The Power of the Witch Doctor

The people in Wagaso’s village were afraid of the witch doctor, and no wonder! Witch doctors had great power and importance in their tribes. Their power was usually passed on from father to son. Their knowledge of plants, animals, and supernatural spells were believed to be great secrets.

Tribal people feared their witch doctors, but they also depended on them to help when they were sick. Plants and herbs the witch doctors used did cure some illnesses, but the witch doctors also used spells and other evil ways of treating the sick.

Why did they do the things they did, and wear such unusual and scary-looking things? They smeared cow manure on their hair because they believed it was sacred and purifying. The people believed that cows were special gifts from the spirits. The witch doctors themselves were afraid that they would make the spirits very angry if they didn’t protect themselves with the things they wore and their rituals. Even the witch doctors lived in fear.

Witch doctors would hurt, even kill, people who spoke against them or refused help from them. More than anything else, the witch doctors used fear to rule the people. The Bible teaches us about this kind of fear – it is not from the true God! 1 John 4:18 tells us that kind of “fear has to do with punishment. . . .” Read all of 1 John 4:18. What casts out all fear? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

At Konso Rock, people caught in lies must put their hands on the “truth rock.” The young people in the picture look very afraid!

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!" (Psalm 111:10) Is there a good kind of fear? Explain your answer.
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