



*Creation
Before
GENESIS*

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The Creation Before The Genesis Creation

Cecil N. Wright

Introduction

How did everything begin? Where did everything come from? How do we explain galaxies that are trillions of light years away? When were Heaven, Hell, Angels and Demons created? Were they created before the Genesis creation?

We begin to see that the source of everything is a supernatural source that is of supreme power, an intellect and a source that has a morality with ethics.

It is difficult for our finite mind to comprehend the concept of no beginning and no ending, ETERNITY. But GOD is omnipresent; that is He has always been, is now and always will be. History shows all civilizations have worshipped some type of superior being and believed in a life beyond the earthly life. Solomon stated that God put this yearning in man. in "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (Eccl 3:11-12)

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Chapter 1

Heaven and Hell

Was Heaven created or has it always existed?

The celestial Heaven is the abode of God. Since God is omnipresent, always present, and since Heaven is His abode, then Heaven must have always existed. This is the heaven where the righteous will live eternally. But angels were present when "God created the non-celestial heavens and the earth" as indicated by the question God asked Job. "Where were you when I made the earth's foundation? ... cornerstone in place while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted with joy?" (Job 38:4-7)

Comment: Therefore, the morning stars and angels were present at creation. It is uncertain when God created them.

Heaven as the abode of God should not be confused with the:

- a. Aerial heaven referring to the atmospheric heavens, as "birds of heaven" or "clouds of heaven." (Matthew 6:26; 8:20; Acts 10:12; 11:6; James 5:18)
- b. Sidereal heavens, the region of the "sun," "moon," and "stars." (Genesis 1:14-16; Psalm 8:3-4; Matthew 24:29,35; Mark 13:15,31; Hebrews 11:12; Revelation 6:14; 20:11)

What about Hell, has it always been in existence or was it created?

With the heavenly creation of righteous spirit beings, angels, there was no need for Hell until Satan, and his angels rebelled. "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment." (2 Peter 2:4-5)

Comment: The word "Hell" is translated from the Greek word *Tartaróōsas* and *tartaroo* which Strong's Concordance gives its meaning as "the deepest abyss of Hades; to incarcerate in eternal torment." Therefore, it appears the rebellious angels are sent to the Tartarus side of Hades, a temporary abode until they are sent to everlasting torment, Hell.

"The angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6)

Comment: Whenever Hell was created, it was established and reserved for the rebellious and wicked at their second death. Some other descriptions are:

1. "furnace of fire; [where] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:42)

2. "the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)
3. "perdition," (destruction) not of the unrighteous. (Philippians 3:19)
4. "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
5. "the second death." (Revelation 2:11)
6. "cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone, ... tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:10)
7. "lake that burns with fire and brimstone, sulfur." (Revelation 21:8)

Chapter 2

The Angel Of Jehovah

When Moses wanted to know God's name so that he could tell his Hebrew brethren in Egypt, God said he was "I AM THAT I AM", and in shortened form when He spoke of himself as I AM. (Exodus 3:14) Then he said to tell the elders of Israel that Jehovah, the God of their fathers had appeared unto him. The difference is that God spoke of himself subjectively, in the first person (I AM), whereas Moses would speak of him objectively, in the third person (HE [WHO] IS = Jehovah).

While there are multitudes of angels of God, "the angel of Jehovah" or "of God" seems to be (a) distinct from the other angels, and (b) much of the time is equated with God himself, as if one of the members of the Godhead and likely is the one called "the angel of his presence" (literally, "of his face") in Isaiah 63:9.

"The angel of Jehovah" or "of God" in the Old Testament could well have been the member of the Godhead that later became incarnate as Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3,14)

Old Testament references

(a) Genesis 16:7-14: "The angel of Jehovah" appeared to Hagar, the handmaid of Sarai, when she was fleeing from her mistress, and instructed her to return. "and she called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth."

(b) Genesis 18:1 - 19:28: Three "men" appeared to Abraham, one of whom is identified as "Jehovah" (18:13-33; 19:27) – a member of the Godhead; and the other two, called "angels" (19:1,15), went into Sodom and visited Abraham's nephew, Lot, delivering him and his family from the destruction of that city.

(c) Genesis 21:8-20: "and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven [on a later occasion], and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? For God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation." (vs. 17-18)

(d) Genesis 22:1-19: "And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Lay not thy hand on the lad, ... for now I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. ... and the angel of Jehovah called Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee," etc. (vs.11-17)

(e) Genesis 24: 1-67: Abraham's language to his servant whom he was sending to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia to obtain a wife for his son Isaac: "Jehovah, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my nativity, and who spake unto me, and who swore unto me, saying, unto thy seed will I give this land; he will send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence." (v.7; cf. v.40)

Comment: The writer (Moses) is using a figure of speech called prolepsis, in which a thing is spoken of before its time, as in speaking of Nero when he was a boy, though he was not emperor when a boy. In like manner, Abraham at the time referred to in the narrative under consideration did not know God by the name Jehovah, but as God almighty (Heb. *El Shaddai*) (Exodus 6:2-3) – though the writer did know it.

(f) Genesis 31: 3-16: "*and Jehovah spake unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee ... And the angel of God said unto me in a dream Jacob: ... and he said [according to Jacob's report to his wives], ... I am the God of Bethel [28:10-22], where thou anointedst a pillar, where thou vow a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy nativity.*" (vs.3-13)

(g) Genesis 48:15-16: "*And he blessed Joseph, and said, the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*" (vs.15-16)

Comment: Jacob (Israel) blessed his son Joseph and his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh. The "angel" here is the "angel of God" in (f) above, and is equated with God himself, hence as being a member of the Godhead.

(h) Exodus 3:1-22: "*And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I ... Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his*

face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt," etc. (vs.2-7a)

Comment: The "angel of Jehovah," "Jehovah," and "God," are equated in this passage.

(i) Exodus 13: 21-22: "*And Jehovah went before them [the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan] by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them by the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; that they might go by day and by night: the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.*"

(j) Exodus 23:20-23: "*Behold, I [Jehovah] send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed before him, and harken unto his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon you transgression: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed hearken unto his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine angel shall go before thee.*"

Comment on Exodus 32 -33:

After a sinful episode at Mount Sinai on the way to Canaan (Exodus 32-33), God severely punishes Israel and threatened to consume them and make a great nation of Moses in their stead. Moses interceded and God agreed to let them live and go on to Canaan, promising to send "mine angel" before them and drive out the inhabitants of the land (Exodus 32:34) but not without first saying, "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." (Exodus 33:3b)

"When the people heard these evil tidings [of 33:1-3], they mourned: and no man did put on him ornaments. And Jehovah said unto Moses, say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people; if I go up in the midst of thee for one moment, I shall consume thee; therefore. now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee." They mourned, and stripped themselves of their ornaments, never wearing them again, and God did not "consume" them. He also further reversed himself, promising Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses replied, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And he asked that God show him His glory as assurance that he and the people had found favor in His sight and would have his presence on their journey. In response, God had Moses to go into the cleft of a rock while his glory passed by, and then to see his back but not his face. (33:4-23)

As a sequel, we note in the book of Deuteronomy that after Israel had arrived nearly 40 years later east of the Jordan River, Moses in his farewell address shortly before his death and Joshua's leading them westward across Jordan into Canaan, recounted various outstanding incidents that occurred along the way, showing how Jehovah had indeed been with them all the while notwithstanding their intransigence time after time after time and his punishing

them in various ways. And in 1:32-33, Moses was recounting how he had said to them at Kadesh-Barnea, "Jehovah your God ... went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in the cloud by day" – which was the very thing God had promised before the above-mentioned sinful episode at Sinai (and verifies our analysis above of Exodus 32-33). But the adult generation had so rebelled at Kadesh, near the border of Canaan, that God punished them by postponing entrance into Canaan until 40 years after their leaving Egypt, when all the rebels would have died in the wilderness.

End Comment on Exodus 32-33

(k) While Israel was encamped in the plains of Moab east of the Jordan opposite Jericho, "the angel of Jehovah" was involved in preventing the greedy prophet Balaam from cursing the Israelites for the Moabite king Balak. (Numbers 22:22-38) And in vs.35-38 "the angel of Jehovah" and "God" seem to be equated.

(l) After Israel was settled in Canaan, "the angel of Jehovah" appeared from time to time to different persons for special purposes:

a) To Israel at Bochim, to rebuke them for not having driven out the inhabitants of Canaan to the extent commanded them – and identified himself as the one who had brought them out of Egypt. (Judges 2:1-5)

b) to Gideon in Ophrah, to appoint him to deliver Israel from the Midianite oppression – and is identified as Jehovah. (Judges 6"11-14)

c) to the wife of Manoah, and later to Manoah, to foretell their becoming the parents of Samson – and they came to realize that they had seen God. (Judges 13:2-25)

d) to David by the threshing floor of Araunah, after staying a pestilence brought on by David's numbering the people as for war without divine authorization, and where David confessed to him his sin. (2 Samuel 24:15-17; cf. 1 Chronicles 21:18-27)

e) to Elijah, in wilderness south of Beer-sheba while fleeing to Horeb from wicked Jezebel in Jezreel after slaying the false prophets she had been supporting. (1 Kings 19:1-8)

f) to Elijah again later, regarding a mission to king Ahaziah in Samaria, who was seeking information of Baal-zebul, the god of Ekron. (2 Kings 1:1-16)

g) to the camp of the Assyrians just outside Jerusalem, to smite it and save the city from attack and destruction. (2 Kings 19:35-36)

h) it the prophet Zachariah, near the end of Judah's exile in Babylonia, to apprise him of it and make known pertinent information, as related in the first six chapters of the Book of Zachariah. He is called "the angel that talked with me" and "the angel of Jehovah." (the latter in 1:11, 12: 3:1, 5, 6)

Comment: While (4) through (8) do not identify "the angel of Jehovah" any further as in prior references, there is nothing in their contexts to prohibit them from likewise referring to a member of the Godhead rather than a created angel sent by Jehovah. And the same is true in regard to the remaining three scriptures that mention "the angel of Jehovah" without reference to any specific occasion of service – namely, Psalm 34:7; 35:5,6 – but do have reference to their ministry in behalf of God's saints, as do the others.

New Testament references

Speaking of Moses, Acts 7:30-32 states: "And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame in the bush. ...: and as he drew near to behold, there came a voice of the Lord, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." And 7:38 says, "This is he that was in the church (assembly) in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers" – described in the Pentateuch as "the angel of Jehovah" and identified as Jehovah, that is, as a member of the Godhead. But these verses in Acts identify said angel as the same one in all these instances.

Next we have 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, as follows: "For I would not, brethren have you to be ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto [Gr. into] Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat of the same spiritual food [manna]; and did all drink the same spiritual drink [water supplied from a rock at Horeb and at Kadesh-barnea]: for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ."

The actual source of that drink was a Spirit Being, not the inanimate physical rock from which it flowed. That Being was "Christ," a "spiritual rock." AND "HE FOLLOWED THEM." That must mean he was the member of the Godhead who accompanied Israel from Egypt to Canaan, and still rendered miraculous service on various occasions in the land of Canaan also, as well as being the one who had appeared unto their earlier fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as narrated above from the outset. But when he "became flesh, and dwelt among us ... as ... the only begotten from the Father" (John 1:14), there were still angels of God that ministered on various occasions, but none called "the angel of the Lord" or "of God," which he, and seemingly he alone, had been called.

Comment: The Israelites were immersed in Moses, a physical redemption from Egyptian bondage. Christians are immersed in Christ's blood, their spiritual redemption from the bondage of sin.

Chapter 3

Angels

Angels in General

The word "angel" is usually translated of the Hebrew word malak and the Greek word aggelos – both meaning messenger or agent.

Angels (in the most common usage of that term) and demons are spirit beings. They do not have bodies of flesh as humans do, though angels on occasions have appeared in human likeness and some demons have seemed to have a predisposition in favor of or a strong liking for human bodies.

There are both good angels and fallen angels – angels of God and of Satan. There are also spirit entities known as demons who are under the control of Satan. Angels are mentioned many times in the Bible. Demons are also mentioned as “devils,” “unclean spirits” and “evil spirit.”

Angelic Hierarchy

In his vision while on the Isle of Patmos, John wrote: "And I saw the seven angels that stand before God" (Revelation 8:2) – commonly regarded as "archangels," though that is not made explicit by the Holy Writ. But the Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (1965) States "The definite article suggests that we should regard these as the seven archangels; they were Gabriel (who says in Luke 1:19, 'I stand in attendance upon God'), Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Saraqael, and Remiel (=Jeremiel mentioned in the note on 6:11). These are the names given in Enoch 20 [in the pseudepigrapha]. Only Michael and Gabriel are named in the Bible. Raphael is one of the principal characters in the book of Tobit (in the Apocrypha) and he says, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, whom ... go in before the glory of the Holy One." (12:15)

Comment: “Pseudepigraphal” is a work or text whose claimed author is not the true author. The book of Enoch was compiled from Jewish writings believed to range in dates from 150 BC.

Comment: But standing before God may not be all it takes to make an angel an archangel or to identify him as such. For Jesus said: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones [these humble believers in himself, vs.3-6]; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). And Gabriel said, "I ... stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19); yet the scriptures do not call him an "archangel" notwithstanding the pseudepigraphal book of Enoch does.

There appears to be rank among angels by the explicit use of word "archangel," meaning the highest angel, which occurs twice in the New Testament. One place is 1 Thessalonians 4:16,

where the definite article, while employed in translation, is omitted from the Greek text, and thus could be understood as "an archangel," and therefore allowing for more and thus a category of archangels. But it also occurs in Jude 9, where Michael is named and called "the archangel," as if indicating him to be the only one, notwithstanding Jude was familiar with the pseudepigraphical book of Enoch.

We are not limited in scripture, however, to the term "archangel," for indications of rank among the angels. But we shall make mention at this point of only two more.

- (a) In 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, reference is made to angels that had sinned, and Jude further states that they "kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation." This implies both rank and assignment to particular places and responsibilities.

Comment: Something "implied" is a personal interpretation.

- (b) Also, 1 Peter 3:22 speaks of Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him." It is likely that "authorities" and "powers" have reference to categories of angels with special assignments and responsibilities rather than to created beings that are not angels – just as in Philippians 1:1 we find that epistle to be addressed to "all the Saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" – which does not mean that the "bishops" and "deacons" were not "saints," but rather that they were saints with special responsibilities and functions assigned.

Comment: Bible translations after the King James Bible generally have overseer rather than "bishop." When the King James Bible was translated the Church of England had a position or office of Bishop. Since King James was head of the Church of England, he commanded that the King James Bible be made consistent with the church of England's teachings and practices. The word bishop is discussed in A Kingdom Not Made With Hands, BbleWay Publishing.

- (1) CHERUBIM (plural of cherub). These are the first to be mentioned and seemingly are among the highest in rank.

- (a) After Adam and Eve had sinned and been driven out of Eden. God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). But here there is no description of the cherubim.

- (b) Two figures of "cherubim" made of gold and standing at the two ends of the mercy-seat above the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle that God had Moses to build at Mount Sinai after Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. There God promised to meet with Moses and "commune' with him "from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony." – the implication

being that the "cherubim" were one of the highest orders of created beings. (Exodus 25:18-22; 37:7-9; Numbers 7:89)

- (c) Later, when Solomon's Temple was rebuilt to replace the Tabernacle, there were two figures of "cherubim" placed in the "oracle" (equivalent to the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle) to correspond to those in the Tabernacle, except larger and located differently. And all the walls of the "house" (Temple) had figures of "cherubim" carved on them, alternation with palm-trees, within and without, as did the entrance and its door also.
- (d) During the Babylonian captivity of Judah, and by the river Chebar, "the heavens were opened" to the prophet Ezekiel, and he "saw visions of God," the first of which featured "the likeness of four living creatures" beside the river (Ezekiel 1:1-28), later identified as "cherubim" (10:1-22); and in a subsequent vision of a restored temple (40:1-47:5), its walls and doors were covered with "cherubim" and palm-trees alternation (41:18-25). And their descriptions are more detailed than preceding ones – also somewhat different.
- (e) The only mention of "cherubim" in the New Testament is in Hebrews 9:5 where the mention is made of "the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat" of the earthly temple.

Comment on four living creatures:

Each of the four living creatures of Ezekiel "had the likeness of a man," except that each had four faces and four wings, and the sole of their feet was "like the sole of a calf's foot" and "sparkled like burnished brass." They also had "the hands of a man under their wings of the four sides." "As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; ... the face of an ox on the left side; ... also the face of an eagle (opposite the face of a man)." (1:4-9)

"As for the likeness of the living creatures [otherwise]. Their appearance was like the burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches: the fire went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." (1:10-14)

Beside each of these "living creatures" of Ezekiel's first vision, he saw a curious wheel ("like unto a beryl [hence, blueish green-blue in hue]" and "as it were a wheel within a wheel") on the earth for each of their four faces. And the "rims of the wheels were "high and dreadful; and ... full of eyes round about." When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved with them; and when they were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted – for "the spirit [or, life] of the living creature was in the "wheels." (1:15-21)

End comment on four living creatures

(2) SERAPHIM (plural of "seraph") - literally means fiery ones, so that in appearance they may have been somewhat as the "cherubim" that Ezekiel saw – that is, "like the burning coals of fire," or possibly like lightning.

Comment: Seraphim is mentioned only in one text– which describes an awe-inspiring vision Isaiah had of the glory of Jehovah when being called to the office of prophet, with "the seraphim" as a part of Jehovah's court.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another [literally, this to this], and said "Holy, Holy Holy is Jehovah of hosts; the earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of host.

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." (Isaiah 6:1-7)

But here we have no description except for the fact that each had wings (six in number, two of them for flying), feet, face, hand (presumably two), and could speak.

(3) LIVING CREATURES. These we have in the New Testament, in the Book of Revelation, in the vision John saw of the throne room of the universe in heaven. There were four of them, similar in some respects to the cherubim and the seraphim of the Old Testament. They were "full of eyes before and behind," situated "in the midst of the throne, and around about the throne" – maybe one of either side of the throne itself, and on either side of the elevated throne area. "And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each of them six wings, all full of eyes round about and within; and they had no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was, and who is and who is to come." (Revelation 4:6a-8)

(4) ELDERS. "Round about the throne were four and twenty [subordinate] thrones [seemingly encircling the four 'living creatures' as well as the principal 'thrones' and its occupant]: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments: and on their heads crowns of gold." (Revelation 4:4) Presumably these were human in appearance.

More often than not, the "living creatures" and "elders: acted in concert. For example,

- (a) When the living creatures worshipped God, the elders joined them. (Revelation 4:9-11)
- (b) When the Lamb had overcome to open the book of the seven seals, "the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb ... And they sang a new song, Saying, Worthy art thou" etc. (Revelation 5:8-10)
- (c) When myriads of angels and every created thing were joining in worship, "the four living creatures said Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped." (Revelation 5:11-14)
- (d) On another occasion, it is said that "the elders and the four living creatures ... fell before the throne and on their faces and Worshipped God." (Revelation 7:11-12)
- (e) And when the fall of Babylon was being celebrated by a great multitude in heaven "the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah." (Revelation 19:1-4)

Occasionally they acted independently.

- (a) When John was weeping because no one in the universe had been found to open the book with seven seals, "one of the elders saith unto [him], Weep not," for the Lion of the tribe of Judah had overcome, to open the book. (Revelation 5:1-5)
- (b) Upon the opening of each of the first four seals of the book, each of the four living creatures took turn, in shouting, "Come," in response to which one of four horses and riders would come forth. (Revelation 6:1-8)
- (c) On another occasion "the four and twenty elders fell upon their faces and worshipped God," without any mention of the four living creatures. (Revelation 11:16-18)

(5) ANGELS. In addition to the foregoing specific categories of celestial creatures mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, there are multitudes of others simply called by the broader and more inclusive term "angels." There were "many angels ... ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" spoken of by him on one occasion as "round about the throne" (at least 101,000,000, but actually more, for that number represents only one thousand thousands in the second category whereas it is thousands [plural] of thousands – all told, an indefinite number of staggering proportions) celebrating the overcoming of the lamb to open the seals of the above mentioned book (Revelation 5:11-12). And in the Book of Revelation angels, singly or in groups, are mentioned throughout – as they also are elsewhere in both the Old and New Testaments. Hebrews 12:22 also speaks of "innumerable host of angels" in connection with "the "heavenly Jerusalem."

Mission of Angels

As angels of God and of Christ, they are "all ministering Spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14) – besides any other missions there may be for them in God's vast and seemingly limitless universe. For the most part, their appearance is not described. And sometimes they have been present or nearby without being seen. But mostly when being seen by humans they appear to be men, and have not always been recognized

as angels – at least, at first – so that "some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2) **And they may be present without being seen.** (see Genesis 22:21-35; cf. 2 Kings 6:14-17)

In what ways they may render service to us individually, we are not told. But we are given examples in both the Old and New Testaments of some instances of service already rendered, and some general missions are foretold.

Old Testament References to Angel's service

1. Genesis 19:1-22: Here we have an account of "two angels" (vs. 1, 15) who came to Sodom to destroy it and to rescue Lot and his family from destruction of the city. But they are also spoken of as "men" (v.10, 12, 16) and had likewise appeared as such to Abraham in company with another who came to be identified as Jehovah (see Genesis 18, and 16-22 in particular). These two occasions may be referred to in Hebrews 13:2, cited above.

2. Genesis 28:12; 31:11: Angels appeared to Jacob in dreams. In one, he saw them ascending and descending between heaven and earth on a ladder, symbolic of their presence and ministries in both realms and the close relation between the two (cf. John 1:51). In the other, the angel may have been "the angel of Jehovah." (see 31:13)

3. Psalms 34:7: "The angel of Jehovah encamped round about them that fear him, and delivered them." This may be the specific angel called "the angel of Jehovah." Or, it may here be a term for the angels (plural) of Jehovah as a class, as we speak of "the horse," meaning horse as a class. If the latter should be the meaning in the text, see 2 Kings 6:14-16 as a possible example.

4. Psalms 78:49: "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, a band of angels of evil." This curious passage is a partial poetic description of God's vengeance upon Egypt by means of terrible plagues before leading up to deliverance of Israel from bondage there. It does not mean the "angels" were evil, but that they were employed as agents of God in bringing evils of afflictions upon the inhabitants of the land – as on the case of "the angel of Jehovah" at times (see 2 Samuel 24:15-17; 2 Kings 19:32-36). Or, it may even be a figurative expression, calling the evils themselves his angels or agents.

5. Psalms 91:11-12: "For he will give his angels charge over thee, To keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, Least thou dash thy foot against a stone." This Psalm as a whole is poetically descriptive of the blessed state of the righteous – describing their spiritual security in terms of physical safety. Its preceding vs. 9-10 in the American Standard Version (using its marginal rendering of v. 9) reads as follows: "Because thou hast said, Jehovah is my refuge, Thou has made the Most High thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come near thy tent." Then following vs. 11-12. As quoted above, with angelic ministry involved. Satan quoted this to Jesus (with a significant omission) in one of his temptations, making it a physical promise to him – "If thou art the Son of God. (Matthew 4:5-6)

6. Ezekiel 9:1-11: This is part of a series of visions given to Ezekiel in regard to abominations in Jerusalem and God's punishment upon its guilty inhabitants (see 8:1-4). In chapter 9, he saw "six men" every one "with his destroying weapon in his hand" (vs.1-2), charged with executing God's wrath; but the description of what Ezekiel saw was more as if they were angels rather than actual men. "And one man in the midst of them clothed in linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side" (vs.2,3,11), was also a part of what Ezekiel saw in connection with the "cherubim" of the next chapter, and both of his hands were filled with coals of fire from between the cherubim to scatter over the city. (10:2,6-7)

7. Daniel 3:19-28: Nebuchadnezzar had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego cast into a fiery furnace, and then saw with them one whom he said was "like a son of the gods"; and when they were delivered unharmed, he said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him." etc.

8. Daniel 7:9-12: This was one of Daniel's night time visions. Said he: "I behold (watched) till thrones were placed, and one that was the ancient of days did sit ... thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." These, presumably, were angels at his beck and call. (Cf. Revelation 5:11)

9. Daniel 8:15-27: Gabriel (an angel of the Lord, Luke 1:11, 19, 26) was called upon to explain to Daniel a vision he had just seen but did not understand.

10. Daniel 9:20-27: "And while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking my prayer, the man Gabriel [evidently the angel Gabriel, as per the foregoing]. Whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me, about the time of the evening oblation. And he instructed me. And talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I came to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore, consider this matter, and understand the vision." (Then the information conveyed by Gabriel)

11. Daniel 10:10 - 11:1: "And behold a hand touched me [said Daniel after a vision that had left him without strength and he had fallen into a deep sleep], which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, thou man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent: and when he had spoken this word, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard; and I am come for thy words' sake. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia [would he be a fallen angelic prince?] withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes [in fact "the archangel" Jude 9], came to help me and I remained there with

the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days.... Then, said he, Knowest thou wherefore I am come unto thee? And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I go forth, lo, the prince of Greece shall come. But I will tell thee that which is inscribed in the writing of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me against these, but Michael your prince. And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him."

This unidentified personage speaks of himself in such a way as to make him rank close to Michael, the archangel. And this same personage gave Daniel the remainder of the information in Chapter 11 an on to 12:4. Also, in 12:1 he speaks of "Michael"...., the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people" – namely, the righteous of Israel – a patron angel of the people of God, it would seem – involved in behalf of God and the obedient subjects of God against Satan and his minions. (Cf. Revelation 12:7-8.)

New Testament References to Angel's Servives.

1. Luke 1:5-23: The angel Gabriel sent to a priest named Zacharias, to foretell the birth of John the Baptist.
2. Luke, 1:26-38: The angel Gabriel likewise sent to "a city of Galilee, named Nazareth," to a virgin named Mary, to foretell the birth of JESUS, "the son of the Most-High."
3. Matthew 1:18-25: An angel of the Lord appeared in the dream to Joseph, to whom Mary was betrothed, to assure him that it was by the Holy Spirit that she was with child, and that he should not fear to take her unto himself.
4. Luke- 2:8-20: An angel of the Lord, joined suddenly by "a multitude of the heavenly host," appeared to shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night near Bethlehem, to announce the birth of Jesus in that city and to instruct them as to how to find him.
5. Matthew 2:13-15: An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream to have him take the child and his mother to Egypt to foil the effort of Herod the king to destroy him.
6. Matthew 2:19-23: An angel of the Lord likewise appeared to Joseph in a dream when Herod was dead, to have him take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel.
7. Matthew 4:11: After the baptism of Jesus, 40 days of fasting, and successfully resisting temptation of the Devil, "behold, angels came and administered unto him. (See also Mark 1:13)
8. Matthew 13:36-43: In his explanation of the Parable of the Tares, Jesus said "the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.... The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of the kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire," etc..

9. Matthew 13:47-50: In the Parable of the Net, he said that "in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and then cast them into the furnace of fire," etc..

10. Mathew16:27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds." (Cf.25:31-46)

11. Matthew. 18:10: "... for I say unto you, that in the kingdom of heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father who is in heaven." (Cf. Acts 12:15)

12. Matthew 24:30-31: "... they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (See also Mark 13:26-27; also 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

13. Matthew 25:31-32: "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations" – to be judged. (vs.33-46). (Cf. Chapter, 16:27; also, Jude 14-15)

14. Matthew 28:1-10: On the morning of Christ's resurrection, "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it" etc. (See also Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-7,22-23; cf. John 20:11-13)

15. Mark 8:38: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels." (See Luke 9:26; 12:8-9; cf. Matthew 10:32-33)

16. Luke 15:10: "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

17. Luke 16:22: "And it came to pass that the beggar [Lazarus] died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

18. Luke- 22:43: "And there appeared unto him [Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane] an angel from heaven, strengthening him." (Cf. Matthew 4:11)

19. Acts 1:10-11: " While they [the apostles during the ascension of Christ] were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men [evidently angels] stood by them in white apparel," and assured them of his return in like manner.

20. Acts 5:19-20: "An angel of the Lord" opened the prison doors and released the apostles, who had been incarcerated for preaching the gospel of the resurrected Christ.

21. Act. 7:53: Stephen, in a speech before the Sanhedrin, said to the court, "Ye ... received the law [of Moses] as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not." (Cf. Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2)
22. Acts 8:26: "An angel of the Lord" instructed Philip, the evangelist, to leave Samaria and go south to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, where he contacted an Ethiopian eunuch and converted him to Christ. (vs. 27-39)
23. Acts 10:3-7,22,30-32: "An angel of God," "a holy angel," "a man ... in bright apparel," appeared to Cornelius and instructed him to contact the apostle Peter for words whereby he and his house might be saved.
24. Acts 12:5-11: "An angel of the Lord" delivered the apostle Peter from prison and averted his being put to death by Herod.
25. Acts 12:15: When Peter had been released from prison and appeared at the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, with a maid answering his knocking "at the door of the gate" and reporting that it was Peter, she was told, "It is his angel." (Cf. Matthew 18:10)
26. Acts 12:23: "An angel of the Lord" smote Herod so that he died, because he did not give God the glory when he accepted acclaim as a "god."
27. Acts 23:6-9: Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed as to whether there is such a thing as an angel – also as to whether there is a "resurrection" or "spirit" – with the apostle Paul believing with the Pharisees in all three.
28. Acts 27:23-24: "An angel of God" stood by Paul one night on board a storm-tossed ship on the Adria" (an arm of the Mediterranean) to guarantee the safety of himself and all on board.
29. 1 Corinthians 11:10: The apostle Paul wrote that the woman ought to have "a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels" – likely because of their concern that all be submissive to God. (See Luke 15:7,10)
30. 1 Thessalonians 4:16: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" – meaning the archangel will be included with the angels that accompany our Lord upon his return at the end of earthly history.
31. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: "The lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (King James Version), when he comes to take vengeance on the wicked and be glorified in his saints.

32. 1 Timothy 3:16: "He who was manifested in the flesh" (see John 1:1-1,14; 1 John 1:1-4; 3:5) was "seen of angels" – evidently while on earth. (see Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13; also, Luke 2:13; 24: 4-7; Act 1:10-11; cf. John 1:51)

Conclusion of Mission of Angels

The ministries of angels have been varied through human history, but used mostly in God's providential guidance and protection of his people – "sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." (Hebrews 1:14) And appearing as men; strangers and men have on occasion "entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2)

Comment: Angels perform God's service to Christians even when they are not aware of that service.

It is possible for us to be the recipients of their ministries and not know it. It is also probable that the spirits of all the righteous are at death conducted by angels to the Hadean paradise as in the case of Lazarus. (Luke 16:22)

Finally, it seems that we shall then join them in the heavenly world. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

GABRIEL

He is referred to twice in the Old Testament, and referred to as "the man Gabriel," because having the appearance of a man. In the first instance, he appeared to the prophet Daniel to explain a vision he had seen but did not understand (Daniel 8:1-19). In the second instance, he likewise appeared to Daniel, this time in response to prayer and to instruct him further in regard to the vision he had seen. (9:20-23)

Gabriel is likewise mentioned twice in the New Testament. In the first instance, he appeared to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, to announce to him the birth of the latter, stating "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings" (Luke 1:5-23). And six months later he was sent from God to "a city of Galilee, named Nazareth," to a virgin named Mary, to announce to her that she would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit and give birth to a son, whom she was to call Jesus, and who would be called the Son of the Most-High. (1:26-38)

MICHAEL

After a certain vision of Daniel, one was sent by God to explain to him the significance of it, yet that one had been delayed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia; but, said he to Daniel, "Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." And before departing, he told him, "there is none that holds with me against these [the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece], but Michael your prince." (see Daniel 10:1-21, with Michael's name mentioned in vs.13,21.) And in

12:1, he is mentioned again by name, and described as "the great prince who stands for the children of thy people" – Daniel's people, the holy ones of the Jews.

In the New Testament, in Jude 9, he is called "Michael the archangel" (the highest level of angel), and describes as having contended with the devil and "disputed about the body of Moses." And, finally, in Revelation 12:7-9, we read: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him." All this was seen by John in a vision, while on the Isle of Patmos.

SATAN

The English word is from the Hebrew term *Satan* in the Old Testament and the Greek term *Satanas* in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is "adversary." It is translated "Satan," meaning supreme adversary of God and man and tolerated by God within certain bounds for the duration of man's probationary period on earth but is doomed to "eternal fire" afterward along with his agents. (Matthew 25:41) The one exception is when Jesus called Peter "Satan" in the sense of a Satan-like man when he challenged our Lord's prediction of his approaching death in Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33).

Character and Identity

In Revelation 12:9, where he is symbolically represented as a "dragon." He is described as "the old serpent, he that is called the Devil; and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world." The word "Devil" means calumniator, one who makes maliciously false statements or a slanderer. And being called "the old serpent ... the deceiver" is evidently an allusion to the serpent who, as an agent of Satan, by falsehood and slander of God deceived Eve in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3), and led her and Adam into sin that eventuated in physical death for them and all posterity. Accordingly, Jesus said to Jews who were seeking to kill him: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth 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 thereof" (John 8:44). The apostle Paul speaks of "the serpent [who] beguiled Eve in his craftiness" (2 Corinthians 11:3), of "the wiles of the devil." (Ephesians 6:11) And of "his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). He may appear as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). Also, oppositely, "your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Origin and Destiny

1. It seems likely that Satan was created as an angel of God of high rank, but not quite the highest, and was leader of "the angels that sinned" and were "cast down," as referred to in 2 Peter 2:4

and Jude 6. In the latter passage, it is stated that "they kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation," implying that they were not pleased with their assigned rank and sphere.

2. In Revelation 12:7-9, we read: "And there was a war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him."

Comment: This was part of a vision John had on the Isle of Patmos, symbolic of what happened as a result of Satan's attempt to destroy Jesus after he had been born, and finally achieve his crucifixion – only for Him to be raised by God from the dead and "caught up unto God, and unto his throne." (12:4-5)

3. In Matthew 25:41, Jesus speaks of the "eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." So, Satan must have been a mighty angel with other angels aligned with him, just as Michael was a mighty angel ("the archangel, "Jude 9) and, according to the imagery of Revelation 12, had still other angels aligned with him. The fallen angels, including Satan, have not yet been cast into the "eternal fire," but are reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4) – Jude says "unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). This is no doubt the "day" God appointed for judging the world in righteousness by the "man" he raised from the dead. (Acts 17:31)

4. In Job (1:6,7,7,8,9,12,12; 2:1,2,2,3,4,6,7) we have our first mention of "Satan" by that name – designated in Hebrew as "the Satan," evidently by way of preeminence.

Ancient tradition identifies Job with Jobab, the second King of Edom (Genesis 36:33); and Uz is thought to have been along the border between Palestine and Arabia, extending from Edom northerly and easterly toward the Euphrates river. That part of the land of Uz which tradition has called home to Job was Hauran, east of the Sea of Galilee, a part of which was later called Bashan, also Golan (to this day).

The Devil

The term "devil" has already been described as a smearing calumniator - slanderer – a false accuser. Not all of Satan's accusations are necessarily false, but all are of evil intent, and most of them are false. Being an inveterate {firmly established or of long standing} enemy of God and man, he accuses man to God (Job 1:6-11; 2:1-5; Revelation 12:9-19), and God to man (Genesis 3:1-15). The Greek word more appropriately rendered "devil: is *diabolos*. It is translated "false accuser" in 1 Timothy 3:1 and 2 Timothy 3:3, and "slanderer" in Titus 2:33, "devil" one time (John 6:70), where Jesus said of Judas Iscariot that he was a "devil" – not "the devil."

Belial

This is a Greek form of the Hebrew word *beliyaal*, meaning worthlessness, wickedness, base fellow and ungodly.

Beelzebub

In the Latin Vulgate by Jerome (in the late 4th century A.D.) of the Greek New Testament work *Beelzeboul* in Matthew 10:25; 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15,18,19), and adopted in most if not all English translations. It was used by the Jewish enemies of Jesus and by Himself as well of "the prince of the demons" and applied to "Satan." (Matthew 12:24-27)

The Tempter

That description occurs in Matthew 4:3 and 1 Thessalonians 3:5 – literally, the tempting one, and the one tempting, respectively. Satan as a tempter solicits evil actions.

The Evil One

See Matthew 13:19, 38-39; 1 John 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18.

The Deceiver

See Revelation 12:9; cf. 20:3, 8.

The Accuser

See Revelation 12:10; cf. Job 1:11; 2:4-5.

The Enemy

See Matthew 13:39.

Adversary

See 1 Peter 5:8; the Greek word is *antidikos*, which originally meant an opponent in a lawsuit, but came to be used as a general word for an adversary whether in a court of law or not. In the latter passage, Satan is used as a verb, meaning to accuse of, be an adversary. (cf. Zechariah 3:1)

Lucifer??? We Think Not.

Early Bible translations of Isaiah have "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations." But in a note, it says. "Or, O day star." But the context of Isaiah 14:3-23 shows the term to be used in addressing the "king of Babylon" (v.4), the brightest star in the political heavens at that time, not Satan, notwithstanding any comparisons between the two and any hyperbolic descriptions used, most of which represent the king's own egotistical and arrogant pride and ambitious designs, soon to be thwarted by overthrow and downfall.

The context just mentioned represents the second part of a "burden" or oracle against the nation of Babylon itself, beginning with Isaiah 13:1. Another similar prophecy is found in Ezekiel 28: 1-19, against the "prince of Tyre," describing his overweening pride and warning him of approaching death (vs.1-10), followed by a satirical "lamentation over the king of Tyre" (vs.11-19), almost certain to have been the same as the "prince."

Chapter 4

Demons

This study on Demons will include their relation to and involvement in other subjects also such as pagan worship, beliefs and practices including astrology, and ancestor worship, spiritism and necromancy, fortune-telling, magic reincarnation, transmigration of souls, and all kinds of myths superstitions, etc. Some of these we may not mention again unless only incidentally and briefly.

Notwithstanding considerable material on the subject, the Bible does not supply conclusive or necessarily authentic answers to nearly all the questions that may or can be asked. But it will be our purpose to cover a wide range of materials as we reasonably can in the scriptures and that contribute to an understanding of them.

In the Bible the word "spirit," but not soul is used of non-human as well as human entities, both good and bad, as GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT and CHRIST, ANGELS and DEMONS. An interesting fact is that belief in the spirit world (both good and bad) has characterized every culture known in all the earth not just in the lands of the Bible, but also in the Semitic, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures predominant in those lands.

The English word "demon" is anglicized form of the Greek noun daimon and is found both in our New Testament and in the LXX (a Greek translation of the Old Testament of about 250 B.C.).

The Septuagint (LXX) speak of a rebellious people "burning incense upon altars of brick without spelling out to whom but forbidden objects of worship; e.g., Baal and other pagan gods.

A popular belief in the Hellenistic or Grecian world before New Testament times was "The spirits of mortals become demons when separated from earthly bodies." (A. Campbell, Popular Lectures and Addresses, pp.380, 381, 386.) It was a common notion in the Greek world (and pagan world in general) that demons often appear in all kinds of places, at all possible times, especially those of uncanny beast, and are manifested in the most diverse mischances. Happenings were often mysterious until recognized as the work of a demon. Some demons were believed to be benign, only wanting the sacrifices due them, others to be hostile and harmful – even violent, and had to be countered by the most drastic means. Demon possession, resulting in illnesses, had also

become a part of popular belief. And so had the practice of endeavoring to expel or exorcise them by magical.

Detestable Practices

The pagan world at large held views similar to popular Greek beliefs with reference to spirits. That concept embraced the forces which mediate between the higher gods and man, including the spirits of the dead, much as angels are represented in the Old Testament as doing between Jehovah and man. But the Old Testament writings forbade the people of God to adopt the beliefs and practices of the pagans, as later the New Testament did and does.

Both Old and New Testaments condemn as abominations various pagan practices and beliefs in relation to demons as follows:

- (1) the practice of passing their son or his daughter through the fire
- (2) one that uses divination,
- (3) one that practices augury (an omen),
- (4) an enchanter,
- (5) a sorcerer,
- (6) a charmer,
- (7) a consulter of a familiar spirit,
- (8) a wizard,
- (9) a necromancer.
- (10) soothsaying,
- (11) magic,
- (12) witchcraft (wizard, as well as witch)
- (13) astrology,
- (14) monthly prognosticators,
- (15) exorcism,
- (16) superstition,
- (17) idol (and kindred terms),
- (18) imposture (reason for which will be explained later).

Meaning of some of these practices

1. Pass Son or Daughter to Through the Fire as worship:

This was a form of child sacrifice, widely practiced in Canaan and its environs, and abominable practice.

Comment: Does today's practice of abortion equate to the practice of child sacrifice in idol worship?

2. Idolatry

Literally, idolatry is the worship of idols or images as deity; figuratively, excessive attachment to or veneration for anything, in which sense "covetousness" is said to be idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Our English word "idol" is from the Greek *eidolon*, something seen, an image or likeness – representing the form of an object, either real or imaginary. In other words, it represents a non-entity so far as reality is concerned. But, in the minds of pagans, in offering sacrifices to idols they "sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye [Christians] should have communion with demons." (1 Corinthians 10:20)

In giving the Decalogue to Israel at Sinai, Jehovah said; "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God." (Exodus 20:4-5)

According to Romans 1:18-32, religion originally was monotheistic (worship of one true God), not polytheistic (belief in many gods) and not idolatry (worship of images). There is no record of polytheism or idolatry before the flood. But it would seem that not many generations latter, these had come into being "Your fathers dwelt of old times beyond the River [the Euphrates], even Terah, father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods." (Joshua 24:2)

3. Superstition

Superstition is founded on irrational feelings of fear, a belief in a religious system regarded (by others than the believer) as without reasonable support, the occult or belief in omens, charms, and signs. (from Funk & Wagnalls New Practical dictionary of the English Language)

Our culture, even among Christians, is not entirely free of vestiges of ancient superstitions. A common superstition of the Middle Ages was that the devil could enter a person during an unguarded moment when he is sneezing, but that this could be prevented if anyone present immediately appealed to God; e.g., "God bless you" when someone sneezes which involved their belief in the power of magic and witchcraft. Among other similar holdovers are the belief that 13 is an unlucky number, the belief in an evil eye, that breaking a mirror causes bad luck, and, conversely, that a horseshoe, a rabbit's foot, or a four-leaf clover brings good luck. The one most prevalent and taken most seriously in our day is dependence upon published horoscope for direction of one's daily activities, based on belief that the stars (widely believed anciently to be demons, gods and goddesses) influence nations and individuals and that astrologers can by them predict the events of a person's life. (See below under the term "Astrology")

4. Divination

This is the process by which humans attempt, or profess, to acquire information from superhuman powers of divinities, by the use of various physical means. (See Ezekiel 21:21). It contrasts with genuinely inspired prophecy. In the New Testament (Acts 16:16), a maid is represented as "having a spirit of divination" – literally, "a spirit of a python, the name of the mythological serpent slain by Apollo. (Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon)

5. Soothing

One who claims to have supernatural insight and is able to reveal secrets and foretell events, a seer, diviner, those who were possessed by the evil spirit (represented by a pagan god or goddess) while delivering their oracular message. (Vine, Expository Dictionary). It is never used in either Old or New Testament of the prophets of God.

6. Augury

The foretelling of events by auspices or omens, hence, predictions based upon the flight of birds, the feeding of fowl, phenomena in the sky, as a meteor or eclipse; and predictions based upon anything – as black cats, nightmares, unlucky days or numbers and the breaking of mirrors.

7. Consulting a Familiar Spirit

This is commonly thought of as consulting, or purporting to consult, with a spirit with which one has rapport and can call upon for information, advice, or assistance, as in the case of the soothsaying maid of Acts 16:16-18.

8. Wizard

Wizard is a translation of the Hebrew word *yiddeoni*, a knowing one, or psychic. It is interesting to note that Isaiah in chapter 8:19 speaks of them "that chirp and mutter" – possibly referring to disguising their voices so as to appear to be voices of the dead (cf. 29:4). A wizard is considered to be a male while having a familiar spirit is more often spoken of as a woman.

Comment: Wizard and witch are not of the same root word. The expression "witch of Endor" has references to a woman with a "familiar spirit." (1 Samuel 28:7-9)

9. Necromancy

The practice or pretense of calling up the spirits of the dead and inquiring of them. The Hebrew word *darash*, means to inquire of the dead. That is what Saul did through the woman of Endor as a medium (1 Samuel 28:8-19) – she having a "familiar spirit" – at least pretending to have, and God certainly granting success this one time, whether or not her usual practice was pretense. And, from Deuteronomy 18:11, it seems a reasonable inference that "consulters of familiar spirits" and "wizards" denote alike such seek, or pretend to seek, oracles from the spirits of the dead. The New International Version consistently renders "mediums" and "spiritists."

10. Monthly Prognostication

Purported divining by omens of the new moon. (Isaiah 47:13)

11. Astrology

Purported form of divination by means of determining and properly interpreting the locations of the celestial bodies of the zodiac – stars, planets, sun, and moon, worshipped by pagans as deities – based upon the belief that they influence human affairs and determine the course of events by their movements and respective and relative locations at particular times.

12. Magic

This is the attempt by human beings to compel or at least induce a divinity, by use of physical means, to do what they wish it to do –whether good (White Magic) or ill (Black Magic) – the terms in parentheses not occurring in the Bible. The purpose of "White Magic" is often to counter or protect from "Black Magic."

13. Enchantment

This form of magus (sorcerer) seems for the most part to be a magical charm or spell-binding attempted by incantation or formula of words chanted or recited, but does exclude action.

14. Charming

Charming has much the same meaning as enchantment and may also include snake charmers.

15. Witchcraft

One would think this has to do with the practice or supposed powers of witches (females) or wizards (males), mainly for evil purposes, rendered the use of black magic, sorcery, enchantment, Satanism, and other occult (mysterious and supposedly supernatural) arts. But this is not altogether accurate. Witchcraft and sorcery are practically synonymous.

16. Sorcery

An umbrella term, embracing both divination and magic, but usually for selfish and deceptive purposes, if not intended to injure others; the professed use of powers gained from the assistance or control of spirits, especially for divining; but also, for black magic, witchcraft.

17. Imposture

Imposter or charlatans is from the Greek word *goetes* denoting a wailer or howler, and was used of an enchanter or magician who uttered incantations in a kind of howl or wail. It may have reference to false teachers who practiced magical arts (see Acts 19:19) for many who practiced "magical arts" bringing their books together and burning them, in Ephesus, where Timothy was. It well could be that most of the practice of so-called occult arts were imposters.

18. Exorcism

This is the practice (pretended if not real) of expelling evil spirits from persons or places or things in which they are thought to be, by means of incantations and the performance of certain occult or magical arts – the opposite of those rites that aim at propitiating or evoking the assistance of the spirit world. It was not used by Jesus and his disciples in casting out demons – Jesus casting them out "with a word" (Matthew 8:16). The word "exorcist" (Gr. *Exorkistes*) occurs in the Bible only in Acts 19:13, where it is used of those who attempted to cast out evil spirits by using the name of Jesus whom the apostle Paul preached, and seemingly used by Paul in a way to discredit professional exorcists.

Existence of Demons: Real or Mythological?

Widespread Belief in Reality

Belief in demons and the possibility of demon possession is dependent first of all on belief in a spirit world – which likely goes back to the beginning of man, and was universal down to the time of Christ, except among the Sadducees. They were a sect of the Jews that denied the reality of angels, spirits, or resurrection (Acts 23:8), whose disbelief was refuted by Jesus.

Belief in demons and demon possession continued to hold an important place in the life of Christian people until the end of the 18th century. Since then belief in spirits has somewhat diminished in civilized countries because of an increasing tendency toward extreme materialism, with a belief demons (ghost) becoming more generally regarded as superstitious. Even some who claim to believe the Bible, as well as skeptics, have considered that demons never really existed and that belief in them as well as in demoniacal possession was indeed superstitious. On the other hand, in recent times (beginning not later than the 1970s) there has been a resurgence of interest and claims with reference to various aspects of occultism, even in sophisticated circles. And in a sort of sub-culture "Satanism" has reared its ugly head.

One theory among professed believers is that the whole scripture account of demons is mythological, and symbolic of the prevalence of evil in the world; also, that the accounts of casting out demons by our Lord and his apostles are symbolic of their conquest over evil by their doctrine and life. But the plain, simple, prosaic narration of events as if fact, makes their assertions not symbolic or figurative, but false, if not literally true. Christ did once speak what is confessedly a parable involving unclean spirits (Matthew 12:43-45; Luke 11:20-26). Yet it symbolized neither the prevalence of evil in the world nor his power over it, but expressly illustrated the worsening state of that evil generation.

Another theory is that Christ and his evangelist spoke of demons and demoniacal possession only in accommodation to the general belief of the Jews, without any assertion as to its truth or falsity, with a view that "demoniacs" were merely suffering under unusual diseases of body or mind (Smith's Bible Dictionary, Vol.1, p.585). But accommodative language is properly used only of things indifferent and when not conveying a false impression. And the scripture narratives do

convey a false impression if demons are not reality – which can hardly be a matter of indifference, in belief in demons being the underlying source of much superstition and abhorrent conduct.

Furthermore, though bodily or mental disease is represented as often accompanying demon possession or resulting from it, Jesus nevertheless distinguished between them: "In my name they shall cast out demons; ... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17-18) "And he ordained twelve, that they should ... have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14-15). This is not in harmony with accommodative language. The following is evidence that it is more than a disease.

1. James 2:14:

Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder." It could hardly be said that "diseases" believe and shudder. But demons can do so, and in some instances have communicated their dread through those they possessed. Note the following.

2. Matthew 8:28-32:

"And when he [Jesus] was come into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two possessed with demons, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' Now there was afar off from them a herd of swine feeding. And the demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And they came out, and went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters." (Cf. Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:26-33)

Diseases do not talk, do not have intelligence, are not endowed with desire and volition, and cannot be tormented.

3. Acts 16:16-21

"And it came to pass as we were going to a place of prayer [in or near Philippi], that a certain maid having a spirit of divination [Gr. a spirit, a Python] met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, 'These men are servants of the Most-High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation.' And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers," etc. This is a narrative of something other than a disease.

4. Acts 19:11-20

Luke records the following later incident in Ephesus: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. But certain also of the

strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches. And the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. And the evil spirit answered, and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them [who were attempting such in this particular instance], and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was glorified. Many also of them that had believed came and confessing and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed."

Comment: Not only are "evil spirits" distinguished from "diseases," but what the evil spirits said and did to seven of the sons of Sceva through the demoniac can hardly be attributed to a disease.

Therefore, Demons had some knowledge of God (James 2:14), of Jesus (Mark 1:21-28; 3:11-12; Matthew 8:28-32; Acts 19:11-20), and of his apostles (Acts 16:16-21; 19:11-10) – and in reference to Jesus and his apostles they expressed it through those they possessed – which means there was such a thing as demonic inspiration (but not always communicating truth, as other passages indicate):

(a) "seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

(b) spirits not of God versus "the Spirit of God" – "spirits of error" versus "Spirits of truth" – "false prophets" versus implied true prophets. (1 John 3:24 - 5:6)

(c) spiritual gift of "discerning of spirits" necessitated in assemblies of the saints evidently to guard against impostors (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:29); and, today any pretended inspiration of God is false. (see 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; cf. Ephesians 4:7-16)

Sorcerers and soothsayers were often able to deceive by means of some sort – whether by Satanic powers or by sleight of hand – but came short of what was done by divine power (see Simon, Acts 8:9-13; Elymas, Acts 13:4-12; sons of Sceva (Acts 19:11-20); Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8-9; Exodus 7:8-13, 20-25; 8:1, 16-19); and those of the court of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2, and 4) and Belshazzar (Daniel 5).

Origin and Temporal Abode of Demons

The origin of demons is unknown from the scriptures except they were created beings. Their abode seems to be referred to as the "abyss" (or "deep"). In Luke 8:31, by the demons who requested of Jesus that he would not command them to "depart into the abyss". And, in Romans 10:6-7, we are told not to say in our hearts "Who shall ascend into the abyss? (that is to bring Christ up from the dead)". Here the word is used as a synonym of Hades, the place of departed

spirits of both the righteous and the wicked between death and the resurrection. From Acts 2:27-31, we learn that in death Christ's soul was in "Hades" (some Bibles have mistranslated it as "Hell"), – but was not left there, because he was raised from the dead (vs.22-33). That was also where the unrighteous "rich man" was after death, as told by Jesus in the account of The Rich Man and Lazarus; but there was "a great gulf fixed" between him and the righteous (Luke 16:19-31). His place in Hades is likely the same as that into which the angels that sinned had been cast down and "reserved unto judgment" – namely, *Tartarus* – in English usually rendered "hell" (2 Peter 2:4; cf. Jude 6) –but distinguished from *gehenna*, the lake of fire and place of the eternal punishment.

The Greek work for "abyss" or "bottomless pit" is *abussos*, an immeasurable depth. It is further employed in Revelation:

- 1) Revelation 9:1-11, in which the abyss is opened to release smoke darkening the air and a five-month plague of diabolical locusts tormenting those not having the seal of God on their foreheads;
- 2) Revelation 11:1-3, in which a beast is represented as coming up out of the abyss to make war against God's two witnesses and kill them;
- 3) Revelation 20:1-10, in which Satan is represented as being imprisoned for a thousand years in the abyss, so as not able to marshal all the nations for world-wide onslaught to destroy the saints of God until the thousand years are finished. And in the last account the distinction between the "abyss" and the "lake of fire and brimstone" is clearly drawn – the latter place of final and unending torment of the wicked. This contrast with Hades, which will be done away at the time of the final and general judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15)

Comment: The "locusts" of the "abyss" were let loose for a season for a divine purpose. It might likewise be true of "demons" to allow a demonstration of the superiority of divine power over diabolic forces, such as by our Lord and his apostles and certain others.

But we have other considerations to take into account, in scriptures addressed to Christians with pagan background and a merging of religious environment, involving the "air" as a region of activity.

In Ephesians 2:2, Satan is referred to in the statement that "ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience."

In Ephesians 6:10-12: "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood [not against man, primarily or only], but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness [spiritual and moral darkness],

against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places" (the atmospheric heavens), or to powerful corporate entities of exalted status on earth under the control of Satan and his imps.

In Colossians we have the following: "God has delivered us [who are Christians] out of the power of darkness [the domain or kingdom of Satan], and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love [Jesus Christ, whose kingdom by implication is one of light (see John 1:1-14; 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:7-11, where "darkness" and light" are not physical, but spiritual, ethical, moral)]" (1:13)—without any reference to or change in spacial location.

Therefore: "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments [or elements] of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him are ye made full, who is the head of all principality and power: ... having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (that is, in his death on the cross)." (2:8-10,15)

Comment: The word translated here as elemental spirits, rudiments, could mean the fundamental principles of knowledge; it was also applied to the basic elements that made up the natural world (earth, air, fire, and water) which were sometimes thought of as spirit powers. But the term was also used of the 'heavenly bodies and the powers that were thought to dwell in them. These were considered to have an influence on human affairs, just as people today believe in fate and read their horoscopes in the daily papers, and sometimes take them seriously."

Comments: The following comment in The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible has much to commend it: "Once more it is stressed that Jesus is the only centre of the Christian life. Speculations about planetary powers and their effect on human destiny are not to be heeded.... In the first century A.D. there were a lot of speculations about divine powers that controlled the universe and about the correct way of coming to terms with them. This discussion was often based on the old myths or legends about pagan gods and goddesses. Its basis was therefore man-made as opposed to Christianity which is solidly based on a historical character, Jesus Christ, and on convincing evidence of his importance as the one in whom God speaks to man. In these speculations the elemental spirits or powers that were thought to inhabit the planets loomed large. (see above 1:16)

So, the scriptures themselves are not definitive in either the Old or New Testament in regard to the spatial locations of the places under consideration and for us to attempt to would be highly presumptuous.

C. Demon Possession Now

The Roman Catholic Church which gives traditional equal place with scripture in its faith and practice, believes there is demon possession now. Its Catechism of Christian Doctrine, 1949, a 2nd Revised Edition of the Baltimore Catechism," expresses the view that "the devils [that is, demons], or the evil spirits" of scripture are "bad angels," and

- (a) Devils are sometimes permitted to enter into the body of a man to exercise power over his faculties – a state known as diabolical possession; or they are permitted to torment a person from without – a state known as diabolical obsession.
- (b) Diabolical possession and obsession are permitted by God to show forth his Glory, to punish sin, to bring sinners to repentance, or give occasion for the exercise of virtue.
- (c) When the devil uses the body of a possessed person to say or do evil things, the person is not guilty of sin, provided he does not freely consent.
- (d) Exorcism is the act of driving out or warding off evil spirits from persons, places or things possessed or infested by them. The church received from Christ the power of exorcism.
- (e) An exorcist is one who has power, conferred by a bishop, to exercise demons. The order of exorcist is the third of four minor orders of the Western Church. Only with permission of his bishop is a priest allowed to use his power of exorcising evil spirits."

"Scripture cited and quoted: Matthew 10:1; Ephesians 6"11. 1 Peter 5:8-9. (Topics 44, 45; pages 34-36)

Some Protestant sources express belief in demoniacal possession as a reality still. "Haynes, in *Spiritualism Vs Christianity*, says: 'Satan possesses the souls and bodies of men and women now just as much as he ever.

Scriptures

The scriptures are not definitive on the matter now being considered, but we can examine whatever we are aware of that might provide a clue.

- (a) The Old Testament does not deal with demon possession as such, and neither does the Gospel of John, which may not have been written until the last decade of the first Christian century – which is thought by some to indicate that demon possession began to be allowed after the close of the Old Testament canon and reached its peak in the time of Christ and his apostles, in order to allow a demonstration through them of divine power over satanic power, and then dwindle considerably, though not completely eradicated.

That demon possession reached its peak and began its decline even while Christ was still alive, may be true. For he speaks of having bound "the strong Man" (Satan) and "spoiled his house" (by casting out demons) (Matthew 12:28-29). And when seventy whom he had sent out ahead to places he would afterward visit, returned rejoicing that "even the demons are subject unto us in thy name," he said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." (Luke 10:17-20)

- (b) It seems rather significant that power to cast out demons is not mentioned as one of the miraculous gifts in any of the epistles to churches or Christian individuals, though it was exercised by the apostles (and Philip) as mentioned in the book of Acts and promised and reported in Mark 16:17-29.

(c) It is not clear from scripture what conditions predisposed to demon possession, though Christ's parabolic message in Matthew 12:43-45 seems to indicate that an "empty house" can be reoccupied, and therefore that a lack of proper piety and character, even without fiendish or malignant disposition, may be a factor.

CONCLUSION

From all we have learned, the climax for ourselves is found in Ephesians 6:10-20 and Colossians 2:8-15, already studied, and what we also have in Colossians 2:16 - 3:17 (and other similar passages), assuring us that Christ is in control, having demonstrated his superiority over Satan and all his angels and/or demons, so that our deliverance from their control is guaranteed by faith in and loyal submission to him. That ought to free Christians of all superstitious fear and dread of an evil spirit world.

Demons are not of Christ as He expelled them and they were used by Satan to accomplish his will.



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