

# THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF DEMONS

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The Bible clearly teaches the existence of certain personal beings called "demons." In the Authorized Version the word "demon" itself does not occur but these beings are variously designated by such terms as: "devils" (Mt. 7:22), "spirits" (Mt. 8:16), "unclean spirits" (Mt. 10:1), "foul spirits" (Lk. 9:25), and "evil spirits" (Lk. 8:2). In all, there are about eighty references to demons in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> On a number of occasions Jesus attested to the existence of demons by His statements concerning them (Mt. 12:27, 28). A significant part of His ministry involved ministering to those who were demon possessed (Mk. 1:34). Consequently, one who accepts the Bible as God's Word and Jesus as God must admit the existence of demons.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT NAMES FOR DEMONS

Daimōn. -- This is the root from which the English word "demon" is derived (through Latin and French).<sup>2</sup> In the critical editions of the Greek New Testament the word occurs only one time--Matthew 8:31. This is the occasion where the daimones in the Gadarene demoniacs requested permission to enter the pigs. On four other occasions the word appears in the Textus Receptus (Mk. 5:12; Lk. 8:29; Rev. 16:14; 18:2).

The derivation of the term daimōn is uncertain. "Plato indeed derives it from daemon, an adjective formed from daō and signifying "knowing," or "intelligent."<sup>3</sup> If this is correct then the name is apparently derived from the fact that the demons have knowledge that is superior to that of humans. Many modern scholars, however, do not accept Plato's derivation and derive the name from the root dai, with the basic meaning of "divide," "assign," or "disrupt."<sup>4</sup> The reason for this derivation is not entirely clear. It has been suggested that it indicates a concept "of the daimōn as that which consumes the body,"<sup>5</sup> or a "divider or distributor of destiny."<sup>6</sup>

It is of significant value to trace the development in meaning of the word daimōn, from its earliest usages to its usage in the New Testament. Apparently its original signification was to designate a "supernatural power."<sup>7</sup> As such it was sometimes used as a synonym for theos ("god"). It was used in a more general sense than theos, however, and was used particularly when an "unknown superhuman factor" was at work.<sup>8</sup> Acts 17:18, where Paul was accused of setting forth "strange gods," is a Biblical example of such a usage by pagans

(however, the derived word daimonion, is used). A second stage (post-Homeric) in the development of the term daimōn was its employment to designate those who were conceived as the intermediaries between men and the gods. These were considered as either demi-gods or as the spirits of good men of the Golden Age.<sup>9</sup> A much later development in the usage of the term involved the conclusion that demons were morally imperfect beings, and like man, might be good or evil. Some concluded that "falsehood belongs to the very essence of demons."<sup>10</sup> The Jewish writers of the Septuagint, and later the New Testament writers, clearly conceived of all demons as evil. The Septuagint, like the New Testament, avoids the usage of daimōn and instead prefers the following term.

Daimonion. --This term is the neuter of the adjective daimonios. Originally it was not used as a true substantive but had the sense of the adjective "divine."<sup>11</sup> Since the concept of "demons" was not so developed as was the concept of "gods," and was used as a general synonym for theos, it came to be used to designate an "inferior divinity," or "lesser deity."<sup>12</sup> The great Greek scholar, A. T. Robertson, said that "Daimonion is a diminutive of daimōn."<sup>13</sup> Apparently the Jews usually avoided daimon because it was "too closely associated with the positive religious elements" of the pagans.<sup>14</sup> Since the Jews considered all the "gods" and "divinities" of the pagans as less than true deity, this term could be appropriately used by them to designate all idols, pagan gods, and demi-gods. The Septuagint, used daimonion to translate five different Hebrew words (shedhim, Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; seirim, Lev. 17:7 and others; 'elilim, Ps. 96:5, 95:5 in LXX; Gad, Isa. 65:11; and qeter, Ps. 91:6, 90:6 in LXX).

The word daimonion occurs about sixty-three times in the New Testament.

Daimonizomai. --This verb means "to be possessed by a demon."<sup>15</sup> In simple verb form it occurs only in Matthew 15:22 where it is connected with the adverb kakos. The Canaanite woman's daughter was "badly demon possessed," or "grievously vexed with a demon." The verb appears twelve other times in the New Testament in participial form and should be translated "demon possessed" (cf. Mt. 4:24).

Daimoniōdēs. --This adjective simply designates that which is associated with demons and should be translated "demonic." In the New Testament it occurs only in James 3:15 where it is used to designate certain wisdom as "demonic." This demonic wisdom is contrasted with the true divine wisdom (v. 17).

Deisidaimonesterous. --This word occurs only in Acts 17:22 where Paul says that the Athenians are "too superstitious" (A. V.), or "very religious" (A.S.V.). It literally means that they were "reverencing the demons (or "divine" things--"gods" in their thinking) more than usual." It is derived from deidō, meaning "to fear," and daimōn.

Deisidaimonia. --This word is derived from deidō, meaning "to fear" or "reverence," and daimonion. It refers to a fear or reverence for demons, or "divine things," gods, or demi-gods. It occurs only in Acts 25:19 where it is translated "superstition" (A. V.) or "religion" (A.S.V.).

Pneumata. --On several occasions demons are simply designated as pneumata, "spirits." In each case the fact that demons are so designated is proved by an adjective describing their character or by the general context. In Matthew 8:16 those who were demon possessed (daimonizomenous) were brought to Jesus and He cast out "the spirits" (pneumata). When the seventy returned to Jesus, rejoicing that "even the demons (daimonia) are subject unto us," Jesus told them to "rejoice not, that the spirits (pneumata) are subject unto you. . ." (Lk. 10:17-20).

A number of qualifying adjectives are used to identify these pneumata as demons: akatharton ("unclean," Mt. 10:1); ponēron ("evil," Lk. 7:21); ponērotera ("more evil," Mt. 12:45); puthōna ("Python," or diviner, Acts 16:16 only); alalon ("dumb" or "mute," Mk. 9:25); kōphon ("deaf," Mk. 9:25); astheneias ("infirmities," Lk. 13:1).

The unusual usage, "spirits of demons," in Revelation 16:14 is apparently intended to distinguish them from human spirits. Not only are they "unclean spirits" (v. 13), but they are not merely human, rather supernatural--"spirits of demons" (v. 14).

#### THE PERSONALITY OF DEMONS

It has sometimes been suggested that there are no personal beings who may be designated as "demons." The term is simply an ancient and common designation for certain mental and physical ailments. Davies states that so-called demonism is nothing more than "certain diseases superstitiously regarded as due to demonical influence."<sup>16</sup> Such a view, of course, implies that Jesus was confused by the superstitions of His day. The Bible-believer, however, cannot accept this explanation. Demons are called "spirits." Spirits are always personal beings. Diseases do not speak as did the demon who cried out "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?" (Mk. 5:7).

Older theologians considered that personality was proved by the existence of intellect, sensibility (or emotion), and will. That demons have intellect may be seen in their recognition of Jesus (Mk. 5:7). That they have emotions is attested by their impassioned pleas ("besought"--Mt. 9:31) to escape premature torment (Mk. 5:7), and by their "trembling" in anticipation of judgment (Jas. 2:19). That they have will is evidenced in their choice of the alternative of entering the swine (Mt. 8:31). More modern theologians tend to express personality in terms of the possession of self-consciousness, and self-determination.<sup>16b</sup> It would seem wise to include moral sensibility or responsibility as part of the definition of personality. The references cited above also prove that demons have self-consciousness, self-determination, and moral responsibility.

#### THE IDENTIFICATION OF DEMONS

Spirits of evil men. --This view has already been mentioned under the discussion of the term daimōn. In popular Greek belief demons were "fundamentally the spirits of the departed."<sup>17</sup> Since they were considered as responsible for many terrifying events in nature and human life

they were generally conceived as sinister powers and consequently as the departed spirits of evil men in particular. Josephus held this view since he identified demons as "no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them."<sup>18</sup>

The Scriptures grant no support to this theory. The spirits of all men are taken at death to specific places ("paradise" or hades) and are not left free to wander about and to inhabit other bodies. There is a great impassable "gulf" fixed between the wicked dead and the righteous dead (Lk. 16:26). Apparently a similar gulf exists between the wicked dead and the living (Lk. 16:27-31). The rich man of Luke 16 woke up in torment and it is clear that there was no possibility of relieving his torment by leaving hades and entering a living body. Even the spirits of the saints are not left to roam the earth. The special appearances of Samuel (I Sam. 28:12-20), and Moses and Elijah (Mt. 17:3), were unique manifestations for sovereign purposes. In Revelation 6:9 the spirits of a special group of saints seem to be confined to a specific location. David said of his departed son, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Sam. 12:23).

Spirits of a pre-Adamic race. -- A number of conservative Bible teachers have concluded that demons are the disembodied spirits of a pre-Adamic race. Thiessen,<sup>19</sup> Larkin,<sup>20</sup> Schwarze,<sup>21</sup> Barnhouse,<sup>22</sup> and Nevius<sup>23</sup> were friendly to this theory. Ottman,<sup>24</sup> Pardington,<sup>25</sup> Bancroft,<sup>26</sup> Pember,<sup>27</sup> and others have firmly espoused it. This is in spite of the fact, as Thiessen admits, "that the Scriptures nowhere speak of such a race."<sup>28</sup> Those who favor this theory contend that Genesis 1:1 describes the creation of a complete and perfect earth many millenniums ago. This perfect earth was changed into the state described in Genesis 1:2 as a result of the sin of either the angels, or of the pre-Adamic men who inhabited the pristine earth, or both. The state described in verse one may have lasted for thousands or even millions of years. Likewise the state described in verse two may have lasted for thousands of years.<sup>29</sup>

Not all who hold this "ruin-reconstruction" theory ("the gap theory") understand it as the explanation for the origin of demons. Archer, for example, classifies "Pithecanthropus, the Swanscombe man, the Neanderthal and all the rest. . . possibly even the Cro-Magnon man. . ." as pre-Adamic, but he suggests that they were "men" who did not have souls.<sup>30</sup> If they were animals who had no souls, or spirits, then their supposed existence offers no explanation for the origin of demons.

There is not one particle of genuine evidence, however, for either a pre-Adamic race or the ruin-reconstruction theory.

1. The grammar of Genesis 1:1-2 will not allow a "gap."
2. Other Scriptures which are supposed to teach this theory are in fact opposed to it.
3. Theology does not demand a gap.
4. Geology does not demand a gap.
5. Certain Scriptures deny the possibility of a gap.

The Bible specifically states that everything that was created was created within the six days of Genesis one (Ex. 20:11; 31:17). It is specifically stated that sin and death entered the world as the result of Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12-18). Adam is clearly designated as the first man (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 14:45). At the end of the creation week God considered everything He had made as "very good" (Gen. 1:31).<sup>31</sup>

Those who hold this view sharply distinguish between demons and angels on the basis that demons are disembodied spirits who seek embodiment in contrast to angels who have celestial bodies and consequently do not seek embodiment. This aspect of the theory will be considered later.

Disembodied spirits of the "nephilim" of Genesis 6. --This theory is based upon the traditional interpretation of Genesis 6 as involving evil angels. These evil angels are thought to have lusted after the beautiful daughters of men and consequently to have entered into marriage relationships with them.<sup>32</sup> The results of this union were a strange progeny that were half human and half angel. Frequently this whole affair is viewed as an attempt, sponsored by Satan, to corrupt the whole human race so that there would be no pure Adamic stock (or "Eveian" stock!) through which the promised deliverer could come (Gen. 3:15). Noah's family may have been the only family which had not been corrupted to include "angelic stock." This is why Noah alone was "perfect in his generations" (Gen. 6:9).<sup>33</sup>

Many conservative scholars agree with the basic premise of this theory--that is, that evil angels were involved in the sin of Genesis 6. Several reasons may be briefly listed:

1. There is no evidence for the alternative theory that the descendants of Seth were a godly race, whereas the descendants of Cain were all ungodly. Even if such a distinction existed, the phrases "sons of God," and "daughters of women" do not seem to be appropriate designations for two such races.

2. Some Septuagint manuscripts (Alexandrinus) have the phrase "angels of God," instead of "sons of God." This is indicative of the ancient Jewish interpretation.

3. The Hebrew manuscripts all have "sons of Elohim," a phrase which elsewhere in the Old Testament always refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7--especially interesting if Moses wrote Job as some believe). The phrase "sons of God" seems to refer to those directly created by God and consequently not born of other beings (angels; Adam, Lk. 3:38; Christians, Jn. 1:12).

4. Without this "angel hypothesis" there is no satisfactory explanation as to why some of the evil angels are bound and others are not. "God spared not the sinning angels (or "angels when they sinned"), but consigning (them) to Tartarus, committed (them) to pits of gloom--being kept unto judgment" (II Pet. 2:4). "And angels, not having kept the rule of themselves (or "their beginning estate") but having deserted their own habitation, He has kept for the judgment of the great day in everlasting bonds under gloom" (Jude 6).

5. The sin of these bound angels seems to be identified as an unusual kind of fornication. After mentioning the bound angels Jude adds: "Just as Sodom and Gomorra and the cities around them, in like manner to these committing fornication and going away after different flesh, are set forth(as) an example undergoing (the) justice of eternal fire" (Jude 7). According to A. T. Robertson, the phrase "in like manner to these" means "like the fallen angels."<sup>34</sup> Wuest argues that the phrase cannot mean that the surrounding cities sinned "in like manner" to Sodom and Gomorra.<sup>35</sup> Indeed if that were the case, the phrase would serve no purpose and the sense would be much clearer if it were omitted. Also in II Peter 2:4 (and perhaps I Pet. 3:19,20) the sin of those bound angels seems to be closely associated with the great flood of Genesis 6:9.

6. The "angel view" was the common interpretation in the time of the Apostles. It was presented fully in the apocryphal Book of Enoch. The so-called "Minor Genesis," the majority of the rabbinic writers, Philo, Josephus, and apparently all of the early Church Fathers accepted it (including Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Lactantius). Though it was rejected by some of the later Church Fathers (Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret) and by many modern theologians (Hengstenberg, Keil, Lange, Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Matthew Henry, John Dick,<sup>36</sup> C. I. Scofield), it has been endorsed by many conservative theologians (Luther, Meyer, Delitzsch, J. B. Mayor, Plummer, Alford, W. Kelly, Pember, A. C. Gaebelien, James Gray, Larkin, Ryrie, Wuest, Unger, and others).<sup>37</sup>

The least that can be said of the statements of Peter and Jude is that their comments certainly harmonize with the then popular interpretation and in no way present any objection to the view.

While it may be agreed that the "sons of God" of Genesis 6 were angels, this does not prove that demons are the disembodied spirits resulting from this union. Not only is this theory based upon the identification of the "sons of God" as angels, but it is also based upon a distinction between angels who are thought to possess a celestial or spiritual body, and demons who are thought to be disembodied spirits. McClain, for example, states that "Demons are not angels."<sup>38</sup> His major reasons are that the names are never used interchangeably and that demons desperately seek embodiment and are distressed and not at rest while not embodied.<sup>39</sup> Concerning this last apparent characteristic of demons, Wuest comments as follows: "This clearly infers that at one time they had physical bodies, and being deprived of them through some judgment of God, they try to satisfy their innate desire for a physical existence in that way. This is not true of angels."<sup>40</sup>

To this reasoning it may be objected that:

1. "Possession" of a human body may be desired by the demons simply as the best method to accomplish their purposes. Also, just as it is possible for degraded humans to delight in the worst of perverted experiences, so the

demons because of their degraded nature may have learned to delight in a certain sensual pleasure which they derive from the possession of a human body. Perhaps they are not fully satisfied until they find a "victim" who will grant them the full exercise of their own will. This does not prove that they once had physical bodies of their own which they lost by Divine judgment. The case of the demons who desired to enter pigs may be simply interpreted as a desperate alternative which they suggested in preference to being sent to the abyss (Lk. 8:32).

2. Satan himself, who is admittedly an angel, can "enter" a person. In Luke 22:3 it is specifically stated that "Satan entered into Judas."

3. Acts 23:8, 9 is used by the adherents of this view to prove that demons, as mere spirits, are to be distinguished from angels.<sup>41</sup> In this passage it is stated that the "Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." The Pharisees, on the other hand, defend Paul by saying, "What if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?" (A.S.V.). To the opinion that demons are here distinguished from angels it should be objected that demons are not mentioned. The Sadducees denied the separate existence of human souls as well as angels. They taught that human "souls die with the bodies."<sup>42</sup> Paul had claimed that he had spoken with the crucified and resurrected Christ (22:18). The Pharisees were willing (for the sake of their argument with the Sadducees) to admit the possibility that a spirit (perhaps even the crucified Jesus), or an angel, had spoken to him. In any case it is clear that a rigid distinction between angels and spirits cannot be drawn. In several passages angels are identified as spirits (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:14). It has previously been noted that demons are sometimes designated as spirits (Mt. 8:16; Lk. 10:17, 20).

On the basis of these objections it may be concluded that there is no proof that demons are disembodied spirits. The basic premise of this theory, that the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 were angelic creatures, seems legitimate. But if there is no proof that demons are disembodied spirits, and no proof that they are an order of beings distinct from angels--may it not be the case that the sin of Genesis 6 did not propagate demons, but rather the demons were the instigators of the whole affair?

Demons are fallen angels.--This means that they were all originally created perfect (like Lucifer, Ezek. 28:15) yet they sinned and in so doing they became demons. All fallen angels may also be called demons. A number of considerations lend support to this view:

1. It offers a reasonable interpretation for the strange union in Genesis 6. If the "sons of God" were fallen angels, and if fallen angels may be identified with demons, then demons may have entered the bodies of depraved men and so controlled and "possessed" them that it could be said that the demons ("sons of God")<sup>43</sup> married the "daughters of men" for whom they had lusted. Gray suggested that, "Through the medium of such bodies thus possessed, the

'sons of God' may have had the intercourse referred to."<sup>44</sup> This removes the objection that angels "neither marry, nor are given in marriage (Mt. 22:30). Christ stated that the "angels in heaven" (A.S.V.). . . "neither marry nor are given in marriage." Apparently it is also true that there can be no intermarriage among angels even on the earth. The only way that angels can enter a marriage relationship is by "possessing" a human being so completely that the individual's will is so controlled as to almost lose his individual identity. This seems to have been the case with many of the demoniacs whom Christ encountered (Mk. 5:1-15).

2. This interpretation also offers a reasonable explanation for the "nephilim" (A.V. "giants"). Genesis 6:4 is usually interpreted as teaching that the nephilim were the unusual progeny of the strange union, but this interpretation is not necessary. It seems legitimate to understand the nephilim merely as "fallen ones,"<sup>45</sup> and identify them with the depraved men who were the subjects of the demon possession. The verse does not say that the nephilim were born by the union, but that the union was possible because of these "fallen ones." The verse adds that "also afterwards" there were "fallen ones" in the earth. They are mentioned again in Numbers 13:33. Why could not these "fallen ones" be the evil men who subjected themselves to demon possession?

They [the Nephilim] (were) the heroes who were from ancient time, the men of the name ("Men of renown"). The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God went in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them.

Even if the "they" refers to the children of these unions it does not imply more than that these children, having such evil fathers also grew up to become fallen ones, famous (or infamous) for their strength and prowess. Later Nimrod was such a hero (Gen. 10:10). One characteristic of a certain type of demon possession in the New Testament was the impartation of unusual strength (Mk. 5:4).

3. Also in favor of this interpretation is the passage in Matthew 12:24-29 where Beelzebul seems to be used as a pseudonym for Satan. The Pharisees accused Christ of casting out demons "by Beelzebul, ruler of the demons." In His response Jesus substitutes the name "Satan" for Beelzebul: "How is Satan able to expel Satan? . . . if Satan stood up against himself and was divided, he cannot stand" (Mk. 3:23-26). Later He refers to "the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). Since he is leader of the demons and also of the fallen angels there is no reason why the two titles may not refer to the same beings. Moreover, when Beelzebul is designated as "ruler of the demons," the word that is used is archontē which has the basic meaning of "first." As "first of the demons" he is their ruler.



4. The account of the demon-locusts who will be released upon the earth near the end of the Great Tribulation supports this identification (Rev. 9:1-11). Though the word "demon" is not used, it is generally agreed among futurist interpreters that the "locusts" described in these verses are demons, or at least demon-possessed creatures. It is significant that these demons have over them as king an angel whose name is Abaddon and Apollyon. If their king is an angel there is no reason why they may not be considered as angels.

5. It has previously been established that angels can do what demons do-- that is they can enter a person and control his activities. Satan entered and directed Judas (Jn. 13:27; Lk. 22:3). This fact renders unnecessary any distinction between the nature of angels and the nature of demons.

6. This identification offers an explanation as to why some evil angels are bound and others are free. Certainly the imprisonment of some of the angels was not due to their participation in the original rebellion and fall with Satan, for in such case the chief offender himself (Satan) would have been imprisoned. It is probable that at the time of the flood God confined the offending demons in His prison. Not all the evil angels had entered the nephilim to enjoy sexual pleasures. It is possible that God may have these fallen angels on "warning," that if any attempt to overstep His permissive bounds (Job 1:12) He will send them immediately to the abyss. The demons in Luke 8:31 besought Jesus that He would not send them to the abyss and terminate their freedom. Unger suggests that it may have been Jesus' habit to dismiss to the abyss the demons He expelled.<sup>46</sup> But it is obvious that not all demons who left their victims were sent to the abyss (Lk. 11:24). Also Jesus ordered one demon not to return to his victim, thus clearly indicating the possibility of such return apart from the Divine prohibition.

That demons are to be identified with the fallen angels was and is the opinion of a great host of conservative Bible scholars. These include John Owen,<sup>47</sup> A. A. Hodge,<sup>48</sup> Charles Hodge,<sup>49</sup> A. H. Strong,<sup>50</sup> Richard De Ridder,<sup>51</sup> Richard Whately,<sup>52</sup> A. C. Gaebelain,<sup>53</sup> L. T. Townsend,<sup>54</sup> and L. S. Chafer.<sup>55</sup> Chafer, however, believed that of those fallen angels who were not imprisoned "another company became demons."<sup>56</sup> Indeed, it may be that though there is no distinction between demons and fallen angels as to their nature, yet the name "demon" may signify the "knowing ones" who have come to know human beings in a unique relationship--i.e. it may be best to reserve the name "demon" for those fallen angels who have degraded themselves by entering and "possessing" human beings. But this is purely conjectural.

The question as to the origin of demons is settled by answering the question, "Are demons different from fallen angels?" The major objections to their identity are as follows:

1. The two are never identified. The fallen angels are never called demons and the demons are never called angels. In answer it might be said that: (a) neither are they clearly distinguished; (b) both are identified as

"spirits" (Heb. 1:14; Mt. 8:16); (c) and both are capable of the same type of activities (Jn. 13:27; Lk. 11:23-26).

2. Demons seem to crave embodiment (Lk. 11:23-26). This is never said of angels. This objection has been answered previously. The demons are depraved spirits who either seek the gratification of their sensual desires by embodiment, or who can best further their Satanic program by embodiment (Jn. 13:27).

3. Demons seem to love filth, nakedness, and tombs (Lk. 8:27), whereas angels are conceived as enlightened beings possessing unusual wisdom. Again the answer is that these evil angels have wholly devoted themselves to sensuous appetites. It is nowhere stated that they are stupid. There is no reason to suppose that the demons who possessed people and caused them to act in strange ways were any less intelligent than the rest of the fallen angels. The most emphasized characteristic of these demons is that they are "unclean." This does not refer to physical uncleanness since they have no material bodies, rather it describes their moral nature. Just as some of the most enlightened humans are addicted to hallucinatory drugs and revel in perversions, so some of the fallen angels have devoted themselves to impurities.

#### THE CREATION AND FALL OF DEMONS

Since the heavens and earth "and all that in them is" were created within the six creative days of Genesis one, the angels who later became demons were created within that week (Ex. 20:11). It is commonly thought that the angels were created in "eternity past," long before the earth or man, but there is no Scriptural proof for this theory. It is stated that the "sons of God" shouted for joy when they beheld God's creative work, but it is probably the work of the second through the sixth of the creative days for which they rejoice (Job. 38:7). Or it is possible that God created the heavens and their hosts (the angels), then the earth (Gen. 1:1), then light, --all within the first day of creation (Gen. 1:5). The statement of Psalm 33:6 that, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," seems to connect closely the creation of the heavens and their hosts, the angels. It is also stated that He made the heavens, "with all their hosts" (Neh. 9:6).

The Jews agreed that angels were created within the creation week but disagreed as to which day of the week.<sup>57</sup>

In view of the fact that everything that God had created could be designated as "very good" at the end of the creation week (Gen. 1:31), it is clear that the fall of the angels did not occur until after the creation of man. This is exactly what the Jewish interpreters of the Old Testament concluded. Were it not for the evolutionary theory and the supposed geologic ages based on that theory it is unlikely that theologians would ever have conceived of the creation and fall of angels as taking place long before the creation of man. In spite of this, many modern

conservatives consider the Jewish concept of the fall of angels subsequent to man's creation as a "strangely imagined" example of the distortions of Rabbinic demonology!<sup>58</sup>

### THE WORK OF DEMONS

1. They sometimes promote idolatry (Acts 16:16; I Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20).

2. Since Satan is not omnipresent they are necessary to him to extend his power (Eph. 6:11, 12).

3. They can cause mental disorders (Lk. 9:39; Mk. 5:15).

4. They can inflict physical infirmities (Mt. 9:32, 33). This can sometimes be accomplished in saints, with God's permission and for His purposes. This was the case with Job whom God allowed to be stricken with boils by Satan (Job 2:6, 7). Jesus said that the woman who had been "bowed together" for eighteen years had a "spirit of infirmity" for which Satan was responsible (Lk. 13:11-16--It is not stated whether the woman was a believer). Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was apparently a physical malady which he interpreted as due to an "angel of Satan in order that he (or "it") might buffet me" (II Cor. 12:7). Perhaps he meant merely that the affliction itself was a messenger (rather than an angel), but in any case Satan himself or one of his angels (demons) was responsible. Yet in spite of this Satanic agency Paul knew that the affliction was by Divine permission and ultimately for his own good--just as with Job.

5. They are sometimes responsible for the dissemination of false doctrine (I Tim. 4:1; I Ki. 22:22; Rev. 16:13; I Jn. 4:1-3).

6. They may be used of God to carry out His purposes (I Ki. 22:22; II Cor. 12:7; I Sam. 16:14).

7. They sometimes seduce humans into immoral activities (I Tim. 4:1-3).

8. They have power to work "miracles" ("signs") to deceive men (Rev. 16:14; 13:12-15).

9. They sometimes attempt to instigate jealousy, faction, and pride among believers (Jas. 3:13-16).

10. They may impart superhuman strength (Mk. 5:4).

11. They sometimes act as "fortune tellers" and prophets. The damsel who was possessed by a "spirit of Python" furnishes a New Testament example

of this. Python was another name for Apollo whose major temple was at Delphi. The famous oracles by the priestess of Apollo at Delphi were probably the work of another such demon.<sup>59</sup> Many of the "familiar spirits" of the Old Testament may have been such demons.

12. They exercise their power and influence in human governments (Eph. 6:12; Dan. 10:13).

13. They may enter and control human beings (Mt. 12:45).<sup>60</sup>

### DEMON POSSESSION

Definition. -- Charles Ryrie's definition is here quoted in full.

Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of a demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession.<sup>61</sup>

Characteristics. --

1. Since the demon controls the activities of the person he indwells, he is able to initiate any of the activities listed under the heading, "The Work of Demons."

2. It is possible to be indwelt or "possessed" by many demons (Mt. 12:45; Mk. 5:9; Lk. 8:2).<sup>62</sup>

3. The demon(s) and the victim seem to be closely identified psychologically.<sup>63</sup> Note the frequent interchange of plural and singular pronouns in Mark 1:23-26 and 5:6-12.

4. The demons are reluctant to leave a victim they control and apparently leave only under Divine compulsion or to further their own Satanic program (Mk. 9:26; Lk. 8:26-33). Apparently some of the Jewish exorcists were successful in casting out some of the demons (Mt. 12:27). This may have been because God sometimes honored His Word even though the exorcists may have used ridiculous methods. Or perhaps some of the demons only "cooperated" to further their own program or to increase the recognition they received.

Jesus' statement to the effect that when a demon has left the person he possessed, he wanders "through dry places, seeking rest and finding none," presents a difficult problem (Mt. 12:43; Lk. 11:24). Sweet was apparently justified in referring to this as a "highly figurative passage."<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately the passage has received very little comment on the part of conservative scholars. Unger's book, which is by far the best book on Biblical demonology known to this author, makes no comment about the "waterless (or "dry") places." Plummer points out that the incantations of the exorcists included the statement, "O evil spirit--to the desert. O evil demon--to the desert. . . ." <sup>65</sup> Kent remarks that the dry places are "indicated elsewhere as the abodes of demons."<sup>66</sup> Not only was this the common conception, but this concept is found in both Testaments (Isa. 13:21; Rev. 18:2). It is probable that Jesus used the term "waterless places," in the sense of "wilderness"--i.e. that which was not suitable for human habitation. This seems to be the sense of the passages in Isaiah and Revelation also. A place which was not fit for human habitation is conceived as fit only for wild animals and evil spirits. Consequently, the phrase, "waterless places" could appropriately serve as "an emblem of their [the demons] dwelling-place in another world"<sup>67</sup>. . . a world not known or inhabited by humans.

Apparently these depraved demons, who have "possessed" humans, are never again satisfied or "at rest" until they find another human (or the same one again) to control. The fact that they "seek" rest would indicate that they cannot possess just anyone. They apparently cannot violate the will of an intended victim and so seek those who willingly yield themselves to their evil influences.<sup>68</sup>

## THE DESTINY OF DEMONS

### Temporary destiny. --

1. Some are now confined in Tartarus (II Pet. 2:4). Some are now confined in the abyss (Lk. 8:31; Rev. 9:1-11). Since no information is given as to the nature or location of these places it is impossible to speak with certainty regarding their identity. Perhaps they are two different places. If so, the demons in the abyss will be released for a short period (five months-- Rev. 9:10) during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 9:1-11). If they are different, then the angels who are bound in Tartarus may not be loosed until the final day of judgment before the Great White Throne. The angels in Tartarus are specifically said to be kept "in everlasting bonds" unto judgment (Jude 6). If, on the other hand, Tartarus and the abyss are to be identified, then perhaps the "everlasting bonds" should be understood in a sense similar to the designation of the fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorra as, "eternal fire" (v. 7). Perhaps the words "everlasting," and "eternal" are meant to designate the origin as Divine, and as consequently infallible in the designed accomplishment. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra will be temporarily removed from the eternal fire which they are now enduring to make their appearance before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15), so perhaps the spirits who are confined in Tartarus will also be released for a short time when the abyss is opened (Rev. 9:1-11).

Another possible interpretation is that the statement that they are kept in eternal bonds "unto the judgment of the great day," does not refer to the Great White Throne Judgment but to the great "Day of the Lord" during which all judgment will be consummated. This would not prohibit their temporary release during any part of the "Great Day of Jehovah's Judgment."

It should be noted that many amillennialists and postmillennialists who do not look for a future millennium and who consequently understand that Satan is already "bound" (Rev. 20:1), also "spiritualize" the confinement of these angels. Berkhof, for example, says: "They are even now chained to hell and pits of darkness, and though not yet limited to one place, yet, as Calvin says, drag their chains with them wherever they go" 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6.<sup>69</sup>

Such an interpretation is actually a denial of the plain statements of the Scripture.

2. Some, as discussed above, will be released for a short period to torment men during the Great Tribulation. These will include those in the abyss, as well as those in Tartarus if the two places are to be identified. The release of these horrible creatures, who have been confined because of the depths of depravity to which they sank, will indeed make even more severe the "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. 12:1).

3. All the fallen angels will be bound when Satan is confined to the abyss at the beginning of the millennium. If (as is generally assumed by premillennialists) one of the purposes of the millennium is to demonstrate to man the character of his own evil nature even in a perfect environment without Satanic influence, then it would seem that not only Satan but all his demonic supporters will be bound with him. Though the Scriptures do not explicitly state this, it is unthinkable that the demons will be left free upon the earth during Christ's kingdom.

4. The fallen angels (or at least some of them) will apparently again be released from the abyss when Satan is granted temporary freedom at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7). This conclusion seems necessary because, though Satan is not omnipresent, he will succeed in deceiving a great multitude, "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:8). Certainly he must have the help of his demons to accomplish this task.

Final destiny. -- Eventually all demons will be cast with Satan into the lake of fire which was prepared for this purpose (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

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