

Angels and Demons.

(Demons—Fallen Angels and their Turn to Evil)

Question 1—*What evidence do we have from Scripture of the reality of demons?*

Answer—In the Old Testament, we find a record that shows that there are spirit beings who are opposing both God and man beginning in Genesis, wherein a spirit being spoke through a serpent in order to lead mankind into a state of guilt and depravity, Gen. 3:1-4. Satan may be considered a demon, since he is the ruler of the demons, *cf.* Matt. 12:24. In the LXX, the Greek version of the OT, several words are translated by the New Testament words, *daimōn* (δαίμων), or *daimonion* (δαίμόνιον): 1.) They are *šēdim* (שֵׁדִים), from the Babylonian word *shēdu*, perhaps signifying a connection to fertility cults, *cf.* Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37. This term, which connotes a being less powerful than a god, stresses the teaching that the heathen gods, these devils, are “no gods,” *cf.* Jer. 2:11. 2.) They are *sā'irim* (סַרְיִם), hairy demons also called satyrs, *cf.* Lev. 17:7; Isa. 13:21. Whereas sheep are loyal to the shepherd and dependent upon him, goats are disobedient, stubborn and difficult to herd and given to attacking men, *cf.* Matt. 25:32, 33. 3.) They are *'ēlilim* (עִלְלִים), a word connoting their worthlessness as gods, or idols, *cf.* Ps. 96:5 (LXX, 95:5). It is a word which classes its object along with divination and lies, *cf.* Jer. 14:14. 4.) They are *gad* (גַּד), a word signifying the god of fortune, *cf.* Isa. 65:11. This word is derived from the Hebrew word *gādad* (גָּדַד), a term which bespeaks self-laceration and cutting of the flesh for magical purposes, or purposes of increasing fortune with the gods, *cf.* 1 Kings 18:28. 5.) They are *qeteb* (קֶטֶב), due to their destructiveness, *cf.* Ps. 91:6 (LXX, 90:6). This word is from a root signifying dying suddenly, or unexpectedly, *cf.* Deut. 32:24; or, perhaps, killing, *cf.* Hos. 13:14.

In the New Testament, there are over 100 references to demons using various words: 1.) They are *daimones* (δαίμονες), from *daimōn* (δαίμων), a term indicating divinity somewhere between a god and a hero, it signified the idea of a destiny independent of man (often “bad fortune”) coming upon and prevailing over him; hence, it was used to designate an evil spirit, *cf.* Matt. 8:31. 2.) They are *daimonia* (δαίμονια), from *daimonion* (δαίμόνιον), a term which refers to them as powerful entities transcending normal experience, and indicating hostile powers, *cf.* Luke 8:30. 3.) They are *pneumata* (πνεύματα), *spirits* which speaks of their incorporeal nature and are usually characterized as unclean, evil or simply of devils, *cf.* Acts 8:7; Luke 7:21; Rev. 16:14. 4.) They are *angeloi* (ἄγγελοι), *angels* denoting their character as messengers which, now fallen, have become associated with the devil, or Satan, *cf.* Rev. 12:9.

This testimony of Scripture is further intensified by the explicit acknowledgement of Jesus that Satan is the ruler of an army of demons, going so far as to equate their reality with proof regarding His Messiahship, *cf.* Matt. 12:22-28. Moreover, He confidently asserts the final destiny of the devil and his angels (the demons) to be the everlasting fire, *cf.* Matt. 25:41. In view of His mission, Christ gave power to His apostles to cast out demons, or devils, *cf.* Matt. 10:1.

Additionally, there is no suggestion that these entities ceased with the ascension of Christ or the close of the apostolic era, rather the apostles warn of future demonic deceptions, *cf.* 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 4:1-3. Nor should this be thought a thing too incredible since these demons will be allowed to work throughout most of the New Testament era without hindrance, *cf.* Rev. 16:13, 14. This shall continue until the coming of the Millennial glory when they shall be bound for a thousand years with their leader, *cf.* Rev. 20:1-3; Isa. 24:21-23. Afterward, they, together with Satan, shall be loosed for a short time wherein they will be permitted to deceive the nations again only to be finally stopped with the second coming of Christ and the Judgment day, *cf.* Rev. 20:7-10.

Question 2—*What is the origin of these demons?*

Answer—There are several theories regarding the origin of demons:

First, there is a view, which goes back at least to the ancient Greek philosophers that the demons are simply the spirits of the dead. To the Greeks, demons were either good or bad, whereas Paul makes clear such are only evil, *cf.* 1 Tim. 4:1. So, for the Greeks, the spirits of wicked men alone would constitute what we would call demons today but, again, the apostolic understanding is that all demons are evil, *cf.* Rev. 9:20. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the souls of the unsaved dead are in hell and cannot roam throughout the earth, *cf.* Luke 16:23. There they are consigned at death and there they shall remain until the great Day of Judgment when they shall be cast into everlasting torments, *cf.* Ps. 9:17; Rev. 20:11-14.

Second, there is a theory that these demons are the spirits of a race of pre-Adamic “men” which perished before the present world was formed, working with a so-called “gap theory,” *cf.* Gen. 1:2. This proceeds upon the notion that the language of being without form and void indicates a preceding judgment, *cf.* Jer. 4:23. However, the Scriptures clearly declare that Adam was the first man, *cf.* 1 Cor. 15:45.

Third, there is an increasingly popular interpretation, which has ancient roots, that suggests that the demons are the result of the sexual union between angels and women prior to the flood, *cf.* Gen. 6:1-4. While this view merits closer scrutiny, it is liable to criticism for several reasons: 1.) The offspring described here are not demons but giants, *cf.* Gen. 6:4. 2.) Incorporeal angels could hardly couple with women possessing flesh and blood, *cf.* Matt. 22:30. 3.) This was clearly much later in the history of earth than the creation but, in the garden, we see the presence of the serpent, Satan, with his presumed entourage, the demons, in tow, *cf.* Gen. 3:1.

Fourth, the best evidence of Scripture indicates that the demons are nothing more or less than fallen, or evil, angels, *cf.* Matt. 25:41. We are told in several places of the fall of their leader, Satan, and that in his fall, he swept many angels, perhaps a third of the angels, with him, *cf.* Rev. 12:4. These fallen angels are now considered either as free or as confined: 1.) As free, they have access to the heavenly realm, *cf.* Job 1:6; and are working on earth amongst its inhabitants, *cf.* Eph. 3:10; 6:12. 2.) As confined, they are relegated to the abyss, or pit, *cf.* Rev. 9:1-11; a place to which Christ cast many, *cf.* Luke 8:31. This is the place where Satan will also be confined during the Millennium, *cf.* Rev. 20:1-3. Elsewhere, we are told that these confined angels, who sinned, are also kept in everlasting, or eternal, chains, *cf.* 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6. Notably, this term “everlasting,” or eternal, is used in only one other place of the power of God, indicating that, by their fall, these angels have been placed under an involuntary compulsion of some sort to the supreme Divinity, *cf.* Rom. 1:20.

Question 3—*What else might we advance in support of the position that demons are fallen angels?*

Answer—First, we may note that the demons seem to have the same subordinate relation to Satan as do his angels for as Satan appears to be the ruler of certain angels designated “his,” *cf.* Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7; so, too, he appears to be the ruler of the demons, *cf.* Matt. 12:24, 26.

Second, the term used to designate Satan as “ruler of the demons,” *archonti tōn daimoniōn* (ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων), literally means he is “first, or the beginning, of the demons,” *cf.* Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15. This same relation is seen in the angel of the abyss, Abaddon or Apollyon (*i.e.*, the Destroyer, *cf.* Isa. 54:16), to the demon locusts which come out of the pit with him, *cf.* Rev. 9:3, 11.

Third, demons and angels are both incorporeal, having the same nature and substance: 1.) The angels are called *spirits*, *cf.* Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:14. 2.) The demons are also called *spirits*, *cf.* Matt. 8:16; Luke 10:17, 20.

Fourth, both demons and evil angels are said to do similar things with demons seeking to possess and control men, *cf.* Matt. 17:14-18; Luke 11:14, 15; and evil angels, such as Satan seeking to do the same, *cf.* Luke 22:3; John 13:27. So, too, evil angels are said to wage war with Satan against God and man just as predicated of the demons, *cf.* Rev. 12:7-17 with Mark 9:17-26 and Rev. 9:13-15.

Fifth, it would appear that the various ranks, or stations, of angels and demons are similar, at least according to their original creation, *cf.* Rom. 8:38, 39; Eph. 6:10-12; Col. 1:16; 2:15.

Question 4—*How then came about the fall of these angels which turned them into demons?*

Answer—That the angels, including the demons, have personality and are persons may be inferred from their original creation, wherein they were oriented toward God, *cf.* Heb. 1:6. Further evidence of the personhood of demons appears in the use of personal pronouns by Christ and the demons themselves, including the use of personal names, *cf.* Luke 8:27-30. Their use of intelligent speech demonstrates that they are intelligences, *cf.* Luke 4:33-35; as seen in Satan’s exchange with the LORD, *cf.* Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5. Moreover, they recognize the identity of Christ, *cf.* Mark 1:23, 24; as well as that of the apostle Paul, *cf.* Acts 16:16, 17. They also exhibit their passability when they are described as trembling at the thought of impending judgment, *cf.* Luke 8:28; Jas. 2:19.

This passability, or ability to change, lies at the root of their turn to evil, for it allowed the possibility of sinning, or “missing the mark,” *cf.* 2 Pet. 2:4. Elsewhere we are told that the angels which fell did not “keep their first estate,” or more literally, they failed “to guard, or preserve, their own beginning,” *cf.* Jude 6 (*archēn; ἀρχήν*). In other words, they fell from their beginning, which was an estate of holiness, and, in the process, began to lose their personhood as they turned from God, *cf.* 1 John 3:8. From this, it seems that believers are warned to hold fast to their “first, or beginning, of person,” to the end, *cf.* Heb. 3:14 (*tēn archēn tēs hupostaseōs; τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως*). This “first estate” is one defined by trust, or confidence, without fear, in faith, *cf.* Heb. 3:6. Through this turning, they ceased to be angels of God and became angels of Satan, transferring their allegiance and trust to a created authority, *cf.* 2 Cor. 12:7 (*angelos satana; ἄγγελος σατανᾶ*).