

Biblical Demonology: the study of demons from a scriptural perspective

1. The Existence of Demons

- a. For the student who professes the infallibility and inerrancy of scripture, the only logical conclusion is that demons do in fact exist.
- b. Both the Old and New testaments affirm the existence of demons.
 - i. Old Testament:
 1. Deut 32:17

¹⁷ *“They sacrificed to demons who were not God,
To gods whom they have not known,
New gods who came lately,
Whom your fathers did not dread.*

2. Ps 106:36-37

³⁶ *They worshiped their idols,
which became a snare to them.*

³⁷ *They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to false gods.*

3. 1 Samuel 16:14

¹⁴ *Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.*

ii. New Testament:

1. Jas 2:19

¹⁹ *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

2. Rev 9:20

²⁰ *The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk.*

3. Luke 4:33, 6:18

³³ *In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice,*

¹⁸ *who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured,*

4. 1 Tim 4:1

¹ *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

5. Rev 16:14

¹⁴ *They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.*

c. Jesus often interacted with demons as if they were real.

i. Mark 5:7-9

⁷ *He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!”* ⁸ *For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!”* ⁹ *Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.”*

2. The Identity and Origin of Demons

a. Origins Without Scriptural Support:

i. Demons and demoniac activity were caused by poorly understood diseases and mental stresses.

1. Jesus differentiated people who were sick from natural causes, sick from demon influenced illnesses, and demon possessed.

i. Mathew 8:1-4

¹ *When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him.* ² *A man with leprosy^[a] came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”*

³ *Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.* ⁴ *Then Jesus said to him, “See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”*

ii. Demons are the disembodied spirits of the dead.

1. Jewish scholar Josephus held this view. He calls demons:

a. “the spirits of the wicked that enter into men that are alive”

2. We know that souls do not remain on the earth but are immediately settled in one of two places.

a. 2 Cor 5:8

⁸ *We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

b. Origins of Demons with Possible Scriptural Support:

i. Demons are the disembodied spirits of the inhabitants of the pre-Adamic Earth

1. Summary

- a. Some people speculate that a race of people existed on the earth between Gen1:1 and Gen1:2.
- b. They believe that these beings rebelled with Satan and that the invasion of this rebellion resulted in the cataclysm whose evidence is seen in Gen 1:2

² *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

- c. These spirits are therefore in an uncomfortable state and are in constant search of human bodies to inhabit.
- d. They believe that these demons are completely separated from the angels.

2. Evidence for this theory:

- a. There could have been a cataclysm though the mechanism or cause is not revealed.
- b. Demons do appear to desire to possess bodies
 - i. Luke 8:32

³² *A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission.*

3. Evidence against this theory:

- a. There is no mention of a pre-Adamic race in the scriptures.
- b. If a cataclysm did occur the reason and method are not revealed in scripture.

ii. Demons are the Nephilim described in Genesis 6

¹ *When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them,* ² *the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.* ³ *Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with^[a] humans forever, for they are mortal^[b]; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."*

⁴ *The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.*

⁵ *The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.* ⁶ *The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.* ⁷ *So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move*

along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.”⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD

1. Summary:

- a. The “sons of God” in Genesis 6:2 refer to angels and therefore their offspring, called the Nephilim, were monstrous human-angel hybrids.
- b. These offspring are supposedly demons.

2. Evidence for this theory:

- a. One possible interpretation for this passage is that the “sons of God” are in fact angels and that this event did occur in this way.
 - i. The term “sons of God” is never applied to believers in the Old Testament.
 - ii. This term is reserved for angels.
 - 1. Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7

⁶ *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and ^[a]Satan also came among them.*

¹ *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.*

⁷ *When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

- b. This event is treated as a shocking and unusual event by the writer of Genesis.
- c. This crime is so heinous that it is one of the major factors which influences God to destroy the earth in the flood.

3. Evidence against this theory:

- a. Many people interpret “sons of God” to not refer to angels but instead to the descendents of Seth whose family began to call upon the name of the Lord.
- b. Therefore the sin may have been the intermarrying of the godly line with the pagans around them.
- c. The main argument against this theory in my opinion is that it is perilous to base the foundation of a theology on one of the most controversial passages of the whole bible!

iii. Demons are Fallen Angels:

1. Summary

- a. Demons are a class of fallen angels that rebelled with Satan against God the Father at some point before the creation of man.
 - b. These beings have all the properties of angels.
 - c. They are separated into two groups, bound and free.
 - d. They roam the heavenly realms but are barred from the “third heaven” (though there is disagreement about when this happened).
 - i. *Note: Scripture speaks of 3 heavens:*
 - 1. *The first heavens : the atmosphere*
 - 2. *The second heavens : celestial space*
 - 3. *The third heavens: the abode of God*
 - e. Some of these fallen angels are in the Abyss
 - i. The Abyss appears to be a temporary prison for these demons.
2. Evidence for this theory:
- a. The devil does appear to have angels in his employ
 - i. Mathew 25:41

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;*

ii. Rev 12:7

⁷ *And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war*

- b. Revelation may describe these demons as falling stars
 - i. Rev 12:4

⁴ *And his tail *swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.*

- c. Some of these fallen angels are described as being bound because of some vague but apparently heinous crime.
 - i. Jude 1:6

⁶ *And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,*

- ii. Some speculate that the sin that caused this binding was the cohabitation of angels with human women described in Genesis 6

3. Evidence against this theory:

- a. There does not appear to be a scripture that *explicitly* states that demons and fallen angels are the same thing.
- b. Some believe that because some fallen angels are bound that there is a difference between fallen angels and demons.
- c. This would mean that the origins of demons may be unknown.
- d. This fact is further complicated because much of what we believe about Satan is not clearly outlined in scripture
 - i. *we will cover this point in detail later*

c. Conclusion

- i. In my opinion, given the 3 options listed above, the weight of scriptural evidence seems to be on the side of demons being fallen angels.
- ii. However, there is enough ambiguity on the subject that I would personally not be dogmatic about it.

3. The Nature of Demons

- a. Demons are spiritual, intellectual, personal, moral and emotional entities.
 - i. Spiritual:
 - 1. Demons are immaterial and incorporeal.
 - 2. The word demon is synonymous with spirit
 - a. Matt 8:16

¹⁶ *When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.*

b. Luke 10:17-20

¹⁷ *The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."* ¹⁸ *And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."* ¹⁹ *Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.* ²⁰ *Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."*

c. Matt 17:18 comp to Mark 9:25

¹⁸ *And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured ^[a]at once.*

²⁵ *When Jesus saw that a crowd was ^[a]rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute*

spirit, I ^[b]command you, come out of him and do not enter him ^[c]again.”

ii. Intellectual:

1. Demons are obviously intelligent

a. They speak and express thoughts.

i. The etymology of the Greek word *daimon* is based upon an adjective “knowing” or “intelligent.”

b. They are referred to as cunning and deceptive.

i. Eph 2:2

² *in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*

c. They have knowledge about God and Christ

i. Mark 1:24

²⁴ *saying, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”*

ii. Matt 8:29

²⁹ *And they cried out, saying, “What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”*

iii. Jas 2:19

¹⁹ *You believe that ^[a]God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.*

iii. Personal:

1. Demons have a personality

a. They have names and personalities

i. Legion (Luke 8:30)

³⁰ *And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.*

ii. Abaddon/Apollyon (Rev 9:11)

¹¹ *They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is ^[a]Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name ^[b]Apollyon.*

iv. Moral:

1. Demons have the ability to make moral choices

2. 2 Peter 2:4

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

v. emotional:

1. Demons respond in emotional ways

a. Jas 2:19

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

b. Mark 5:7

⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!”

4. The Powers and Activities of Demons

a. Amazing Strength

i. Luke 8:29

²⁹ For He had commanded 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 break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

b. Power to produce disease

i. Dumbness

1. Matt 9:32-33

³² As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man ^[a]was brought to Him. ³³ After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “Nothing like this has ^[b]ever been seen in Israel.”

ii. Blindness

1. Matt 12:22

²² Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to ^[a]Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

iii. Suicidal mania

1. Mark 9:22

²² 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!”

iv. Personal injuries

1. Mark 9:18

¹⁸ and ^[a]whenever it seizes him, it ^[b]slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and ^[c]stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.”

v. Physical defects and infirmities

1. Luke 13:11-17

¹¹ And 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. ¹² When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your sickness.” ¹³ And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. ¹⁴ But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, “There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him? ¹⁶ And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?” ¹⁷ As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.

c. Oppose God and His Will

i. Destruction of the Promised Seed

1. Gen 4:8

⁸ Cain ^[a]told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

ii. Preventing the spread of the gospel

1. Matt 13:39

³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the ^[a]end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

d. Oppress Man

i. Power of natural phenomena

1. Job 1:16

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

ii. Power through temptation

1. Gen 3:1-7

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from ^[a]any tree of the garden’?” ² The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” ⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves ^[b]loin coverings.

2. Matt 4:3

³ And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

iii. Demon possession

1. Mark 1:23-27

²³ Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴ saying, “What ^[a]business do we have with each other, Jesus ^[b]of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” ²⁵ And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” ²⁶ Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”