

MODERN CHRISTIANITY ASTRAY FROM THE BIBLE

POPULAR CHURCH TRADITION EXPLORED

A BIBLICAL INSPECTION OF POPULAR CHURCH TEACHINGS

Generally speaking, the Bible is set forth in chronological order. Genesis records the Creation, the population of man, the calling out of Abraham and the development of his offspring: the nation of Israel. From Exodus onwards, the Bible records the history of Israel, their dispersion among the nations, rejection of Christ, and ultimately the gospel being preached to the Gentiles. The Bible concludes with the Book of Revelation, which reveals the Lord's last inspired message to man. The chronology of the Bible is important when considering the subject before us.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 *"I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"*

1 Thessalonians 2:13 *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe"*

The above quotations cannot be emphasized enough as we seek to determine the exact Scriptural definition of the Devil and Satan. Preconceived ideas of men and mythology must be dismissed to draw a precise Biblical conclusion of subject at hand.

THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL: IDOLS AND DEVILS

Judges 2:11-13 *"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth"*

2 Kings 17:16-17 *"They left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger"*

Psalms 96:5 *"For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens"*

The Bible is a detailed account of Israel's history, which includes how God's nation drifted astray from His commandments and learned the idolatry of the heathen nations about them. Scripture records the severe impact the influence of these pagan nations had on Israel's religious perspective.

- **Funk and Wagnall’s Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, pg. 2727-28**—“Devils, in later Hebrew and Christian belief, the supreme spirit of evil who for immeasurable time has ruled over a kingdom of evil spirits and is in constant opposition to God. *The belief in such a spirit developed very gradually in Hebrew theology and was affected by extra-national influences. There is no indication in the Scriptures that the Hebrews that lived in the period before the Babylonian captivity had any concept of evil spirits as beings separated from God.* The angels of Scripture or tradition, who foretold and executed God’s will, were considered the instruments of physical, never of moral evil.
“In the Apocrypha, which reveals both Chaldaico-Persian and Egypto-Alexandrian influences, the older Hebrew doctrines of misfortune disappears, and demons or evil spirits are for the first time mentioned as the authors of calamities... Hebrew demonology was widely disseminated and the New Testament contains distinct recognition of its prevalence in popular belief, particularly in the attributing of disease to the agency of evil spirits... The primitive Church assumed the existence of the Devil as an unquestionable fact.”

IDOLS—GODS—DEMONS

It is a staggering revelation to many modern Christians that the word “devils” only appears four times in whole of the Old Testament. Furthermore, the word is only used in the plural and always refers to false idols. Not one time does the word “devil” appear in the singular, and never does it relate to the modern concept of a fallen angel or rebellious supernatural power.

Leviticus 17:7 “And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.”

The above reference is to that of false gods, which ascribed to the form of goats! Thus, the NIV and other translations have “goat-idols,” while the RV “he-goats.” A Bible concordance will prove that the same word translated “devils” above is translated “goats” throughout the King James Version of the Bible!

The Bible eSword notes the following:

- “devils: Seirim, properly signifies hairy or hairy ones; and hence is used not only for he-goats, but also for some fabulous beings or sylvan gods, to whom was ascribed the form of goats.



Maimonides says that the Zabian idolaters worshipped demons under the form of goats; and that this custom being spread among other nations, gave occasion to this precept. He-goats, however, are probably intended here, which were objects of divine honour among the Egyptians under the name of honour among the Egyptians under the name of Mendes. Herodotus says that all goats were worshipped in Egypt; but particularly he-goats. From these seem to have sprung Pan, Silenus, and the innumerable herd of those imaginary beings, fauns, satyrs, dryads, etc., all woodland gods, and held in veneration by the Greeks and Romans.”

2 Chronicles 11:15 “And (Jeroboam) ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.”

Once again, the NIV has “goat and calf idols,” instead of “devils.” Certainly the modern Christian depiction of the goat-like devil is now coming strikingly into view!

Psalm 106:34-39 “They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan”

The direct connection between the false “idols” of the pagan nations round about Israel and “devils” cannot be missed. NIV and others has “false gods.”

Deuteronomy 32:16-17 “They provoked him (God) to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils (NIV “false gods”), not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.”

Note the context: these “devils” were worshipped as divine beings or “gods” by the nations who influenced Israel. The four references above are the only occurrences in word “devils” in the Old Testament of the Bible. It is quite remarkable that 4,000 years of history produces such few references, especially since the context is always to false gods or idols.

The Bible records Israel’s worship of the idol-gods of many pagan nations.

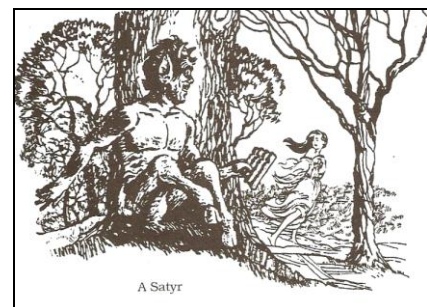
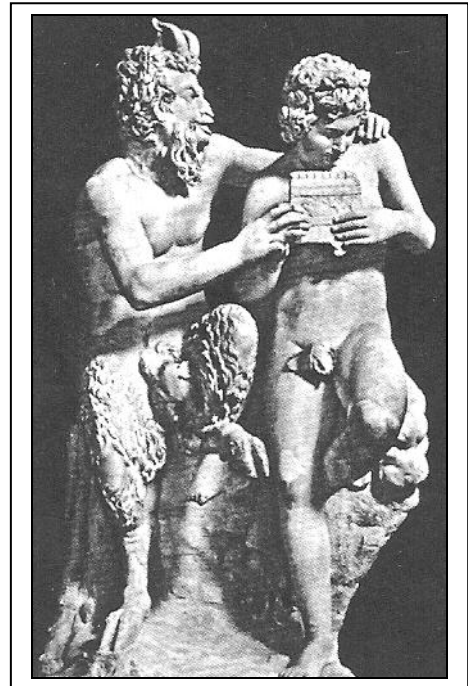
Judges 10:6 “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines...”

The Hebrew word translated “devils” is also translated “satyr” in the following:

Isaiah 13:19-21 “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation ... But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there and their shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there”

The NIV and others have “wild goats.” This is a reference to the fall of Babylon and the glory of the beautiful place replaced with desolate conditions.

Isaiah 34:14 “The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow” (NIV “wild goats”)



- **Bulfinch's Book of Mythology** describes satyr as “a race of immortal goat-men who dwelt in woodlands.”

Isaiah 21:9 “Behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*”

Note the Apocalyptic reference to Babylon corresponding with the prophet Isaiah and the term “devils” instead of “wild goats”—

Revelation 18:1-3 “I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her...*”

In mythology, “Pan” was a goat-like god revered by certain cultures.

- “**PAN. God of nature, the wild, shepherds, flocks, goats, of mountain wilds, and is often associated with sexuality**”—Wikipedia

Animal worship has always been a part of pagan Idolatry.

Romans 1:19-25 “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*”
(goats, calves, mice, snakes Exo 32:4; 1Sam 6:4-18; Acts 16:16 mg.)

DEVILS OR DEMONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1 Timothy 4:1-3 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*” (NIV “demons”)

This New Testament word “devils” is the Greek δαιμόνιον *daimonion*. It implies demons and refers to a heathen deity, and is translated “gods” in the following:

Acts 17:16-22 “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, *when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons... And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a*

setter forth of strange gods (Greek xenodiamonion): because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection... Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (deisi-demonion).” (Greek “fear demons”)

It is rather remarkable that the language regarding “superstition” in false “gods” actually relates directly to demonology! A simple study of the words and background of the subject of demon possession and Israel’s gradual adoption of this pagan doctrine is clear from the Scriptural record, as well as history. All respected historical sources acknowledge that Israel’s belief in demons and evil spirits happened only after the interaction with other nations.

e h - - - r y e y n n d	<p>him. ¹⁸ And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, ¹⁹ What would this ¹babblor say? other will some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange ²gods: because ¹he preached ²unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. ¹⁹ And they took hold of him, and brought him ³unto ⁴the ⁵Areopagus, saying, May we know what this ⁶new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? ²⁰ For thou bringest certain ⁷strange</p>
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onica had ord of God at Berea also, Berea, likewise, stirring also, and stirred des. 14 And	<p>⁴ (mg.) ¹ Cp. John 4. 22 & A Cor. 15. 34. ² ver. 8. ³ Cp. ver. 30.</p>	<p>and beheld also I found an a inscription, ⁷TO GOD. ¹What Whom there ⁸in ignorance, this set I worship, him declare</p>
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² Gr. demons. ³ Or, before ⁴ Or, the hill of Mars
⁷ Or, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. ¹ Or, base fellow. ⁵ Or, Mars
¹ Or, full of idols. ^{**} Or, gods that ye worship.

182

- **Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible**—“In considering the question of demonology in the Bible, it must be borne in mind from the outset that the modern definition of a demon as a devil, or malign spirit, is the result only of a long development.”
- **International Encyclopedia**—“In the **postexilic era, foreign domination and oppression appear to have been major factors in stimulating Jewish thought to focus on the problem and the origin of evil. Evil began to be traced increasingly, not directly to Yahweh Himself, but rather to supernatural beings.*”
Postexilic—the period between Israel’s exile in Babylon and the first century,
- **McKenzie’s Dictionary of the Bible**—“Judaism of the inter-testmental and New Testament period exhibits a very active belief in demons, which is in many respects derived from Mesopotamian demonology... Beliefs about the evil influence of demons, especially in causing ills and misfortunes, were borrowed by the Jews wholesale and almost without alteration from Mesopotamia. Such popular language implies no dogmatic or philosophical affirmation of cosmic supernatural forces of evil... the use of popular imagery should be understood to lie behind many details of the New Testament concept of demons.”

The above references explain why there is an emergence of Jewish belief in demon-possession in the New Testament, while the concept is generally absent in the Old Testament. The acceptance of demon-possession was due to the influence of other nations on Israel. This historical background also solidifies the consistency of the Biblical record, which draws a direct line between “devils” and “idols.”

1 Corinthians 10:16-21 “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things

which the Gentiles sacrifice, *they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*"

The language of "idols" and "devils" are synonymous and used interchangeably in Scripture.

Revelation 9:20-21 "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk"

Psalms 135:15-18 "The idols of the heathen *are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them*" (Psalm 115:4-8) *Idols created in like image of men for worship*

1 Corinthians 8:1-6 "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him. As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things..."

- Funk and Wagnall's Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, pg. 2727-28—"Devils, in later Hebrew and Christian belief, the supreme spirit of evil who for immeasurable time has ruled over a kingdom of evil spirits and is in constant opposition to God. *The belief in such a spirit developed very gradually in Hebrew theology and was affected by extra-national influences. There is no indication in the Scriptures that the Hebrews that lived in the period before the Babylonian captivity had any concept of evil spirits as beings separated from God. The angels of Scripture or tradition, who foretold and executed God's will, were considered the instruments of physical, never of moral evil.* "In the Apocrypha, which reveals both Chaldaico-Persian and Egypto-Alexandrian influences, the older Hebrew doctrines of misfortune disappears, and demons or evil spirits are for the first time mentioned as the authors of calamities... Hebrew demonology was widely disseminated and the New Testament contains distinct recognition of its prevalence in popular belief, particularly in the attributing of disease to the agency of evil spirits... The primitive Church assumed the existence of the Devil as an unquestionable fact."

The Old Testament records about 4,000 years of history, and yet is silent on the subject of a person being "possessed with a devil." It only appears in the New Testament, after the Jews were influenced by other nations.

Luke 11:15-20 "Some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. *If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do*

your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.” (god of the dung hill or god of flies)

This reference draws a connection between Beelzebub and Satan. And since the Jews attributed healing power to “Beelzebub,” it becomes imperative to understand to whom they were referring. Once again, the Word of God provides the answer:

2 Kings 1:1-3 “Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?”

Here we find Ahaziah king of Israel so influenced by the idols of pagan nations he actually seeks Baalzebub “the god of Ekron” (the Philistines) for a cure to his illness!

- **Smithsonian Magazine, Oct. 1999—“And the Devil in general, the Devil with a capital D, as opposed to the legions of lowercase devils, demons, imps, satyrs, fiends and so on, first entered human history less than 3,000 years ago... The Old Testament, which was composed between the tenth and third centuries b.c. has little trace of the Devil with a capital D, and in its earlier books, none at all...”**

While there are many gods of various nations mentioned in the Bible it is not a confirmation of their true existence. Examples: Dagon (1Sam 5:1-12); Ashteroth (1Kin 11:33); Diana (Acts 19:28); Molech, Chemosh (1Kin 11:17, 33); Python (Acts 16:16).

In fact, to invalidate the reality of such false gods it is important the Bible retains language and context of certain people being “possessed by a devil.” In harmony with Jesus’ reference to Beelzebub, the ability of Christ and his disciples to cure those believed to be afflicted with “demons” is proof of the power and existence of the God of Israel.

Mark 3:14-15 “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils”

Luke 9:1 “Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases”

Matthew 10:1 “And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease”

The contest between the authority of Christ Jesus and power to cure “devils” is important, as it gives testimony to the Only True and Living God—Yahweh.

James 2:19 “Thou believest that there is One God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (Luke 4:40; Mark 3:11; Acts 16:16-17)

- Remember, it was by the divine miracle of fire that Elijah the prophet manifested the *false* belief in Baal (see: 1Kin. 18:21-46).
- Moses likewise, with the miracles in Egypt executed judgment against the *false gods* of the land (Exo. 12:12; Num. 33:4). 1Kin 20:28

Matthew 8:16 “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick”

Consistent throughout the Gospel records *sickness is often attributed to being possessed with devils*, especially neurological and mental disorders.

John 10:17-21 “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, *He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*” (NIV “demon”)

John 7:16-20 Jesus said: “Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? The people answered and said, *Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?*” (NIV “demon-possessed”)

Matthew 11:18 Jesus said: “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, *He hath a devil*” (NIV: “he has a demon”)

More proof that mental woes being attributed to being influenced by “a devil” the Bible records the Jews accusing both Jesus Christ and John Baptist of having “a demon.”

John 8:47-52 Jesus said: “He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil*” (NIV “demon-possessed”)

Mark 5:15-16 “And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine”

Legion was one suffering for schizophrenia, or multiple personalities. By the Word of God he was healed! By representation, it teaches the ability of the Word of God to set aright wrong thinking. In fact, in the New Testament mental or neurological illnesses are often associated with demon possession.

Matthew 4:23-24 “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments (*Wms. “torturing disease”*), and those which were possessed

with devils, and those which were lunatic (ASV “epileptic”), and those that had the palsy (Roth. “paralyzed”); and he healed them.”

Both ancient and modern physicians have written extensively combating the idea of “demon possession,” showing these were neurological disorders. It is noteworthy that *modern Christians* today do not attribute these same legitimate illnesses to demon possession! Such things as blindness, deafness and epilepsy are treated by physicians.

Matthew 17:14-15 “And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.”

The NIV has “seizures,” while the Amplified Bible has “moonstruck.” The RV translates “epileptic.” Note eSword comment (right):

he is: Σεληνιαζεται [Strong's G4583], from σεληνη [Strong's G4582], the moon, one who was affected with his disorder at the change and full of the moon. This is the case in some kinds of madness and epilepsy. This youth was no doubt epileptic; but it was evidently either produced or taken advantage of by a demon or evil spirit.

Mark 9:17-18 “And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away.” (see: Mar 7:25)

The Lord was able to cure even the most severe cases of neurological and mental illness, showing the Gospel is the answer for the root of the problem: sin and death. Note:

Matthew 8:16-17 “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses”

It is important to note that the above quotation from Isaiah 53:4 says nothing about demon possession or spirits. This is undeniable evidence that the “sickness” and “infirmity” of the Old Testament corresponds with the possession of “demons” and unclean “spirits” by the Jews after their assimilation among heathen nations.

Isaiah 53:4-5 “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed”

- ❑ **Bible Almanac**—“Elements of *pagan religion* began to fill voids created by skepticism and doubt... For example, *Jews of Diaspora (dispersion) became fascinated with demons and angels. They qualified Biblical belief in a Creator who has sovereign control of His creation, by adopting Persian views of the universe with an elaborate spirit world, and an ongoing war between the forces of light and of darkness.*”
- ❑ **Smithsonian, Oct. 1999**—“The first Devil, the first concentration of all evil in a single personal form, *appears in history some time before the sixth century b.c., in Persia. His name is Ahriman, described by the prophet Zoroaster (Zarathustra) as the Principle of Darkness*

(evil) engaged in ceaseless conflict for control of the world with Ormazd or Mazda, the Principle of Light (good). The Jews were under Persian domination for almost two centuries, and it is likely that Ahriman had some influence on the formation of the figure of their Satan.” (pg. 116)

When preconceived ideas and emotions are removed it becomes evident that the Scriptural application to “demon possession” is borne out of the influence of heathen idolatry upon Israel: the Jews. In contrast, the popular theory of demon possession—as adopted by *modern Christianity*—is accepted without challenge due to lack of Bible knowledge.

SIN AND THE DEVIL

Let us move on to another New Testament word commonly translated “devil” (singular). It is the Greek word διάβολος *diabolos*. This word is not related to the word “devils” (demons), which we emphasize again represents idols or heathen gods. The Greek word *diabolos* means “slanderer” or “false accuser,” and even appears in the New Testament by those very words. *Diabolos* does not represent a supernatural creature or fallen angel enticing men to sin. Rather, it is a word used for sin in the flesh (sin’s flesh) or human nature; and its various manifestations of “the works of the flesh”—individual, collective, social or political.

The word translated “devil” or *diabolos* in the New Testament is dominantly employed as a personification of “sin in the flesh.” We will explain its application going forward. The reader of the Bible will know the use of *personification* is very strong and throughout Scripture.

Personify means:

- “to represent (a quality or concept) by a figure in human form.”
- “attribute a personal nature or human characteristics to (something nonhuman)”
- “represent or embody (a quality, concept or a thing) in a physical form”

As an overview, it will be found that throughout the N.T. the devil (*diabolos*) is a personification of the flesh or sin-nature of man. The actions, thinking or “obeying” the sin-nature or flesh constitutes the *works of the devil*. By this rule of personification, there are *children of the devil*, which walk according to the *natural man* or “*the old man of the flesh*.” We encourage the reader to note other applications of personification: “waters”—Psalm 77:16, “love”—1 Corinthians 13:1-5, “wisdom”—Proverbs 8:1-3.

For example, “sin” is personified in the very early record of the Bible, in the account of Cain and Abel. We read:

Genesis 4:7 “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, SIN lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him”

NIV: “sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you”

There is another personification just three verses later:

Genesis 4:10 “And he said, What hast thou done? THE VOICE OF THY BROTHER’S BLOOD crieth unto me from the ground”

Note the below reference, where “riches” are personified as a “master” ruling over men:

Matthew 6:24 “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon (riches)”

Equally, “sin” is personified as a master reigning over servants:

Romans 6:6,12 “Knowing this, that our *old man* is crucified with *him*, that the *body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve *Sin*... Let not *Sin* therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof”

This personification of sin or evil is abundantly obvious throughout the Bible in the subject matter of the “Sons” or “Children” of Belial. Note these very clear references:

Deuteronomy 13:13 “Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known” (ASV, RV “base fellows”)

Judges 19:22 “Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him” (NIV “wicked men”)

Judges 20:13 “Deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel” (NIV “wicked men”)

- “Belial” is also translated “naughty” (Pro 6:12), “wicked” (Job 34:18; Psa 101:3), and “ungodly” (Psa 18:4; Pro 16:27; 19:28). Therefore, it is undoubtedly a personification.

1 Samuel 2:12-13 “Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself.”
Though Eli's sons, they were sons of Belial (AMP “worthless men”)

- As is obvious from these accounts, “Belial” is personified as a father having “children”—“sons” or “daughters” (1Sam 1:16). This continuous application must be remembered when we consider the subject of *the devil*.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”

- Belial means “wickedness,” and by personification, a *Father* of unbelievers or those in darkness. This is a critical point.

- ❑ **Smith's Bible Dictionary**—"The meaning of this word as found in the Scriptures is *worthlessness*, and hence, reckless, lawlessness. *The expression son or man of Belial must be understood as meaning simply a worthless, lawless fellow.* The term as used in 2Cor 6:15 is generally understood as an appellative of Satan, as the *personification of all that was bad.*" Appellative means "common noun"
- ❑ **Easton's Bible Dictionary**—"The expression 'son' or 'man of Belial' means simply a worthless, lawless person."
- ❑ **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**—"The American Standard Revised Versions *more correctly renders, 'base fellows' (so 'daughter of Belial' 1Sam 1:16, 'wicked woman').* There is here no suggestion of a *proper name.* Afterward, however, 'Belial' became a proper name for Satan, or for Antichrist"

Personification "attributing human nature to inanimate objects or abstract notions"

THE TWO FATHERS—THE TWO CHILDREN

Acts 13:9-10 "Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on (Elymas), And said, *O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"*

John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"

By personification, an "enemy of all righteousness" and those who give way to their "lusts" are declared to be the children of "the devil" (*diabolos*). Thus, "the devil" is personified as a "father." Like the phrase "sons of Belial," language regarding the "children" of the "devil" is found throughout Scripture. **John 8:34** states: "whosoever committeth sin is the *servant of sin.*"

THERE ARE ONLY TWO FATHERS AND TWO CHILDREN: NATURAL MAN—SPIRITUAL MAN

1 John 3:5-12 "And ye know that (Jesus) *was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: *he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? *Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*" (See: the devil and his angels Matthew 25:41)

There are only two kinds of offspring: "children of God" and "children of the devil." The latter is one of natural, fleshly birth, while the former are those born by the Word of God.

The “devil”—*diabolos*—in the N.T. represents “the flesh”—our sin-prone nature.

Romans 8:13-15 “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (note: living “after the flesh” equals “death”)

The requirement of “circumcision”—fleshly removal of reproductive organ—for Abraham’s offspring taught true birth had to be after the spirit, not the flesh (see: Gal 4:21-31; Rom 4:11-13; 2:28-29; Phi 3:3)!

John 3:3-6 “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? *can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?* Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” Only two births “flesh” or “spirit”

1The 5:5—“Ye are all CHILDREN of the LIGHT and of the DAY; we are not of the night, nor of darkness”

Romans 6:6 “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin”

The “old man” must be put to death to give way to the “new Man” that servitude to sin would be changed into servitude of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”

Ephesians 4:22-24 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”

Notice the “new man” has to be “created” by God. Therefore, the “old man” is after the flesh or the devil. This continual principle is simply too consistent in the Word of God to ignore.

Colossians 3:6-10 “For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him”

THERE ARE ONLY TWO BIRTHS: NATURAL AFTER THE FLESH AND SPIRITUAL AFTER GOD

Romans 8:5-14 “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you... For if ye live after the

flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

To “mind” the flesh or “obey” the flesh is to “walk” after the impulses of the natural man. The scriptures declare this leads “to death” (note: “the devil” or flesh has “the power of death” Hebrews 2:14)! Those after the “spirit” are born by the Word of God unto life!

John 1:12 “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

1 Peter 1:23-25 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

James 1:17-18 “Of His own will begat he us with the word of truth”

THERE ARE ONLY TWO WALKS: FLESH OR SPIRIT

Romans 8:1-5 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-17 “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”

Ephesians 4:17-18 “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”

Two Masters are represented in the Bible: Sin or God. Paul expounds baptism by personifying the fleshly man as one who “serves” the Master of “Sin”—

Romans 6:3-17 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?...Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin... Let not Sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof... Know ye not, that to WHOM ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to WHOM ye obey; whether of Sin unto death, or of Obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of Sin...”

It is beyond any dispute that “Sin” is personified as a master or ruler in this context. The “old man” or “body of sin” is crucified in baptism so that the “new man” might change from servitude of Sin to servitude of God.

John 12:26 “If any man serve me,” said Jesus, “Let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour”

THE PERSONIFICATION OF SIN: GODS AND PRINCES—THE WORLD

Ephesians 2:1-3 “*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*”

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 “*If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*”

Philippians 3:18-19 “*Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*”

“Children of disobedience” fulfill “desires of the flesh” and are “minding earthly things.” Why is “the world” the enemy? Scripture teaches us:

THE WORLD MANIFESTS “THE FLESH”—SONS OF GOD OVERCOME WORLD

1 John 2:15-17 “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*”

1 John 5:4 “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*”

1 John 4:4-6 “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*”

1 John 5:19 “*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*”

James 4:4 “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*”

“Works” and “Lusts” of the devil are synonymous with the “works” and “lusts” of the flesh.

John 8:44 “*Ye are of your father the devil (diabolos), and the lusts of your father ye will do.*”

The only “works” and “lusts” in the Bible are attributed to the natural man of the FLESH, never a supernatural, fallen angel. Notice the personification of “disobedience” as a father:

Ephesians 2:1-3 “*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in* THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE: Among whom also we all had our

conversation in times past *in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*”

Galatians 5:17 “For the flesh *lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*”

Galatians 5:19-24 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like... And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with *the affections and lusts*”

Ephesians 4:20-24 “*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*”

Romans 13:12-14 “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*” (their own lusts: Psa 81:12; Rom 1:24)

CHRIST CRUCIFIED THE FLESH AND DESTROYED THE DEVIL

1 Peter 4:1-2 “Forasmuch then as Christ hath *suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*”

1 Peter 3:18 states plainly that Jesus was “put to death *in the flesh.*” The Bible is not like any other book. It is the product of divine inspiration where exact words and expressions must be meditated upon, without the influence of pre-conceived theories or modern concepts.

Hebrews 2:14-18 “Forasmuch then as the children *are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*”

THE DEVIL—FLESH AND BLOOD—DEATH

Like his brethren, the Lord partook of the “same” nature of “flesh and blood.” However, being sinless, he destroyed that which has the “power of death, that is, the devil.” *And, if the devil were an actual personality, he was “destroyed” by Jesus 2,000 years ago. The Bible says so!*

SIN HAS THE POWER OF DEATH (HEB 2:14-18)

“sin... bringeth forth death”—Jam.1:15

“the sting of death is sin”—1Cor 15:56

“sin hath reigned unto death”—Rom. 5:21

“by one man sin entered the world and death by sin”—Rom 5:12

“the wages of sin is death”—Rom 6:23

“by man came death”—1Cor 15:21

THE WAYS OF THE FLESH EQUAL DEATH

“if ye live after the flesh ye shall die”—Rom 8:13 (Rom 6:20-21)

“when ye were in the flesh... bring forth fruit unto death”—Rom 7:5

“he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption”—Gal 6:8

Since sin brings forth death, the result of “death” is often applied for sin: 1Tim 5:6; Mat 8:22; Eph 5:14.

Notice how Jesus destroyed sin and death:

Hebrews 9:26 “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin *by the sacrifice of himself.*”

Filled with the lusts of the flesh the world is described as a ruling, prevailing Spirit of Sin. Those who follow their own desires are described as “of the world” and “of the devil.”

1 John 2:14-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*”

1 Corinthians 2:12 “Now we have received, *not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God*”

John 15:19 “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you”

John 14:30 “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: *for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*” (16:14; 12:31)

THE TWO FATHERS—THE TWO CHILDREN: NATURAL MAN—SPIRITUAL MAN

1 John 3:5-12 “And ye know that (Jesus) *was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as *Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*” **first man born of man*

THE DEVIL AND SIN/FLESH: SYNONYMOUS

1. There were not two different things Jesus was “manifested” to take away—*sin* and *the works of the devil*—but one, represented by two words (1John 3:5 cf. 1John 3:8)
2. There are not two different “works” destroyed by Christ—*the flesh* and *the devil*—but one, represented by two words (Gal. 5:19 cf. 1John 3:8).
3. There are not two “fathers”—*the flesh* and *the devil*—but one, represented by two words (Heb. 12:9 cf. John 8:44).
4. There are not two natural “children”—*the flesh* and *the devil*—but one, represented by two words (John 3:6 cf. John 8:44; 1John 3:9-10).
5. There are not two things that have power to bring “death”—*sin* and *the devil*—but one, represented by two words (Heb. 2:14 cf. Rom. 6:23; 5:21; 1Cor. 15:56; Jam. 1:15).

These two principles—*the flesh* and *the devil*—are synonymous. The root problem with all men is the nature we possess, and obeying the fleshly impulses or desires of our nature.

Romans 8:3 “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh”

2 Corinthians 5:21 “For he hath made him to be sin for us (nature), who knew no sin (transgression); that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” “sin” is used for human nature Heb. 9:28

Hebrews 5:7-8 “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death”

1 Peter 4:1 “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin”

1 Peter 2:24 “Who his own self bare our sin(s) in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” John 1:29

Accordingly, the ways of man, the flesh and the devil are described in the Bible as *of the earth, natural* and not from “above.”

Colossians 3:1-8 “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry”

James 3:14-17 “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, *sensual, devilish”

**The word “sensual” is translated “natural” man (1Cor 2:14), “natural” body (1Cor 15:44, 46)!*

The Bible makes it very clear there is only one source of sin is man!

James 1:13-15 “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Mark 7:15-23 “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

Luke 6:43-45 “A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit... A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”

Romans 7:5, 14-25 “For when we were in the flesh, *the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death...* For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:* for to will is present with me; but *how to perform that which is good I find not.* For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin”

Jeremiah 17:9-10 “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*”

The Book of Proverbs is filled with the choices made by both the wise and the foolish. The motives and consequences of each are examined; with the foolish men following their own temporal desires and the wise men avoiding immediate pleasure in favor of the greater end result. The decisions of both men are outlined throughout the Book of Proverbs, yet never is there a mention of interference from a supernatural force of evil. There is, however, a warning throughout for wise men not to be “enticed” by sinners (Pro 1:10). Equally, the warning is repeatedly issued for wise men to avoid companionship with the foolish and wicked. Such was the case of Judas Iscariot, who succumbed to the influence of the Jewish leaders. Mark carefully the language:

Luke 22:1-4 “*Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them*”

All parallel Gospels record Judas communing with the chief priests to betray Jesus (Mat 26:14; Mar 14:10-11). John’s account adds:

John 13:1-2 “*When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him*”

The principle again appears in the Book of Acts: “conceived this thing in thine own heart.”

Acts 5:3-4 “*But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*”

DEVIL—RELATES TO MEN WHO WALK AFTER THE FLESH

John 6:68-71 “Jesus answered them, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*” (Rotherham and others translate this word as “adversary,” not “devil.”)

1 Timothy 3:1-11 “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober... One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, *lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil* (Greek: *diabolos*). Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the *devil* (Greek: *diabolos*)... And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not *slanderers* (Greek: *diabolos*), sober, faithful in all things.”

Strong’s Concordance (right) shows “devil” and “slanderers” are the same Greek word. Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible as: “sentence of the adversary.” Goodspeed’s The New Testament: An American Translation as: “slandrous people.”

1Ti 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
1Ti 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
1Ti 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
1Ti 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;
1Ti 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
1Ti 3:10 And let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.
1Ti 3:11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

William Tyndale translates as: “evil speaker.”

A man’s own “pride” is associated with “the devil.” Thus, many translators abandoned the implications of the word *diabolos* translated as “devil.” Notice the below; if a man fails to temper his own “anger” is related to “the devil”:

Ephesians 4:26-27 “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil”

Titus 2:1-5 “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers (Greek: *diabolos*), not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.”

Tit 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.
Tit 2:2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.
Tit 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
Tit 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

Diabolos means slanderer, or false accuser. Like “devil” being used for Judas (John 6:70), the above reference is to mankind: “aged women.” Proving “devil” relates to man, Bible translators again implemented the word “false accusers” for the *diabolos* in the below reference:

2 Timothy 2:24-3:5 “In meekness instructing those that oppose ... they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil (Greek: *diabolos*), who are taken captive by him at his will. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves...
 2 Tim. 2:24-26
 3:1-5
 trucebreakers, false accusers (Greek: *diabolos*)”

The word *diabolos*, translated “devil” is the same Greek word translated “false accusers” just three verses later. The “snare” of the “devil” is self-imposed by fleshly pride (see: 1Tim 6:9).

subverting of w thyself ap- l, a workman to be ashamed, the word of ofane and vain they will in- e ungodliness. ord will eat as : of whom is hiletus; aining the truth ying that the past already; the faith of f the founda- andeth s sure, l, e The Lord that are his.	² Gr. taken alive. Luke 5. 10. ^a ch. 4. 3. ¹ John 2. 18. ¹ Tim. 4. 1. ^b 1 Tim. 6. 20. ^c Luke 16. 14. ¹ Tim. 6. 10. ³ Or, gangren. ¹ Cor. 15. 33. ^d Cp. ver. 8. ¹ Cor. 15. 12. ³ Or, makebates. ¹ Tim. 3. 11. ¹ Tit. 2. 3. ^e 2 Pet. 3. 3-7. ^f Rev. 21. 14. ⁵ Or, steady. ¹ Pet. 5. 9. ^g John 10. 14, 27. ^h Rom. 8. 29. ^h Rom. 2. 20. ⁱ 1 Tim. 5. 8. ^k Mat. 7. 23. ^l Cp. ¹ Tim. 3. 15. ^m Rom. 9. 21.	snare of the <u>devil</u> , who are ² taken captive by him at his will. CHAPTER 3. ¹ He foretellet the wickedness of the last days, ⁶ and describeth the enemies of the truth. T HIS know also, that ^a in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, ^c covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, <u>false accusers</u> , ^e incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a ^h form of godliness,
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DIABOLOS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Dismissing the theology of modern Christianity, note how the word *diabolos* is in the Old Testament, Septuagint Version of the Bible. The O.T. was originally translated in Hebrew, while the N.T. in Greek. Long before the New Testament was recorded Ptolemy II Philadephus, King of Egypt (285—246 B.C.) prompted the Jewish high priest in Jerusalem to send 70 scholars to Alexandria to translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. Here’s how they applied *diabolos* in the O.T.—

Esther 7:4 “For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although *the enemy (diabolos)* could not countervail the king's damage.”

Esther 8:1 “On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' *enemy (diabolos)* unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.”

Obviously, this relates to man. The verb form of *diabolos* occurs in the following references:

Daniel 3:8 “Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and *accused (diabollo)* the Jews...” (N.T. equivalent of “false accuser”)

Daniel 6:24 “And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had *accused (diabollo)* Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”

It should also be noted that *diabolos*, as in the above references, quite often refers to civil or political authorities. This is precisely how it is applied in the New Testament,

Ephesians 6:10-12 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the *wiles of the devil*. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, *but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”

All students of the Bible must allow the Word of God to interpret itself, and avoid applying modern definitions to scriptural words. *Darkness* refers to the spiritually unenlightened, not a superhuman force of evil (see: 1Pet 2:9; Eph 5:8; 4:17-18; 2Cor 6:14; 4:4; Acts 26:18).

The Lord told the Jewish leaders who seized him: “**When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. And they took him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house**”—Luke 22:53-54.

Obviously, this was not a supernatural group of demons, but evil Jewish leaders full of envy.

SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES—GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE

- Why would Yahweh use ungodly men to fulfill His purpose? Because it emphasizes a critical point that the Most High rules in the Kingdom of Men (Dan 4:17; Rom 13:1-7).
- Caiaphas, the high priest, fulfilled prophecy by uttering Divine Words unknowingly (John 11:49-52). The soldiers also, who would not rend the Lord’s garment, which was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy (John 19:23-24). Likewise, Balaam (Num 22-24; 2Pet 2:15-17). See: Mat 7:22-23).
- Yahweh, the God of Israel, calls the king of Babylon His “servant” (Jer 25:9; 27:5-7 cf. Eze 30:24), and the king of Medo-Persia His “anointed” and “shepherd” (Isa 44:28; 45:1), and the Gentiles His “sanctified ones” (Isa 13:3).
- Christ told Pilate “thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above” (John 19:11).

1 Peter 5:6-9 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; *because your adversary the devil (diabolos), as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*”

That the “devil” refers to a civil authority oppressing believers is evident from the use of the word “adversary.” The Greek word (*antidokos*) implies “an opponent at law.” Notice the use of this very same word elsewhere:

Matthew 5:25 “Agree with thine *adversary (antidokos)* quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the *adversary (antidokos)* deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.”

Peter’s reference to the “devil” as a “roaring lion” is again used for civil authorities in Paul’s epistle to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:16-17 “At my first answer (i.e. *appearance in court*) no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with

me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” See: Psa. 22:13, 21; Acts 22:1; 23:1; 28:17

Once again, we are witnessing the necessity to allow the Bible to define itself. Consider the reference below, where the meaning of “the devil” is obviously not referring to a supernatural evil spirit:

Revelation 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, *the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

Students of the Bible and those even vaguely familiar with history will freely acknowledge that early Christians were greatly persecuted by various political authorities, such as Herod and Nero.

** Devil is generally a political term, whereas Satan is generally a religious term.*

It is not to be ignored that certain characteristic of false teaching include “devils.” Note:

1 Timothy 4:1-3 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*”

It is commonly taught that Satan is a fallen angel who provokes men to sin. There are several occurrences of “angels” appearing to men in miraculous fashion in the Bible. However, we have not one single account of the appearance of a supernatural agent of evil appearing to men.

1. Angel appears in a “flame of fire” unto Moses (Exo 3:2)
2. Angel appears to Gideon bringing “fire out of rock” and vanishes (Jud 6:21)
3. Angel “ascended in the flame of the altar” before Manoah and his wife (Jud 13:20)
4. Angel “descended from heaven” upon the “great earthquake” of the Lord’s resurrection and “rolled back the stone” (Mat 28:2)
5. Angel “opened the prison doors” of the apostles (Acts 5:19)
6. Angel appearing to Cornelius in a “vision” (Acts 10:3)
7. Angel entered into “the prison” with Peter to loosen him from his chains (Acts 12:8)
8. Angel “wrestled” with Jacob (Hos 12:4; Gen 32:24-29)... etc

The concept of a mighty “fallen one” challenging God’s authority and power has been attributed by *modern Christianity* to Lucifer. The subject of Lucifer has been so terribly misrepresented that it has led many astray from the Bible. The name “Lucifer” appears only one time in the Bible and relates directly to the King of Babylon, not a superhuman agent of evil.

Isaiah 14:1-12 “*Thou shalt take up this proverb AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!...Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*”

- **Young’s Analytical Concordance: “Lucifer, a translation of ‘helel’—applied to the king of Babylon by Isaiah, in reference to his glory and pomp.”**

- Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 17: “Lucifer, in ancient astronomy the morning star. A name given to the planet Venus when she appears in the morning before sunrise...A name commonly given to Satan, the prince of darkness, due to the fathers of the church having mis-interpreted to the reference to Lucifer (the King of Babylon) in Isaiah 14:12 as being Satan.”

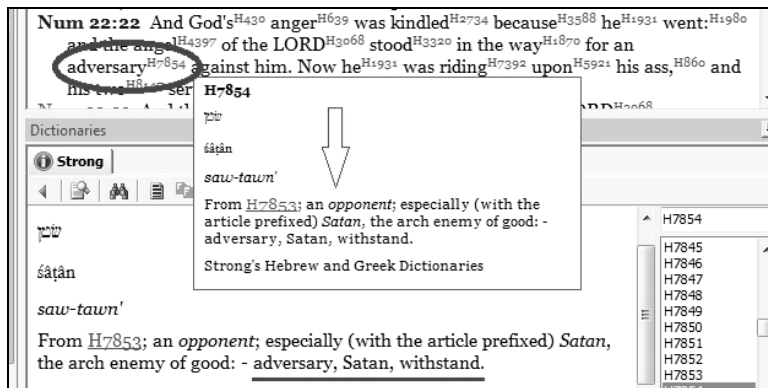
We encourage every Bible student to research the mythology associated with Lucifer. Encyclopedias, dictionaries and works of history uniformly agree the reference in the Bible pertains to the king of Babylon, with the modern concept of the name attributed to the influence of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The Revised Version has Isaiah 14:12 as “day star,” while the NIV has “morning star.”

WHO OR WHAT IS SATAN?

Like the name “Lucifer,” the use of “satan” has been exaggerated and misrepresented. It simply means “an adversary.” Satan is NOT a proper noun (a name used for a specific individual, place... etc. such as *Sally, Dallas, Bill, Germany*), but simply a common noun. Personal research will reveal Hebrew and Greek scholars agree with this conclusion.

In fact, the word commonly translated “Satan, with a capital ‘S,’” is also rendered as “an adversary” throughout the Bible. Note the below reference, where the Hebrew “satan” is applied in various ways in Scripture, even referring to a righteous angel of God.

Numbers 22:20-23 “Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way...”



Numbers 22:31-33 “Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times”

d which I shall hat shalt thou	⁴ Or, ever since thou wast, &c. ^h ver. 35. ch. 23. 12, 26 & 24. 13. ⁱ Cp. Gen. 21. 19. ² Kin. 6. 17. Luke 24. 16, 31. ^k Judg. 5. 10. ^l Cp. Ex. 4. 24. ^m See Ex. 34. 8. ⁵ Or, bowed himself.	since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. 31 Then the LORD ⁱ opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he ^m bowed down his head, and ⁵ fell flat on his face. 32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out ^o to withstand thee, because thy way ⁿ is perverse before me: 33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three
rose up in the dled his ^k ass, the princes of		
he went: ^l and LORD stood in adversary a- Now he was : ass, and his re with him. saw the angel anding in the word drawn in he ass turned		
	^o Heb. to be an adver- sary unto thee. ^p Cp. ver. 22. ⁿ Job 16. 11.	

- **Smithsonian Magazine, Oct. 1999**—“Ancient Hebrew had a noun, *satan*, meaning ‘obstructor’ or ‘accuser,’ and several *satans* appear in the Old Testament being sent by God on different errands, such as blocking the path of Baalam’s ass...” (pg. 116)

Job 1:1-8 “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and *Satan* (margin: Heb. “the adversary”) came also among them...”

The same word translated “an adversary” in Numbers 22 is translated “Satan” in Job 1. The student of the Bible must consider why the translators deliberately placed the alternate rendering in the margin! Furthermore, “sons of God” is a phrase referring to mortal men who follow God (John 1:12; Rom 8:14). Furthermore, their appearing before the “presence” of God (v 12) is common Bible language when mortal men who are accountable interact with God (Jonah 1:3; Gen 4:16; Psa 51:11).

<p>ose name man was and one and ¹ es-</p> <p>born unto nd three</p> <p>also was eep, and eels, and oxen, and es, and a t; so that reatest of ast. vent and</p>	<p>^{13.} ^f Prov. 16. 6. ⁹ Ps. 34. 14. ² Heb. all the days. ¹ Sam. 18. 29.</p> <p>^h 1 Sam. 1. 4. ² Kin. 4. 8. ⁱ Gen. 6. 2, 4. ¹ Kin. 22. 19.</p> <p>³ Or, cattle. Gen. 4. 20.</p> <p>⁴ Heb. the adversary. ⁵ Heb. in the midst of them. ⁶ Or, husbandry. Gen. 26. 14. ^k ch. 2. 2. ⁷ Heb. sons of the east.</p>	<p>to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and ^e cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job ² continually.</p> <p>⁶ ¶ Now ^h there was a day when ⁱ the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and ^o Satan came also ^s among them.</p> <p>⁷ And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, ^k From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.</p>
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There is an ever-present urgency for readers of the Bible to never get caught up on pre-conceived theories or misapplication of modern English definitions to Scriptural words.

Zechariah 3:1-5 “And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and *Satan* (margin: “an adversary” Num. 22:22, 32; Psa. 109:6) standing at his right hand to resist him...”

Again, it must be worth consideration as to why the translators deliberately note the Hebrew word in the margin. We urge the reader to review the times here spoken of by the prophet Zechariah, which will reveal who was

the “satan” resisting Israel. It certainly was not a supernatural fallen angel, but the Samaritans (see Ezra 4-6). “Now when the *adversaries* of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple of the LORD...” Ezra 4:1. Their contention was so strong they caused the building to stop (Ezra 4:24). This is precisely when Zechariah’s prophesy was introduced to encourage the work to continue: “Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem” Ezra 5:1.

<p>measuring line</p> <p>Whither goest said unto me, rusalem, to see readth thereof, length thereof. / the angel that went forth, and ent out to meet</p> <p>nto him, Run, ough man, say- i shall be in- owns / without ultitude of men n : the LORD, will a wall of fire nd will be / the</p>	<p>¹ Mark 16. 5. Cp. ver. 1. ² i. e. an adversary. ³ Num. 22. 22. 32. ⁴ Ps. 109. 6. ⁵ ch. 12. 6 & 14. 10. ⁶ Heb. to be his adversary. Ps. 38. 20. ⁷ Esth. 9. 19. Ezek. 38. 11. ⁸ Cp. Mic. 5. 11, 14. ⁹ Jer. 31. 27. ^h Jude 9. ⁱ ch. 1. 17. ^k Cp. Is. 4. 5. ^l Amos 4. 11. ^m Ps. 125. 2. ⁿ ver. 8. Is. 60. 19. ^o Ps. 46. 5. ^p Cp. Is. 64. 6.</p>	<p>holy land, and ^s shall choose Jerusalem again.</p> <p>¹³ ^t Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up ^x out of ² his holy habitation.</p> <p>CHAPTER 3.</p> <p>¹ Under the type of Joshua, the restoration of the church, ⁸ Christ the Branch is promised.</p> <p>AND he shewed me ^z Joshua the high priest standing before ^a the angel of the LORD, and ³ ^c Satan standing at his right hand ^o to resist him.</p> <p>² And the LORD said unto Satan, ^h The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD ⁱ that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: ^{is} not this ^l a brand plucked out of the fire?</p>
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While there may be skepticism to what has been advanced—that “an adversary” and “satan” are interchangeable—the below reference should remove all doubt. 2 Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”

Psalm 109:3-7, 20-22, 28-30 “They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries (Heb. satan)... and let Satan (margin “an adversary” verse 4, 20, 29) stand at his right hand... Let this be the reward of mine adversaries (Heb. satan) from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul... Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries (Heb. satan) be clothed with shame, and let them cover...”

NOTE: Differing from the KJV translation of Psalm 109:6 “Satan,” the NIV and RSV translate the verse as “an accuser.” This is a staggering revelation for so many who have simply accepted the popular teaching of modern Christianity without any personal study of the subject for themselves!

King James Version	New International Version	Revised Standard Version
<p>1; ^a To ver. 5, Ps. 57, 7-11. ^b Ps. 35, 19.</p> <p>2 fought against me ^w without a cause.</p> <p>3 4 For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself <i>unto</i> prayer.</p> <p>4 ^c Ps. 35, 12 & 38, 20.</p> <p>5 And ^c they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.</p> <p>6 ^d To ver. 15, Ps. 35, 4-8. ^e Zech. 3, 1.</p> <p>7 ^d Set thou a wicked man over him: and ^e let ^o Satan stand at his right hand.</p> <p>8 ^o Or, an adversary. ^o Ps. 113, 4. Cp. Jer. 51, 9.</p> <p>9 ^o Or, <i>shits</i>. ^o Cp. Ps. 1, 5.</p> <p>10 ^o Heb. <i>gy</i> out guilty, or, wicked. ^o Ps. 57, 21.</p> <p>11 ^o Let his children ^m be con-</p>	<p>⁵They repay me evil for good,⁷ and hatred for my friendship.</p> <p>⁶Appoint^e an evil man^d to oppose him; let <u>an accuser</u>^e stand at his right hand.</p> <p>⁷When he is tried, let him be found guilty,^f and may his prayers condemn^u him.</p> <p>⁸May his days be few;^v may another take his place^w of leadership.</p> <p>⁹May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow.^x</p> <p>¹⁰May his children be wandering</p>	<p>even as I make prayer for them.^z</p> <p>⁵ So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.</p> <p>⁶ Appoint a wicked man against him; let <u>an accuser</u> bring him to trial.^a</p> <p>⁷ When he is tried, let him come forth guilty; let his prayer be counted as sin!</p> <p>⁸ May his days be few; may another seize his goods!</p> <p>⁹ May his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow!</p> <p>¹⁰ May his children wander about and beg; may they be driven out of^b the ruins they inhabit!</p>

- The fact that Hebrew scholars translate “satan” as “an adversary” or “accuser” should cause any Bible student to reconsider the popular teaching of modern Christianity, which claims that “satan” is a supernatural evil angel tempting mankind to sin. Without question the above comparison of translations punctuates the true definition of “satan.”

Matthew 16:21-25 “Began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed... Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord... But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Obviously Peter was not a supernatural agent of evil, but “an adversary” of God’s Will requiring Jesus to lay down his life in sacrifice. Furthermore, Peter’s loving desire was his Lord and Master would not have to experience such a death. Although there was no deliberate evil intent of the apostle, his actions were contrary to the purpose of God. Certainly this whole account is a direct contradiction to the popular theology of modern Christianity.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles... For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed... To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be

saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”

The apostle Paul wrote the same to Timothy; that brethren in Christ walking contrary to the principles of godliness—whether in doctrine or action—were to be put outside of fellowship and back into the world until they repented (1Tim 1:19-20). It is beyond scriptural reasoning or common sense to believe Paul was suggesting believers to place one of their own in the control of such a wicked fallen angel as the supernatural Satan of mythology.

GOD CALLED SATAN?

Further powerful proof is found in the fact that God Himself is referred to as “Satan” in the Old Testament. This reference is staggering to so many who are ignorant of existence in the Bible!

2 Samuel 24:1-2 “And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.”

While the context clearly refers to “the LORD” (Yahweh, God of Israel), note that the parallel account in the book of Chronicles speaks of “Satan”:

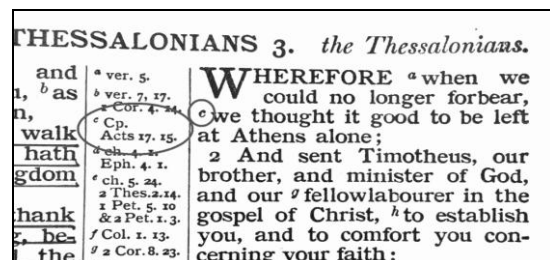
1 Chronicles 21:1-2 “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.”

The comparison of Scripture with Scripture demands that we disregard the pre-conceived creeds of men. Sadly, so many sects among modern Christianity never allow God to define Himself and His purpose through his word. A student of the Bible will always permit Scripture to be self-interpreting. We do not deny the use of the words “satan” and “devil.” We do deny, however, the terrible misapplication of these words being attributed to an evil fallen angel.

Another example is in 1The 2:17-3:2 Paul speaks of being hindered by “Satan.” A simple comparison with the account of which he speaks reveals the adversary to whom he refers. Note the margin:

1 Thessalonians 2:14-3:2 “Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us... Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you...”



Act 17:1-16 “When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead... *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar... And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athen*”

The “satan” hindering Paul was the Jews who resisted his teaching. As stated previously, “satan” generally has more of a religious context, whereas “devil” is more civil or political. Notice the use of the word in the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 2:9 “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan”

Revelation 3:9 “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee”

The name “Jew” represents those who embrace the Gospel (Rom 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Gal 6:15-16). These references represented those of among the “synagogue” claiming to be believers, but in reality they rejected Christ.

As with the “devil” the word “satan” is attributed to men. Like “devil,” the use of “satan” can also be associated with the flesh, and the affliction of mortality common to man:

Luke 13:12-16 “When Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day... The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite... ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me... For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”

Act 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and *healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him*”

THE OLD SERPENT: DEVIL AND SATAN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was cast out, that *old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan*”

Revelation 20:2 “And he laid hold on the dragon, that *old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years*”

The book of Revelation is distinctly a book of symbols implemented to express history, as we are told in the very first verse (“signified” *given by symbol* Revelation 1:1). The “old serpent” is a representation of the thinking that gave expression to the mind of the flesh. The “dragon” is the political manifestation of the same principle. The “serpent” usurped the commandment of God, and therefore is a personification of the thinking of the flesh.

John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it”

The mark of the “lie” was “speaking of his own” and “not in the Truth.” The serpent, as a beast of the field, became a symbol of this “lie,” which led to death. Hence, he was a “murderer.”

Genesis 3:1-4 “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die”

Romans 8:7 “The **carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” **animal thinking, mind of the flesh*

- The word “carnal” in Rom 8:6-7 is the same word “flesh” in Rom 8:8.

ONLY TWO KINDS OF THINKING IN THE BIBLE: FLESH AND SPIRIT

2 Corinthians 11:1-4 “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity (“singleness”—Eph 6:5) that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him”

The apostle makes the comparison of the serpent and those advancing false doctrine. Throughout the Bible, the “serpent” is connected with false teaching: “ye shall not surely die... your eyes shall be opened, ye shall be as gods.” (see: John 3:14; Numbers 21:7-9)

Romans 8:1-5 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me

free from the law of sin and death... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Gal 5:17)

THE SEED OF THE SERPENT

1 John 3:8-12 “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin... In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother... Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous”

The “seed of the serpent” is identified as a person: Cain. Accordingly, Jesus called the Jews a “generation of vipers” (Mat 3:7; Mat 23:33-35; John 8:44). As such, they were of the “earth,” symbolized by the “serpent” being cursed to go upon its’ “belly” (Gen 3:14). This is twice connected with those who “serve” themselves. *All snakes are carnivores; none being herbivores.

Philippians 3:18-19 “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”

The apostle’s statement is not to be taken literally, of course. The “god” of their own “belly” represents self-serving or selfish people. Such are “enemies of the cross of Christ” in that they do not serve Christ, but their own interests.

Romans 16:17-18 “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”

It is not honest Bible reasoning to amplify personifications in Scripture into literal personalities. The psalmist wrote: “*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent*” (Psa 58:3-4; Psa 140:1-3). The reader of the Word can find multiple connections between man’s evil—sadly, all of us at times—and the poison of serpents, especially in our terrible words that often lead us to sin. Expressing both Jew and Gentile “all under sin,” Paul declares there is “none righteous” and “their tongues” are filled with the “poison of asps” (Rom 3:9-19). Under the Law of Moses, all serpents were an unclean abomination, with all members of the species being carnivores, not herbivores; meaning flesh-eaters (Lev 11:42).

Consider the very first appearance of the serpent in the Bible. It is admitted by all denominations that the expressions used are allegorical, and in fact, a prophecy of Jesus Christ ultimately conquering sin in the flesh.

Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”

As virtually all agree, the “seed” of the serpent and the “seed” of the woman related to Christ’s victory over sin and death. Therefore, the serpent is to be understood as a representation of sin and death (Heb 2:14-18).

The serpent is implemented allegorically of sin and sin-nature throughout the Holy Bible. In Numbers 21, serpents bit the children of Israel who spoke “against God and against Moses” (21:5). The connection between the serpent and sin in this account is quite obvious. Joining the principle between sin and the serpent, the apostle Paul states “the sting of death is sin” (1Cor 15:56). In a public display of putting to death “sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3), the Lord Jesus Christ was himself compared to the “serpent on the pole” (John 3:14-16; 8:28; 12:32).

John 3:14 “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up”

- **Smithsonian, Oct. 1999—“The serpent who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden WAS LATER IDENTIFIED by Jewish rabbis and Christian Church fathers with the Devil, the principle of Evil; but in the third chapter of Genesis as written, HE IS ONLY A SNAKE.” (pg. 114-115)**

It is a very worthy study to consider the exact language regarding the serpent. In **2Corinthians 11:3** the apostle Paul wrote: **“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent BEGUILLED Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be CORRUPTED from the simplicity that is in Christ.”**

- ❑ The Greek word translated “beguiled” is also translated “deceived” in the New Testament. In the places where it occurs it is directly related to SIN and PEOPLE. “Sin, taking occasion by the commandment *deceived* me,” Romans 7:11. Warning of those that seek their own interests and “cause divisions and offenses,” Paul says “they are such that serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own belly (*serpent*), and by good words and fair speeches *deceive* the hearts of the simple” Romans 16:17-18. “Let no man *deceive* himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise” 1Corinthians 3:8. And again, “let no man *deceive* you by any means...” 2Thessalonians 2:3.
- ❑ The word “corrupted” in 2Corinthians 11:3 also refers to man; specifically everyone before being enlightened by the gospel. “Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is *corrupt* according to deceitful lusts” Ephesians 4:22. Self-deception is something we are all prone to be misled by; that is, our own fleshly desires. See James 1:22-26; Hebrews 3:13; Jeremiah 17:9-10; 1Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 3:7.

ONLY TWO KINDS OF THINKING IN THE BIBLE: FLESH AND SPIRIT

1 John 5:17-19 “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” *the words “wicked one” and “wickedness” are the same.

John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do”

1 John 3:8 “He that committeth sin is of (*born, out of*) the devil”

1 Timothy 5:11-15 “But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry... I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children,

guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan.”

WHY IS SIN PERSONIFIED?

“Sin” is personified many times and in diverse ways in the Bible, because “sin” is always connected with the person of “man” in Scripture. “Sin” and “death” are literally identified with a “person.”

Romans 5:12, 19 “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned... For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”

James 1:14-15 “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”

Warfare, for example, is recorded throughout the Bible: nation verses nation and men verses men. Never—not one time—does the battle involve mortal men against a supernatural force of evil. Rather, it is fleshly men resisting godly men. This principle is recorded over and over again.

The Devil is used:

Individually Heb 2:14 Christ a partaker of flesh and blood destroyed the devil
 2Tim 2:26 recover themselves out of snare of the devil (1Tim 3:7)
 Jam 4:7 resist the devil and he will flee
 1John 3:10 he that committeth sin is of the devil
 Eph 4:27 be angry, sin not neither give place to the devil
 Acts 10:38 healing all that were oppressed of the devil
 John 8:44 ye are of your father the devil

Politically Rev 2:10 devil shall cast some of you into prison
 1Pet 5:8 your adversary the devil goes about (opponent at law)
 Eph 6:11-12 stand against the wiles of the devil
 Rev 20:10 devil that deceived them cast into lake of fire

WHO WAS THE DEVIL TEMPTING JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS?

This question is often asked: who was the devil tempting Jesus in the Wilderness? First of all, the devil of the Bible is always physical. It is always the ACTOR, not the ACTION. It is the SLANDERER, not the SLANDER. Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit” when he went into the wilderness (Luke 4:1), and there “fasted forty days and forty nights” (Mat 4:2). Fasting is for the purpose of absolute mental dedication to God, eschewing the appetite of the flesh (Acts 13:3; 10:30; Dan 9:3; Mat 17:21; 1Cor 7:5). Remember: Heb 7:26; Phi 2:5. By comparison it appears the tempter in the case of Jesus was the Jewish leaders.

“If thou be the Son of God” Many brethren suggest this was the Jewish leaders. Notably, the Jews are the only ones ever recorded to ask this question (Mat 27:39-43; 26:63; Joh 10:24); an adulterous generation seeking a sign (Mat 12:39).

“To be tempted” The Jews alone are the only ones recorded as tempting Jesus (Mat 16:1; 19:3; 22:18,35; John 8:6; Luke 10:25). The Jews “tempted” God 40 years in the Wilderness (Heb 3:1-17) “It is written” The tempter knew the Scriptures (v. 10), but wrested them, only to be corrected by Jesus (Mat 4:3-10). This again fits the Jewish leaders.

The “Satan” of popular theology presents a Scriptural impossibility. The orthodox view suggests that “Satan” was once God’s foremost angel, who decided to rebel and take a host of angels with him as he was expelled from heaven; thus creating a supernatural struggle between God and His arch-rival. Not only does modern Christianity’s theory challenge God’s omnipotence, it contradicts the Word of God. Scriptures declare: “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), and that angels cannot “die any more” (Luke 20:36). However, the “Satan” taught by the church clergy somehow escaped this divine edict and was able to sin and not experience death. The angels of Scripture “do God’s commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word” (Psa. 103:20), and “all his angels praise Him” (Psa. 148:2).

- **Young’s Analytical Concordance—“ANGEL is used of a messenger, good or bad, from heaven or from men, and applied to spiritual intelligences, to the pillar of cloud and fire, to the winds, to priests, prophets, ministers, disembodied spirits, etc.”**

The Greek word “angel” is *aggelos* and is used for mortal men and immortal messengers of God.

Matthew 11:10 “For this is he (John Baptist) of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger (*aggelos*) before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”

Luke 7:24, 27 “And when the messengers (*aggelos*) of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people”

James 2:25 “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers (*aggelos*).”

Notice the comparison 2Cor 11: (v. 13) “For such are *false apostles*, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (v. 14) And no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” Apostle means *to be sent* (v. 13), while Angel means *a messenger* (v. 14). Both employing the same idea, and hence, the comparison. (v.15) “Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed as ministers of righteousness.” The reference is clearly to false religious teachers pretending to be genuine followers of Christ and not superhuman forces. The apostle issued the same warning to the Galatians 1:6-9. See: Gal 4:13-14;

ANGELS—

1. Doing God’s will and work—Psa. 103:20-21
2. Speak for God—Exo. 3:2-6; Acts 7:35-38; Exo. 34:5
3. Reveal God’s character—Exo. 23:20-21
4. Part of God’s heavenly council—Psa. 89:5-8; 1Kings 22:19-23
5. Help one another—Dan. 10:13-14; Zec. 1:8-14; Gen. 18-19; Dan. 10:13
6. Immortal and do not marry—Luke 20:36
7. Know good and evil—Gen. 3:22
8. Angels don’t know all of God’s forethought—Mark 13:32; 1Pet. 1:12
9. Ask God questions—Zec. 1:12
10. Sent on missions by God—1Chr. 21:15; Dan. 3:28; 6:22
11. Authority to make decisions—Gen. 18:17-21; Exo. 23:21; 33:17; Dan. 4:17
12. Differing in rank—Jos. 5:14; Dan. 12:1-2; Luke 1:19; 1Tim. 5:21
13. Host of angels—Mat. 26:53; Dan. 7:10
14. Can read thoughts and intents—Gen. 18:12; Luke 1:18-20

15. Remember actions of saints—Luke 24:4-8
16. Able to eat—Gen. 18:8; 19:3
17. Rejoice with believers—Luke 2:10-14; 15:10; Job 38:7
18. Appear like men—Heb. 13:1-2; Jud. 13:15-21; Dan. 10:18
19. Can prevent us from seeing them—Num. 22:24-31; 2Kin. 6:15-17
20. Involved in Creation—Job 38:4-7
21. Man created in angels' image—Gen. 1:28
22. Gave the Ten Commandments—Acts 7:38; Gal. 3:19
23. Minister to believers—Heb. 1:14; Exo. 33:17; Gen. 19:21-22; 24:40
24. Protect the saints—Psa. 34:7; 91:11; Dan. 3:28; 6:22
25. Accommodate requests of saints—Gen. 19:19-22; Exo. 33:12-17
26. Work with same person—Gen. 48:16; Mat. 18:10; Luke 24:6; Acts 12:15
27. Involved with judgment of saints—Luke 12:8-9
28. Are now subject to Christ—Heb. 1:6; 1Pet. 3:22; 2The. 1:7; Mat. 25:31
29. Control current world affairs—Rev. 8:1-13; 15:1-8
30. Not in charge of kingdom to come—Heb. 2:5
31. Will work with saints in kingdom Age—Rev. 5:9-12; 7:9-12
32. Saints to be like the angels—Luke 20:34-38

Additional note: We have considered the Scriptural principle requiring the “natural man” or man of natural, fleshly “birth” to be “born again” of the spirit-word by water in baptism. This was Jesus’ explanation to Nicodemus (John 3:1-8). This necessity of this principle is realized in the miracles of healing by Christ and the apostles. For example, the Bible deliberately states that Peter healed a man who was lame “from his mother’s womb” (Acts 3:2). Likewise, the apostle Paul healed a man “cripple from his mother’s womb” (Acts 14:8). After hearing the apostle “preach the gospel” he had “faith to be healed” (Acts 14:7-9). The Lord Jesus Christ also healed a man “which was blind from his birth” (John 9:1-32). The condition of a natural “birth” is one of spiritual blindness and ungodly walk, as those words are metaphorically employed throughout the Bible.