

# THE DOCTRINE OF DEMONS

## WHAT ARE DEMONS?

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### Definition

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- Some say that demons are the spirits of deceased evil people, but according to Luke 16:23, evil people are in Hades/hell after death, so this cannot be true
- Others insist that they are spirits of a pre-Adamic race – this theory is based on the “gap theory” of an original creation of Genesis 1:1, rebellion and a fall of that originally created race between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, and the resultant chaos; Genesis 1:3 describes the recreation; the original creation of humanity that fell is now the spirits of demons. BUT the problem of this view is that it depends on a creation of humanity prior to Genesis 1 and 2 and there is no biblical warrant for such a view
- The Biblical view is that demons are fallen angels

*Demons are evil angels who sinned against God and who now continually work evil in the world.*  
Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 412.

### The Existence and Nature of Demons

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#### 1. Their Origin

- They were made on the first day of creation and before the earth was created

*Psalm 148:2, 5 ~ Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!...Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created.*

*Job 38:7 ~ When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

*Ex 20:11 ~ For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.*

#### 2. Their Fall

- It is clear that Satan has a following of like beings...He is known as the “prince of the demons” and “the devil and his angels”:

*Matt 12:24 ~ But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”*

*Matt 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;*

- At the fall of Satan, many angels followed him in that rebellion; it appears that a third of the angelic host seems to have fallen with Satan:

*Isaiah 14:13 ~ I will raise my throne above the stars of God...*

*Revelation 12:3-4 ~ And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon... And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth.*

- Individually, they fell morally (because of their pride and rebellion)

### 3. Their Inability to be Redeemed

*Hebrews 2:16-18 ~ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.*

*1 Timothy 5:21 ~ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of [His] chosen angels, to maintain these [principles] without bias, doing nothing in a [spirit of] partiality.*

- The number of demons is fixed and cannot be changed as demons cannot be saved
- No demon can be forgiven for their initial rebellion with Satan; they cannot become “holy angels” again

### 4. Their Present Location

#### a. Loose & Active Demons

*Ephesians 6:12 ~ For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

- These demons are free and active in the world, able to work Satan’s schemes and oppose God’s work

#### b. Confined Demons

##### 1) Temporarily Confined

*Revelation 9:1-2 ~ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.*

*Luke 8:30-31 ~ And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.*

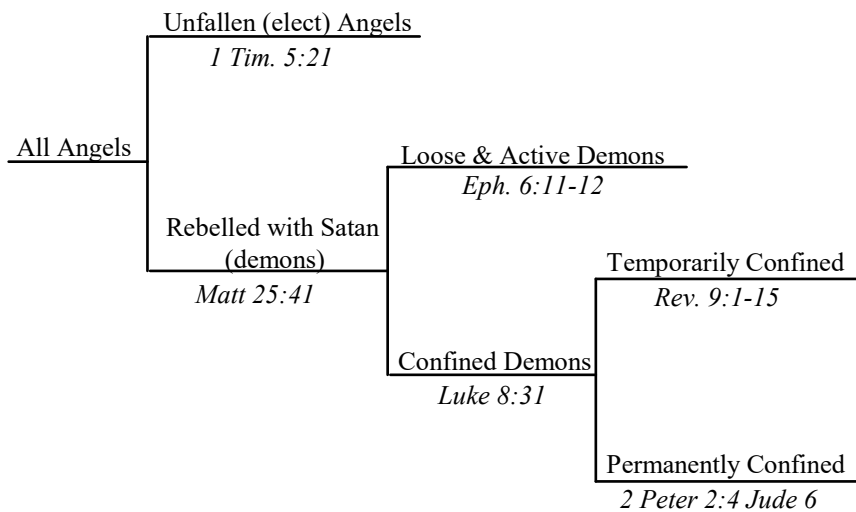
- These demons are confined in “the pit,” apparently too depraved and harmful to be allowed to roam upon the earth
- Revelation 9 indicates that these demons will be released from confinement during the Tribulation to afflict people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (vs. 3-11)

## 2) Permanently Confined

**2 Peter 2:4** ~ 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;

**Jude 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.

- These demons are permanently confined to *tartarus*(which is translated as “hell” in 2 Peter 2:4)
- They are confined because of some enormous sin they committed
- Perhaps the best explanation is that these demons were the “sons of God” who came down to the “daughters of men” and cohabitated with them, seeking to create race of unredeemable people in order to thwart God’s plan of redemption



## 5. Their Work

### a. They Oppose God’s Plan

**Revelation 16:13-14** ~ And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

### b. They are Sovereignly Used by God

**1 Samuel 16:14-15** ~ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. Saul’s servants then said to him, “Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you.

**1 Kings 22:20** ~ And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.'

**2 Corinthians 12:7** ~ There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-to keep me from exalting myself.

### c. *They Withstand Good Angels*

*Daniel 10: 13 ~ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia*

### d. *They Promote False Doctrine and Idolatry*

*1 Corinthians 10:20 ~ No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.*

*1 Timothy 4:1-3 ~ 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, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.*

### e. *They Inflict physical diseases and death*

*Matthew 9:33 ~ And after the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the multitudes marveled, saying, "Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel."*

*Mark 1:32 ~ And when evening had come, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed.*

*Revelation 9:15 ~ And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind.*

### f. *They Possess People*

**1) Definition of Demon Possession** – When one or more evil spirits completely control a person. The demon speaks, acts and dominates the person.

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 the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within.

Charles Ryrie, *Study Graph: Bible Doctrine II*

### 2) Of Non-Christians

*Matthew 8:28 ~ two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by...*

*Matthew 9:32 ~ As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.*

*Matthew 12:22 ~ Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.*

- There was a great outbreak of demon activity and demon possession during Christ's time on the earth, no doubt in opposition to his Messiahship
- The Gospels abound with accounts of demon possessed people

- Demon possession evidences itself by a change in character and spiritual disposition, such that their entire personality is affected
- For example, the demons speaking through the man immediately recognized who Christ was (Mark 1:23-24)
- Also, the man in the country of the Gerasenes exhibited supernatural physical strength and ability to break shackles and chains (Mark 5:3-4)
- Interestingly, Jesus seems to have nearly eradicated demon possession in Palestine during his earthly ministry

### 3) Of Christians?

*Ephesians 2:1* ~ In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...

*2 Corinthians 6:15-16* ~ Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

*Colossians 1:13* ~ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son

*1 John 2:13* ~ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one...

*1 John 4:4* ~ greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

There is no clear example in the Bible where a demon ever inhabited or invaded a true believer. Never in the New Testament epistles are believers warned about the possibility of being inhabited by demons. Neither do we see anyone rebuking, binding, or casting demons out of a true believer... Christ and the apostles were the only ones who cast out demons, and in every instance the demon-possessed people were unbelievers. The collective teaching of Scripture is that demons can never spatially indwell a true believer.

John MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, 22-23

### *g. They Oppress People*

**1) Definition** - Influence in a wide variety of ways by evil spirits which is short of actual possession and total control.

### 2) Of Christians

*Luke 22:31* ~ Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat

*2 Corinthians 12:7* ~ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

*1 Thessalonians 2:18* ~ For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan thwarted us.

*1 Peter 5:8 ~ Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

Although demons cannot inhabit believers, God sometimes permits Satan to afflict Christians externally with adversity. We will not always know the reason, but we do know that God sovereignly controls every situation to accomplish His purpose, causing all such adversity to work for the believer's good (Rom. 8:28).

John MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, 25

## DEALING WITH DEMONS

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### Early Church Authentication

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- Casting out demons was a unique authenticating role for the early church leaders-Christ, the apostles, the seventy, etc.

*Matthew 10:1, 8 & Luke 9:1 ~ And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness... Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons...*

*Mark 3:15~ 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.*

*Hebrews 2:3-4 ~ After it was at the first spoken through the Lord it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

- What was the purpose of casting out demons in the early church?
  - 1) Authority over demons was almost always linked with the sign gift of healing in verifying the authority of a person.
  - 2) In each instance where Christ gives authority over demons, it is uniquely limited to the specific people He is addressing (the apostles, or the seventy)
  - 3) The apostles' unique foundational role demanded the corresponding verification by sign gifts
  - 4) As with any narrative there must be clear teaching elsewhere in Scripture for it to be normative for us today.
  - 5) To say the authority to cast out demons is for today, demands that we accept healing and the other sign gifts as being for today.

### How should we deal with demons today?

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- Believers are called to resist Satan which is primarily done through living a holy life in submission to God.

**James 4:7** ~ *Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

**1 Peter 5:8-9** ~ *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.<sup>9</sup> But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

“Resist” is a military term that speaks of taking a firm stand against an enemy. We are to stand against our hellish foe by being firm in the faith (vs. 9). That speaks of purity in both doctrine and conduct. Do you want to be firm in the faith? Shun evil and draw near to God. When Satan or fleshly desires tempt you, resist. If we do that, Scripture guarantees that devil will flee  
 John MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, 68

**Ephesians 4:27** ~ *And do not give the devil an opportunity.*

**Ephesians 6:11-20** ~ *Put on the full armor of God that you may stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

Notice the resources believers are given at the moment of salvation:

1. The belt of truthfulness
2. The breastplate of righteousness
3. The shoes of the gospel of peace
4. The shield of faith
5. The helmet of salvation
6. The sword of the Spirit

**1 John 4:4** ~ *greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*

- What does this mean for us?

1) Believers must have no unconfessed sin in their life or they can give Satan a foothold -not for possession, but oppression

2) The believer’s armor in Ephesians 6 is what has been provided to be victorious in the spiritual battle. If “binding” and “casting out” of demons was so crucial, Paul seems to have made a glaring omission in this foundational chapter for spiritual warfare.

3) Never in the NT epistles are believers instructed about how to cast out demons whether from a believer or unbelievers. Even if some would conclude that this should be practiced, there is no clear instruction about how it should be carried out.

4) Nowhere in the NT are believers called to initiate confrontation with Satan or demons. It is primarily a defensive posture by repelling His attacks and not giving him a foothold.

No one today has authority over demons and disease like the apostles did. In fact, 2 Peter 2:10-11 and Jude 8-10 imply that believers are below demonic spirits on the “authority ladder” and need to implore the Lord when dealing with them. So “taking authority” over demon spirits or negative circumstances is not a biblical concept. Our method of dealing with Satan is to resist him, firm in our faith.

John MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, 60

- Confronting demons is the mark of false teachers:

*2 Peter 2:10-11 ~ and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,<sup>11</sup> whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.*

- Even Michael, the highest ranking angel, did not dare confront Satan:

*Jude 8-10 ~ Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.<sup>9</sup> But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"<sup>10</sup> But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed*