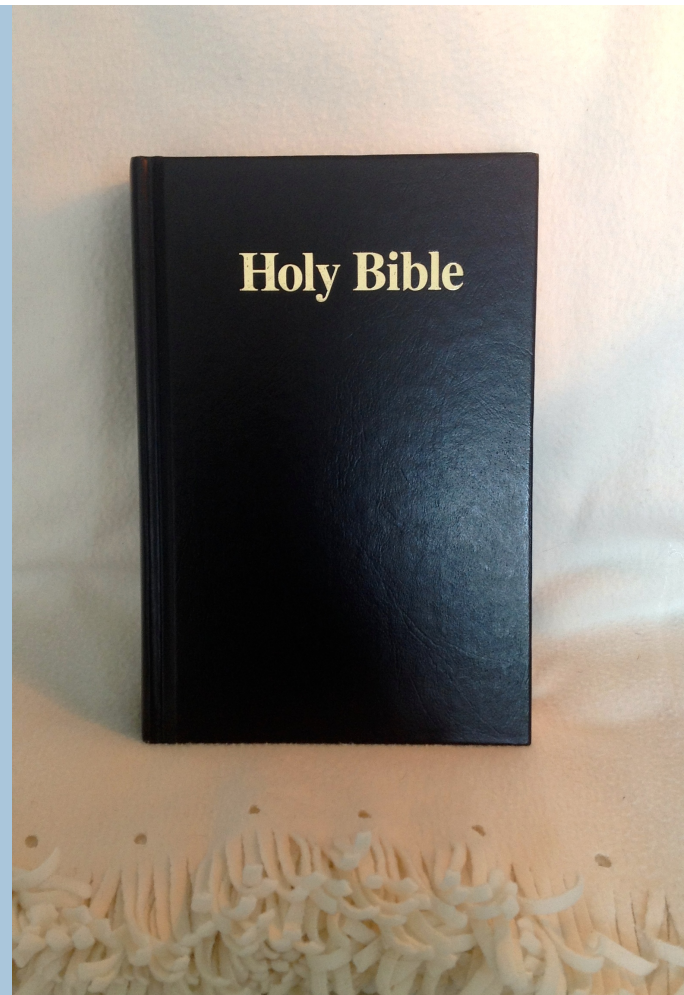


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EXPLORING
BIBLE
TEACHING
ON
DEVILS





EXPLORING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DEVILS

“Devils” is mostly a New Testament term though its origins are found in the Old Testament, as we may see.

The original Greek word in the New Testament for devils is:- (Strong's ref.1142) daimonion or daimon (demon) from daio (to distribute fortunes); & this Greek word, to the pagan Greeks, referred to:

- 1) a god, a goddess
- 1a) an inferior deity, whether good or bad
- 2) in the NT, an evil spirit {ie a hurtful fortune}

Devils, or Demons are NOT the same as diabolos, which is the word for the devil. However, there is some co-relationship. The devils/demons were considered to be under a chief called Beelzebub; which view was held by some Jews at the time of Christ, as:

“But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow [Jesus] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” Matthew 12:24

We find that the devils of the New Testament are essentially the Pagan gods of the Old Testament. Lets first explore Beelzebub in the Old Testament as an instance:

“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 enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?” (2 Kings 1:3)

So around 800 BC Baalzebub (Beelzebub) was a pagan god adopted by the Philistines as the god of their city Ekron.

By New Testament times Baalzebub was considered by some to be the Lord over all the lesser (evil) deities (of paganism).

According to Rabbinic sources Baalzebub means Lord of the flies. Flies were regarded as distributors of disease like agents of Baalzebub. Thus, as we have seen, the Pharisees called Beelzebub “the prince of the devils.” (Matthew 12:24)

Paul refers to the notion of devils being derived from mythical pagan gods by referring to the Old Testament in the following:

19 "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?"

20 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."

22 "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"
(1 Corinthians 10)

Here Paul draws a lesson from Israel in the Old testament where it says:

16 "They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." (Deuteronomy 32:16,17)

So by the spirit, both Paul and Moses equate "devils" with mythical pagan "gods", as we have seen:

Paul said:

"the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils" (1 Corinthians 10:20)

Moses said:

"They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not" (Deuteronomy 32:17)

These pagan gods were deemed to be distributors of fortune, and therefore are referred to as devils/demons (Greek from daio signifying to distribute fortunes).

The Jews were forbidden to make idols, but other nations supplicated devils or distributors of fortune by making food offerings to their idol representations. But Paul further shows that such things only exist in the imagination of men as:

1 Corinthians 8:

4 "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.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)"

[eg Baalzebub and devils in general]

6 "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, and we by him.

7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

God showed Israel also that the devils of the pagan gods are nothing, that He alone is the only distributor of fortune:

Exodus 4

11 And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?

As it is with physical ailments so also with mental:

Deuteronomy 28

28 The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

Deuteronomy 32

39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

So the Israelites were wasting their time (and enraging God), in trying to placate the mythical distributors of fortune; although they went to extreme lengths to do so as:

Psalms 106

37 "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,"

Human, or any other form of sacrifice to mythical devils was forbidden by the law as:

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.

But respect for mythical devils was still prevalent in the minds of some at the time of Christ and the Apostles, as we see when Paul preached to the Athenians as:

"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbling say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods [Greek:daimon(ion) ie demons/devils] because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." (Acts 17:18)

At times Israel were told they need not fear the gods/devils as they do not exist for there is only one deity as:

Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isa 44:8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

However originally God chose to show that He has more power than that imagined of the Pagan gods:

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.” (Exodus 12:12)

“For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:”

Deuteronomy 10:17

Why did God sometimes allow His people to think that the demon gods of the nations existed? It was to prove their allegiance to Him, as:

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 13:1-3)

As did God in the Old Testament, so Christ also showed himself to have the power to overcome all powers, Lord of lords, real or imagined, because some of the Jews were influenced by the later Greek culture of devils:

Matthew 17:18

“And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.”

“the child was cured” that is Christ cured the Childs mental illness as he also cured physical illnesses. But Does “rebuked” and “departed” mean the demon must be a personal being? No, because we find that such terms are used elsewhere, as:

Luke 4:39

“And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.”

Mark 4:39-41

“And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

But there is also another reason for calling the healing of the mentally sick “casting out devils”. It had become a figure of speech or medical term for mental illness, as:

Matthew 4:24

“And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.”

“healed them.” Yes works of healing, both physical and mental illnesses. And if it seem strange the terms such as “possessed with devils” could ever become medical terms, lets look at the reference here of “lunatic”. Literally “those which were lunatick” means those who are smitten by the Moon god (Luna-tic), yet in Victorian times this was the accepted medical term for madness, so this is what they called the asylums; Lunatic Asylums. But this did not mean that the Victorians believed the patients were struck by the Moon god. We, today have dozens of medical terms that originate with mythical pagan demon distributors of ill fortune.

Jesus did his healing work by the spirit, and he empowered his apostles to do the same:

Luke 9:1

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

In other words:

Luke 9:2

And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

and of Jesus:

Luke 7:21

And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

“cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits”

Matthew 12:22-23

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

“Is not this the son of David?” yes this was the main reason he healed the sick to prove he is the saviour, Messiah heir to the throne of David that people might believe in him.

Jesus had to show he could defeat the great enemy of mankind, mortality and all its ills. To portray this as a conflict that he would win, the mentally deranged and irresponsible were

providentially provoked to acknowledge him in fear. It was as if the fallen nature was reacting vocally:

Luke 4:40-41

“Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.”

But why would Christ allow a misplaced belief in personal devils to linger? Well he did not always correct society at large:

Mark 4:11-12

“And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in **parables**: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”

A case in point was Christ's treating of the scribes and Pharisees:

Mark 3:22-24

And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in **parables**, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

demons | conclusions

Summary

- Demons are spirits of idols, **which don't exist**
- Demon possession :
 - Aside from a couple of references, demon possession is only really found in volume in **the late 20's AD**
 - These demons are also mainly found **in Galilee**
 1. **Demon possession was connected to illness**
 2. **People with demons were healed**
 3. **People believed in demons**
 4. **Demons speaking are just deranged people speaking**
 - Jesus for the time tolerated societies belief in demons, and spoke in the language of his day, we might call them medical terms now such as Hygeia (health) gave her name to terms like hygiene and hygienic. She was the daughter of Asclepius, god of medicine.

But that's not the final word. Let's look beyond those anomalies

To the greater reality:

1 Timothy 6:14-16

“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”