

It: A Novel

By Stephen King
(Scribner, 1986)
1157 pages

I am a Stephen King fan. He writes in an extremely vivid way, creating word pictures that you can see in the mind's eye.

It is a typical Stephen King novel: dark, suspenseful, scary, nerve racking, nail biting and vivid. It was, as with every other novel of his that I have read, was a page turner and once I started, I really couldn't put it down.

Many are familiar with this story (either from the book or the TV-movie adaptation): there is a killer clown on the loose in Derry, Maine that hides a deeper secret. The terror first affects a group of kids known as the loser's club – and returns to terrorize them when the kids are grown and called back to town to deal with the insidious horror of the standpipe and the marshy barrens of Derry.

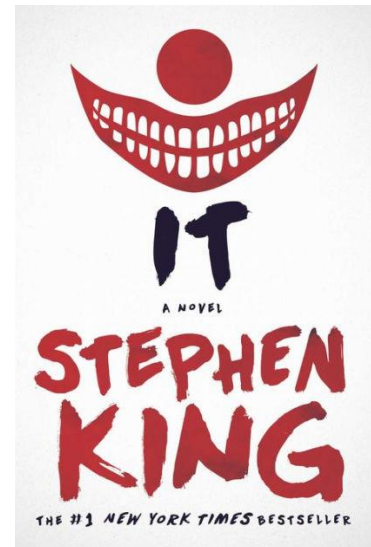
Be warned – the language can at times be quite graphic, the imagery incredibly vivid (including images of violence), somewhat salacious (there are a couple of scenes that are highly sexualized, even of the children) and not at all what I would call a Christian novel in any sense of that word.

However, in the middle of the horror story (actually more towards the end), there is a line that King includes that transforms the disturbing story into a statement of the nature of faith and belief.

The book says: “Can it be that IT protects Itself by the simple fact that, as the children grow into adults, they become either incapable of faith or crippled by a sort of spiritual and imaginative arthritis?”¹

The It is some extraterrestrial entity that terrorizes the residents of Derry, Maine every twenty-seven years (or there about) for the last several centuries. The adults can't see IT, but the children often can and often interact with it. Additionally, the group of children initially overcome it because of their power of belief and the “goodness” that exists between them.

The adults can sense the evil presence in their town. The children can. The difference is summed up in the line quoted just above. Children have the ability to retain to see beyond themselves and have a simple belief.



¹ Stephen King, *It: A Novel* (New York: Scribner, 1986), page 908.

Adults (according to the novel) are afflicted with a spiritual or imaginative arthritis which prevents faith, trust, belief, and acceptance of things that cannot be rationally explained. And in spite of the disturbing story line, I must agree with the conclusion.

I think that this is why Jesus calls all persons to have the faith of a little child.

Matthew 18:1-4 says this,

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (ESV)

Never did I imagine I would hear in the recesses of my mind a scripture when I read a Stephen King novel – but I did.

King tells us there is a danger of being an adult – losing the ability to believe, trust, have faith and imagine the reality around us. Jesus, on this one point, would probably agree. He calls each one of us to have the ability of a child to believe, to trust, to have faith and imaginatively see the world around us.

The novel was entertaining. But it also reminded me that I must remain childlike in my faith and my trust in God.

In believing in Christ, in expressing faith and seeing with a child's eyes leads to a victory that I can't describe!