

## Week Five: Demons: Unclean Spirits (Part 1 of 3)

### THE REALITY OF DEMONS

In the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the reality of demons was commonly **denied**; in the latter part and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is much more readily and universally affirmed. Undoubtedly the increase in the number of witches and astrologers as well as booming sales of accompanying paraphernalia (including trade journals) has contributed to this change. Movies and books on the occult extraterrestrials have contributed to their acceptance.

### THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

- a. Scripture clearly **affirms** the reality of demons, though not all who profess Christianity admit the validity of this evidence. Note this way of evading the force of some of the scriptural teaching: “Demons often survive as figures of speech (e.g., ‘gremlins’) long after they have ceased to be figures of belief.
- b. The Testimony of Christ
  - i. A number of times during His earthly ministry our Lord cast out demons from various people. These instances, of course, affirmed His belief in their real existence (Matt. 12:22–29; 15:22–28; 17:14–20; Mark 5:1–16).
  - ii. He also gave the disciples **authority** to cast out demons in a context that did not require, as some allege, accommodation to their ignorant belief in demons (Matt. 10:1).
  - iii. Never did our Lord **correct** anyone for their acceptance of the reality of demons (Luke 10:17), yet He was willing on many other points to correct false theology. If we cannot accept the Lord’s testimony, then we would have to conclude that either (a) He was lying, or (b) He was accommodating His teaching to the ignorance of His audience (which in effect makes Him guilty of propagating falsehood), or (c) the early church redactors of the text added the parts about His teachings on demons.
- c. The Testimony of Other Parts of the New Testament

- i. All the writers of the New Testament (except the writer of Hebrews) mention demons for a total of more than **100** references. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 10:20–21; James 2:19; Revelation 9:20. Note too that demons are mentioned in the first (James) and last (Revelation) books that were written.
  - d. The Testimony of the Old Testament
    - i. Much less frequently does the Old Testament refer to demons. The “shedhim” of Deuteronomy 32:17 and Psalm 106:37 were lord-idols whom the Hebrews regarded as visible symbols of demons. The “seirim” of Leviticus 17:7; 2 Chronicles 11:15; Isaiah 13:21; and 34:14 were also demonic conceptions.
    - ii. To deny the reality of demons requires ignoring or denying the truth of many passages in Scripture.
- II. THE ORIGIN OF DEMONS - Various suggestions have been made as to the origin of demons.
  - a. They Are the Spirits of **Wicked**, Deceased People - This view seems to come from the ancient Greek belief about demons as being the disembodied spirits of deceased people, especially those who were evil in life. It has no support whatsoever in Scripture, since the Bible always places the unsaved dead as confined in a place of torment, unable to return to roam on the earth (Ps. 9:17; Luke 16:23; Rev. 20:13).
  - b. They Are the **Disembodied Spirits** of a Pre-Adamic Race - This view understands Satan as originally ruling over a perfect earth and a pre-Adamic race of people. When Satan sinned against God, this race of people were somehow involved in his rebellion. They lost their bodies and became disembodied spirits or demons.<sup>2</sup> This concept distinguishes between all angels, both good and bad, and demons. It offers as support the idea that demons seek embodiment, thus indicating that they are disembodied spirits. But against the view is the plain fact that nowhere does the Bible even hint at the existence of a pre-Adamic race.
  - c. They Are the **Offspring** of the Union Described in Genesis 6:1–4
    - i. This requires at least two assumptions: (a) the sons of God are angels, and (b) the offspring were not human. That the

sons of God were angels is a possible view, but that the offspring were demons is most unlikely..

- d. They Are **Fallen Angels** - This view states that the demons are the angels who rebelled with Satan.
  - i. In support of this view consider the following: Satan is designated the prince of the demons (Matt. 12:24), indicating that since their leader, Satan, is an angel, the demons must also be angels, but fallen as Satan is.
  - ii. In several places demons are called **spirits** (though **unclean spirits**), which associates them with the spirit world of angels, not humans. For example, the demon referred to in Matthew 17:18 is called an unclean spirit in the parallel account in Mark 9:25. The same equation of demons and spirits is found in Luke 10:17–20. Also, according to Matthew 8:16, the Lord healed many demon-possessed people by casting out the unclean spirits from them.

### III. THE CONFINEMENT OF SOME FALLEN ANGELS

- a. The Scriptures clearly indicate two groups of fallen angels, one consisting of those who have **some freedom** to carry out Satan's plans and the other who are **confined**.
- b. Of those who are confined, some are temporarily so, while others are **permanently** confined in Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6). The Greeks thought of Tartarus as a place of punishment lower than hades. Those temporarily confined are in the abyss (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1–3, 11), some apparently consigned there to await final judgment while others will be loosed to be active on the earth (Rev. 9:1–3, 11, 14; 16:14).
- c. Why are some in Tartarus?
  - i. Some suggest the **unnatural** sin of Genesis 6:2–4 committed by some of the fallen angels (called "sons of God" in the passage) caused their confinement in Tartarus. Though angels do not reproduce after their kind (that is, do not produce baby angels), they may have been permitted to cohabit with human women on this one occasion to produce human offspring.

- d. Other views of the “sons of God” in this passage include (a) the **godly line** of Seth, which cohabited with the ungodly women of the line of Cain, and (b) rulers from the line of Cain.
- i. This is an interpretive problem we **cannot solve**.
- e. What was the specific sin involved by whomever committed it?  
Three answers are possible.
- i. If angels were involved then the sin was **angelic cohabitation** with human beings.
- ii. If the sons of God were humans, it was the sin of **marrying indiscriminately** without regard to spiritual condition (if Sethites) or royal status (if kings were involved).
- iii. It was the sin of **polygamy** because verse 2 may be understood to mean that they (whoever they were) took all the wives they chose (cf. 4:19). The offspring were men of strength and military prowess (the Nephilim probably lived on the earth before these marriages and were not the result of them).

The Following outline will help you understand the present status of demons.

- All Angels
  - Elect Angels (Unfallen) 1 Tim 5.21
  - Fallen Angels (Rebelled with Satan) Matt 25.41
    - Loose and active demons – Ephesians 6.1-12
    - Confined demons – Luke 8.31
      - Temporarily confined – Rev 9.1-15
      - Permanently confined – II Pet 2.4; Jude 6

As always we point out that these handouts rely heavily on - Ryrie, Charles C. (1999-01-11). Basic Theology: A Popular, Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth, Moody Publishers.