

Angels and Demons

By Doug Hamilton

Part II) Demons

Question: What or who are demons?

Answer: There is a general consensus concerning them.

Various Definitions of Demon

“...the English transliteration of a Greek term (daimōn) originally referring to any one of numerous, vaguely defined spirit beings, either good or bad. In the NT they are understood as evil spirits, opposed to God and God’s people.”

-Vines Complete Expository Dictionary

“...the English transliteration of a Greek term (daimōn) originally referring to any one of numerous, vaguely defined spirit beings, either good or bad. In the NT they are understood as evil spirits, opposed to God and God’s people. In the KJV, the term is regularly translated ‘devil,’ a word that appears in the RSV only as the translation of a different Greek term meaning ‘accuser’ or ‘slanderer’ (*diabolos*). It is used as a virtual synonym for ‘Satan.’

-Harper’s Bible Dictionary

“They belong to the number of those angels that ‘kept not their first estate,’ ... ‘unclean spirits,’ ‘fallen angels,’ the angels of the devil (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7–9). They are the ‘principalities and powers’ against which we must “wrestle” (Eph. 6:12).

-Easton’s Bible Dictionary

Question: Where did demons come from?

Answer: Demons were once angels from heaven.

There are many Bible verses which demons are fallen angels. Sometime prior to the creation of the physical universe as we know it, all angels were in heaven with God. Satan himself was a leading angel as well, but rebelled in pride against God and was cast down from heaven. Some verses which indicate this are the following:

- Revelation 12:4, “And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth...”
- Revelation 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”
- Daniel 8:10, “...some of the stars to fall to the earth...”
- Matthew 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...’”

Prior rebellion in heaven against God condemned the devil and his followers of angels earned them eternal condemnation to the *abyss*. The *abyss* is often mentioned in scripture in various terms as the abode of the fallen angels or demons.

- In Luke 8:30-31 the demons begged Jesus, “*not to command them to depart into the abyss.*”
- In Jude 6 it identifies the fallen angels of God as being “*kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*”
- Revelation 9:1 refers to it as the “*bottomless pit*”.

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In a future lesson we will cover the details of the afterlife, but for the sake of understanding demons, we will identify the two phases of it. Ultimately all people will face the final judgment before at the resurrection (John 5:28-29). There is however a temporary location for disembodied souls which is referred to as *Hades* (Luke 16:23).

There are two sides to *Hades*, the first being *paradise* (Luke 23:23), which is the realm of the saved. The second is referred to as *tartarus*. The apostle Peter used this term to describe the abode of the condemned angels of God in 2 Peter 2:4, "...*God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (tartarus) and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment...*" Young's Literal Translation translates it as "*having cast them down to Tartarus...*" As *Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* summarizes, Tartarus was originally the name of a dark abyss where the Titans were confined; later the term became equivalent to HADES. It is to this location of the condemned temporary abode which the demons are found. They are in an irreconcilable position concerning their fate.

Question: Who is the ruler of the demons?

Answer: Satan

- Mark 3:22-23, "And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."²³ And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"
- Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."
- Revelation 20:2-3 confirms the devil as the leader of demons.

In the same way that the devil has the fallen angelic demons as his workers, God has His angels for the work of His kingdom. When we are baptized into Christ, we have chosen to join God's team. Until that time we are by default on the team of the devil. *1 John 3:10*, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

Question: What is the phenomenon known as Demon-Possession?

Answer: Demons actually were able to take possession of human bodies.

This appears to be a phenomenon based in and around the ministry era of Jesus and the establishment of His church. When Jesus and his apostles were casting out demons in the first century, *the multitudes marveled, saying, "Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel"* (Matthew 9:32-33). It was something which the Jews had never really confronted, but "*that is the way it will also be with this evil generation*" (Matthew 12:45). In the first century writings of the New Testament demon possession had burst in high rates among the people of Israel. They really did not know what to do concerning it.

Nothing like it in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament times there was nothing remotely resembling "demonic possession" of the New Testament. For example, Judges 9:23, "*Then God sent an evil spirit between*

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Abimelech and the men of Shechem...” It was not referring to demonic possession, but simply an idiom of the spirit of strife between two parties.

When it said in 1 Samuel 16:14, “*an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him*” (see also 1 Samuel 18:10-11, 1 Sam 19:9), the language does not say “demon”. The “evil spirit” did not possess, but came in different intervals throughout Saul’s rebellious life. He drove the Spirit of God from him and the vacuum of evil entered the picture. He simply did not share the qualities of NT demon-possession.

Even when Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17 and Psalm 106:37 mention demons it was in the context of Canaanite idols, not real demons or demonic possession. They were nothing more than false idols of a false god worship.

Demonic possession in the New Testament defied the natural realm.

- 1) They were associated with some illnesses in Jesus’ day.
 - Luke 7:21 At that very time He cured many {people} of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many {who were} blind.
 - Luke 13:11 And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all.
 - The conditions they suffered from demon possession came upon them suddenly and medical treatments of the day would not touch it.

- 2) They could empower diviners and fortunetellers with superhuman knowlege.
 - Acts 16:16 And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling.
 - Luke 4:34 "Ha! What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!"
 - Luke 8:28 And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."

- 3) They could drive men mad with superhuman strength.
 - Luke 8:29 For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and {yet} he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert.
 - Mark 9:22 "And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"
 - Acts 19:16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

The phenomena of demon-possession which occurred during the days of Jesus was concentrated, extreme and obvious. If one were to chart out the documented New Testament record of possessions, the concentration of them were in the ministry of Jesus and thinned out the church expanded and the word was established.

Question: Why was demon-possession prevalent during the ministry of Jesus?

Answer: By casting out the demons, Jesus’ superiority over the devil was clearly

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demonstrated to the world.

- Mark 16:17-18 "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons..."
- Matthew 12:28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (see also Luke 11:20)
- John 12:31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out."
- By demons possessing humans and being cast out by Jesus, He showed His superiority of the power of His earthly ministry on the devil's home turf, the world. As Clinton Arnold wrote in his commentary on Matthew: "First-century exorcists—both Hellenistic and Jewish—used a variety of techniques, including rituals, incantations and spells, potions or herbs of various kinds, and rings or other magical objects"..."Jesus' exorcisms contrast sharply with these examples. No incantations or magical objects are used. There is no sense that the power is in the technique or the words that are used. Jesus rather commands the demons from his own authority and they immediately submit. The exorcisms are not meant as showy demonstrations of his magical arts, but to confirm the in-breaking of the kingdom of God in his words and deeds. When the Lord's Messiah arrives, the forces of Satan are confronted and overcome."

Jesus' power was so great that He transferred it to be carried out in His name.

- Mark 3:14-15 And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.
- Matthew 7:22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'"
- Acts 19:11-12, "And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out."

All this further proved His power over the realm of Satan. When compiling the many accounts of demon possession in the New Testament, there remains only one logical reason why it happened. Demon-possession and excision was a demonstration to the world of the power of Jesus over the devil. It is a true statement in I John 3:8 states, "*The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*"

Question: Do we have demon-possession today?

Answer: I do not believe so.

Jesus has been proven through the events recorded in the first-century document called the New Testament. There was an historical prevalence of these accounts during the lifespan of the Savior and the establishment of the church. All the proof a man or woman needs to find in their pursuit of salvation has been etched into the historical record and the gospel is sound.

One might ask, "Doug, I hear about people who claim they have seen demon-possession today. How can you say we do not have demons possessing certain crazed people in our society?" My question in reply is, "Why is it that these examples do not exhibit superhuman

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qualities of the past?” We must be careful not to make conclusions void of empirical evidence.

We must not confuse demon-possession with possession of demonic doctrine.

Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1, “*But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...*” This was a warning to the church of how demons affect us today, through demonic doctrine. It is the world system of thinking that is “*according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience*” (Ephesians 2:2).

- Jesus warned in Revelation 2:24, “*But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.*”
- Peter warned Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-3 that “*Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land*”.
- John warned the Christians in 1 John 2:22, “*Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?*”
- James warned Christian in 3:14-15, “*But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.*”

When we choose the path of the worldly logic, we are following the doctrine of demons and their leader the devil. Heed the words of Jesus from in Mark 4:14-19 and the planting of the seed of the word of God. Some hear the word and “*immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them*” (15). Others receive the word and “*when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away*” (17). Still others hear the word, “*but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful*” (19).

There is a culture in the world today that is assaulting our belief in the word of God. When a young child is fed a steady diet of evolution for years and finds it difficult to see a Creator, it is the doctrine of demons. When society is fed the lie that same-sex marriage and artificial insemination follows the natural laws of biology, it is the doctrine of demons. When a people are fed the teaching that we can be in a relationship with the world and God, it is the doctrine of demons. When a religious people ignore what the Bible teaches concerning salvation and invents another way to heaven, it is the doctrine of demons. It is nothing more than “the god of this world” blinding “the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4). It is the doctrine of demons.

Application: Stop worrying about what you think you saw on the Hollywood movies and be fearfully concerned about the doctrine of demons that is claiming the spiritual lives of those whom we hold most dear. Make the commitment today to speaking the truth of God’s world to your children, to your neighbors and to all that be afar off (Acts 2:38). Cast out the demons of unbelief from the lives for which we have influence in this realm. Crush the doctrine of demons!