them (Colossians 2:15). The Holy Spirit who dwells in believers is greater than every demonic force, curse, occult object, and hidden scheme, for 1 John 4:4 declares that the One who is in believers is greater than the one who is in the world.

This balance is pastorally important. If Christians deny occult activity altogether, they may leave believers unprepared for spiritual deception. If they exaggerate occult power, they may deepen bondage to fear. Scripture calls believers to reject the works of darkness while standing confidently in Christ. Ephesians 6:10-18 does not instruct believers to fear animals, objects, numbers, dreams, or rituals. It instructs them to be strengthened by the Lord, put on

the armor of God, stand in truth, righteousness, readiness, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer.

Christian teaching should therefore distinguish between discernment and paranoia. Discernment asks: Does this practice conform to Scripture? Does it exalt Christ? Does it lead to holiness, truth, love, humility, and obedience? Paranoia asks: What hidden curse may be attached to this animal, object, dream, person, or event? Discernment rests in Christ's victory. Paranoia gives fear interpretive control. Discernment equips believers to resist evil. Paranoia often makes evil appear more powerful than God's promises.

Biblical-Theological Response: Providence, Creation, Christ's Victory, and the Indwelling Spirit

A Christian response to superstition must be more than denunciation. It must offer a fuller biblical vision of reality. Four doctrines are especially important: creation, providence, Christ's victory, and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Creation teaches that all created things belong to God. Animals, bodies, days, seasons, stars, objects, and material realities are not evil in themselves. They may be misused, misunderstood, idolized, feared, or manipulated, but they remain creatures. This protects Christians from both secular materialism and superstitious animism. The world is not spiritually empty; it is God's world. But neither is the world full of autonomous powers that rival God. Colossians 1:16-17 places all things under Christ's creative and sustaining lordship.

Providence teaches that life is not governed by luck. God's rule does not make human choices meaningless, nor does it make suffering simple. Yet Scripture insists that events do not unfold outside God's sovereign knowledge and permission. Proverbs 16:33 affirms God's rule even over what appears random. Romans 8:28 teaches that God

works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. This does not permit shallow explanations of suffering. It does permit deep trust when explanations are hidden.

Christ's victory directly confronts fear of occult powers. The New Testament does not present believers as spiritually vulnerable victims who must secure themselves through charms, formulas, or counter-rituals. It presents them as united to the risen Christ. Colossians 2:15 teaches that Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities. Hebrews 2:14-15 teaches that through death Christ destroyed the one holding the power of death and freed those enslaved by fear. John 10:27-29 presents Christ's sheep as secure in His hand and the Father's hand.

The indwelling Spirit completes this pastoral assurance. Romans 8:15 teaches that believers have not received a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but the Spirit of adoption. 1 John 4:4 assures believers that the One in them is greater than the one in the world. This does not encourage carelessness. It encourages confidence. The Spirit leads believers into holiness, truth, prayer, discernment, and assurance, not bondage to omens.

These doctrines also clarify the difference between faith and superstition. Prayer is not superstition because prayer submits to God's will. Wisdom is not superstition because wisdom applies God's truth responsibly. Spiritual warfare is not superstition because it rests in Christ's victory and biblical obedience. Fasting is not superstition when practiced as a humble dependence on God. Giving is not superstition when offered freely and faithfully. Anointing oil is not superstition when used according to Scripture as part of prayerful pastoral care. These practices become distorted when treated as mechanisms that force outcomes.

Superstition asks, "What sign controls my future?" Faith asks, "What has God spoken?" Superstition asks, "What ritual will guarantee my desired result?"

Faith asks, "How can I obey God and entrust the result to Him?" Superstition asks, "What object protects me?" Faith confesses, "The Lord is my refuge." Superstition asks, "What hidden force must I appease?" Faith declares, "Christ is Lord."

Pastoral and Educational Implications

Christian communities need intentional discipleship on superstition because believers may formally affirm biblical doctrine while functionally living under fear. Pastors, parents, lecturers, Christian educators, and church leaders should therefore address superstition not only as error but as formation. People are formed by repeated fears, family sayings, social media messages, ritual habits, crisis responses, and community interpretations of suffering. Christian discipleship must patiently replace those patterns with Scripture-shaped imagination.

First, churches should teach creation and providence clearly. Believers need to know that the world belongs to God, that created things are not independent spiritual powers, and that God's providence is stronger than luck. Teaching should address ordinary examples: morning greetings, dreams, funerals, animals, exams, childbirth, business, travel, and illness. If preaching only addresses abstract doctrine but not daily fear, people may continue to seek help elsewhere.

Second, Christian educators should teach discernment without mockery. Many people shaped by superstition are not foolish; they are often afraid, grieving, socially pressured, or spiritually uninstructed. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 calls the Lord's servant to correct with gentleness. A humiliating tone may harden people, while a patient biblical approach may free them. Educators might ask reflective questions: What do I fear most when I wake up? What do I trust when I travel? What do I do when I dream about something disturbing? What do I believe protects my home? What hidden

assumptions shape my view of children, widows, disability, illness, or misfortune?

Third, families should remove fear-based spiritual practices from household life. Children should not be taught that certain people bring bad luck, that animals automatically announce death, that birthmarks carry curses, or that online prayers must be forwarded to avoid punishment. Parents and guardians should model prayer, Scripture reading, wise preparation, and calm trust in God. The home should become a place where children learn that Christ is greater than fear.

Fourth, churches must address religious manipulation. Leaders should not attach guaranteed miracles to payments, objects, formulas, or social media engagement. Pastoral authority must not be used to monetize fear. The church should teach generosity, prayer, fasting, healing, and deliverance biblically, without turning them into transactional systems. The difference between faith and formula must be made explicit.

Fifth, Christian institutions should develop teaching resources on digital spirituality. Young people are being discipled by apps, short videos, influencers, podcasts, and algorithmic communities. If churches do not teach biblically about astrology apps, manifestation culture, tarot content, online prophecy, and chain prayers, digital media will fill the gap. Digital discernment should be treated as part of Christian education, not merely as a technology issue.

Sixth, pastoral care should help believers renounce superstition practically. Some may need to delete astrology apps, discard charms, stop consulting diviners, refuse chain messages, repent of occult involvement, or confess fear-based practices. Others may need patient teaching because their fears are tied to grief, trauma, or family pressure. Acts 19:18-20 provides a biblical pattern of renunciation as the Word of the Lord prevails. Yet renunciation

must be followed by formation. Fear must be replaced with truth.

Finally, Christian communities should cultivate practices of confidence in Christ. Believers should be taught to pray before journeys without fearing routes, to study for exams without trusting lucky clothes, to bury the dead with dignity without fearing ancestral punishment, to welcome children without attaching superstitious labels, to use material things without idolizing them, and to engage digital culture without surrendering to its spiritual confusion. The goal is not merely to stop superstition. The goal is to form Christians who live under the lordship of Christ.

Conclusion

Superstition is not harmless when it shapes worship, fear, relationships, identity, decision-making, and spiritual practice. It may appear as belief in good or bad luck, fear of certain people, anxiety over numbers or dates, interpretation of animals as omens, bondage to dreams, reliance on protective objects, rituals for success, fear of the dead, harmful labeling of children, astrology, manifestation culture, prosperity formulas, occult practices, or digital chain messages. These expressions differ in form, but they share a common theological disorder: created things are treated as though they possess spiritual authority that belongs to God alone.

This article has argued that a biblical-theological response must neither mock people shaped by superstition nor excuse practices Scripture corrects. Superstition often grows from fear, uncertainty, grief, poverty, trauma, social pressure, and inherited tradition. Compassion is necessary. But compassion must be governed by truth. Scripture calls believers away from divination, omens, sorcery, spirit consultation, manipulative religion, and fear-based spirituality. It calls them toward faith in the Creator, trust in divine providence, submission to Scripture, confidence in Christ's victory, and life in the Holy Spirit.

The contribution of this article lies in integrating biblical theology, conceptual analysis, pastoral education, and contemporary cultural engagement. It shows that superstition is not merely a relic of premodern culture but a continuing challenge in both traditional and digital forms. It also shows that Christian discipleship must address everyday fears, not only formal doctrines. If believers are not taught to bring dreams, death, animals, dates, objects, digital messages, and occult anxieties under Scripture, they may continue to live with divided trust.

The Christian answer is not superstition against superstition. It is not charms against curses, formulas against fear, or rituals against omens. The Christian answer is the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him all things hold together. Through Him the powers are disarmed. By His Spirit believers are freed from slavery to fear. Therefore, the Christian may greet the morning without dread, honor every person as an image-bearer, reject omens, renounce occult practices, test every spiritual claim, and walk by faith rather than fear. The day belongs to the Lord. The believer belongs to Christ.

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