

A Study of

Spiritual Beings



*And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape
like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven,
which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.*

- Luke 3:22

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by Matt Hennecke



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GOD THE FATHER

Much can be said about God the Father. In fact, any study of God must fall far short of describing all of His attributes and qualities. All that we know, all that we can imagine, and all that exists beyond our imaginations are as nothing in comparison to the reality of God. The two most important qualities of God are, 1) He IS, and 2) He rewards those who seek Him (Heb 11:6). These two affirmations form the foundation of Christianity. Without faith in these two pillars of truth all of Christianity comes crashing down.

I. THE NATURE OF GOD

A. God is a Spirit (John 4:24; 1 Tim 1:17)

1. What is meant by God's being a Spirit?

2. In Genesis 1: 26 we're told that God created man in his own "image" and according to his "likeness." What characteristics of God are apparent in man?

B. Omnipotent

1. What is the definition of omnipotence?

2. What biblical passages indicate God's omnipotence? (Gen 17:1; Rev 4:8)

3. If God is omnipotent, why did He have to send His Son to die on the cross?
Why couldn't He just save all men?

C. Omniscient

1. What is the definition of omniscience?

2. What biblical passages indicate God's omniscience? (Psa 139; Isa 44:7-8; Ezek. 11:5; 1 Jn 3:20)

D. Omnipresent

1. What is the definition of omnipresence?

2. What biblical passages indicate God's omnipresence? (Psa 139; Prov 15:3;)

E. Loving

1. What was the greatest act of God's love toward us?

2. What is the nature of God's love?

3. If God is omnipotent (all powerful) and he loves His creation (man), then why does He allow man to suffer? Why does He allow man to be lost?

F. Good and Severe (Rom 11:22) - How can God be both good and severe?

G. Just and Justifier(Rom 3:26)

1. What does this passage mean?
2. How was God able to be just and the justifier?

H. Jealous (Josh.24:19) Isn't jealousy an improper emotion?

II. GOD AND HIS WORK TODAY Man is not able to guide himself spiritually (Prov 20:24; Jer 10:23) Man needs the guidance of God. How does God guide man today?

A. God Guides us Through Inspiration–the revealed word (1 Cor 2:6-12)

1. Direct inspiration–what is direct inspiration? (see Mt 10:19-20; Jn 16:13; Eph 3:3-5) Does God continue to provide direct inspiration? Prove your contention through scripture.

2. Indirect inspiration–what is indirect inspiration? (see Eph 3:4-5; 2 Tim 3:16-17)

B. God Directs Events–Does God control the events of life so as to guide men?

1. Miraculous events–(see Ex 14:30-31; Psa 106:7-9; Jn 20:30-31)
2. Unmiraculous events–(see Isa.45:1,13; Ezra 1:1-4; Ezek 36:22-24; Rom 13:1-6)
3. What is the difference between miraculous and unmiraculous events? Does God still use miraculous and unmiraculous events to guide men?

III. ISSUES SURROUNDING GOD

A. Why did God create man? (see Gen 1:31; 1 John 4:7-8 God's love needs an object.)

B. Does God *need* man (see Job 22:2-3; Acts 17:24-25)?

C. Does God know who will be saved and who will not? If He can know, how does that "foreknowledge" affect our salvation? If He cannot know, then is he truly omniscient? (Job 34:21)

1. Gen 22:12—in this passage, God only "knows" that Abraham fears Him at the point of obedience, not before
2. A counter argument can be made using Peter Mt 26:34 – Jesus foreknew Peter's denial)

D. Is there anything God cannot do?

E. Can God's will be changed? (see Ex. 32:10-14)

F. What is God's relationship to sin? How does God view sin? (see Deut. 12:31; 16:22; Heb 1:9)

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF GOD

Disbelief in the existence of deity; the doctrine that there is no God

Atheism

Psa 14:1; 19:1; Rom 1:20;
Heb 3:4; Isa 45:12, 18;
Isa 40:22; Psa 8:8; Col 1:16

The belief that any ultimate reality of God is unknown & ultimately, unknowable.

Agnosticism

Psa 14:1; 19:1; Rom 1:18-22;
Heb 3:4; Isa 45:12, 18;
Isa 40:22; Psa 8:8

A doctrine of God that denies the interference of God with the laws of the universe (theistic evolution)

Deism

Acts 17:24-27; Psa 32:1-6;
1 Cor 10:13; Mt 6:6; Eph 1:
15-23; Phil 3:20-21; Col 2:8-9

A belief in one personality (God) "wearing" three different modes.

Modalism

Gen 1:26; 3:22; Mt 28:19;
Jn 14:26; Acts 1:6-8; 1 Cor
15:20-28; Heb 1:1-5

The belief in three individuals (personalities) comprising one God.

Triune Monotheism

Jn 5:18; 10:30; 14:26; 16:13; 2
Pet 1:20-21; 1 Cor 2:9-12; Phil
2:5-11; Eph 4:4-6

The belief in three distinct and different Gods.

Tritheism

Eph 4:6; Job 6:10; Hos 11:9;
Hab 1:12

The belief in many different gods; characteristic of the early Greeks & Romans.

Polytheism

Acts 17:22-24; 1 Cor 10:20-21;
Deut 32:16-17; Ex 20:3;
15:11; Acts 14:8-15

Doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe; belief that nature is God.

Pantheism

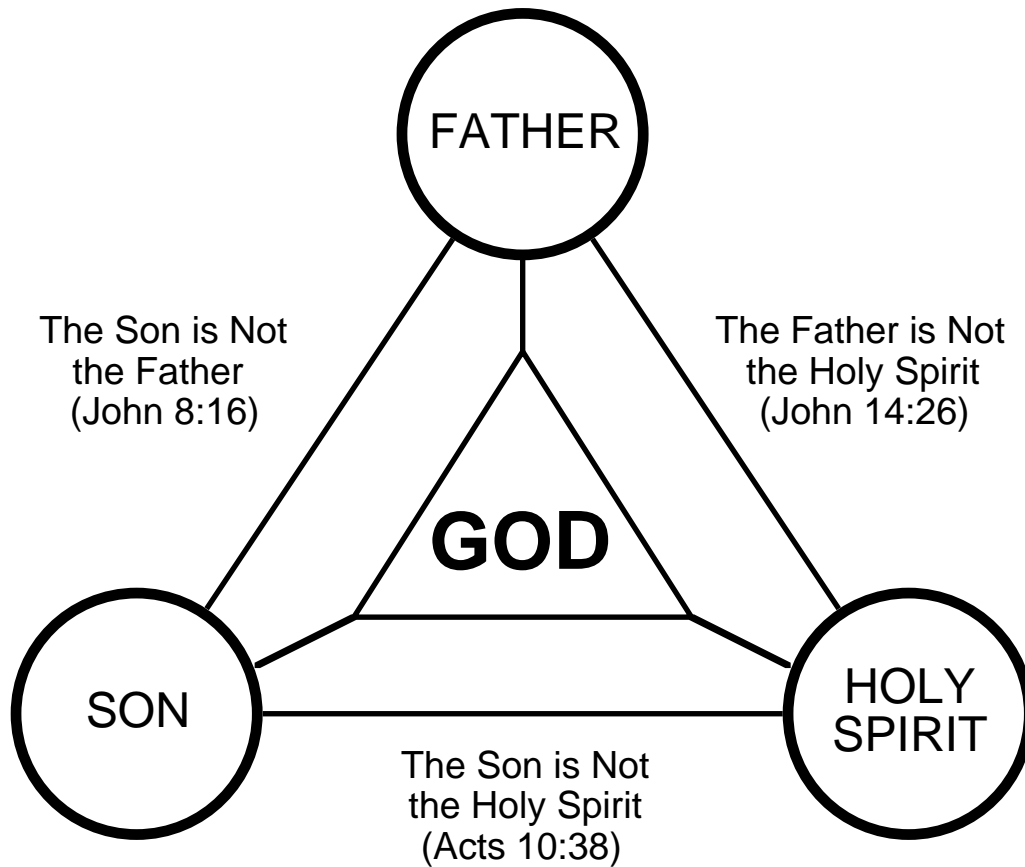
Rom 1:20-25; Jn 4:24;
1 Cor 2:14-15; 11:14; 15:42-58;
Gen 1:1

The center of the universe is man. God resides in each of his creatures - we can set our own course.

Humanism

Jer. 10:23; Jn 6:65-69; 14:6;
Prov. 14:12; 16:9, 25;
Ps. 48:14

THE GODHEAD



The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are ONE in nature and in character according to Matt. 28:19; John 5:18; 10:30; 14:26; 16:13; Col. 3:14-17; and Heb. 1:3.

However, they are NOT the same in rank, authority or personality according to John 7:16; 10:29; and 1 Cor. 15:27-28.

The Bible says that a husband and wife are "one flesh," and yet we recognize that they are still two personalities involved in a single purpose. They do not have the same rank. We can consider the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the same way.

GOD THE SON – JESUS CHRIST

Jesus claimed to be the Christ of Old Testament prophecy, the Son of God (Matt 16:13-17). Much of the New Testament is a record of the evidence that sustains these claims (Jn 20:30-31). The infidel rejects the evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. The agnostic asserts the evidence is insufficient to support the claim. Only the true believer accepts the evidence and displays the resultant faith in Jesus Christ that becomes the foundation of his hope for eternal life.

I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST

A. Incarnate deity (see Jn 1:1-5;9-14)

1. Prove that Jesus is God in the flesh using biblical scriptures and examples.

(see Jn 8:23-24; Isa 9:6; Rev 15:3)

2. Where was the deity of Jesus when he was a small boy? (see Lk 2:49)

B. Sinless - Could Jesus have sinned? (see Mt 4 and note the temptations of Jesus) Did Jesus sin? (see 2 Cor 5:21)

C. An Example

1. Jesus *knew* of God's existence (before coming to earth he was with God) whereas our belief is a matter of *faith*. How can Christ be our example if his obedience was a matter of knowledge and ours is a matter of faith? (see Jn 13:15; Rom 15:5; 1 Pet 2:21; 1 Cor 10:13)

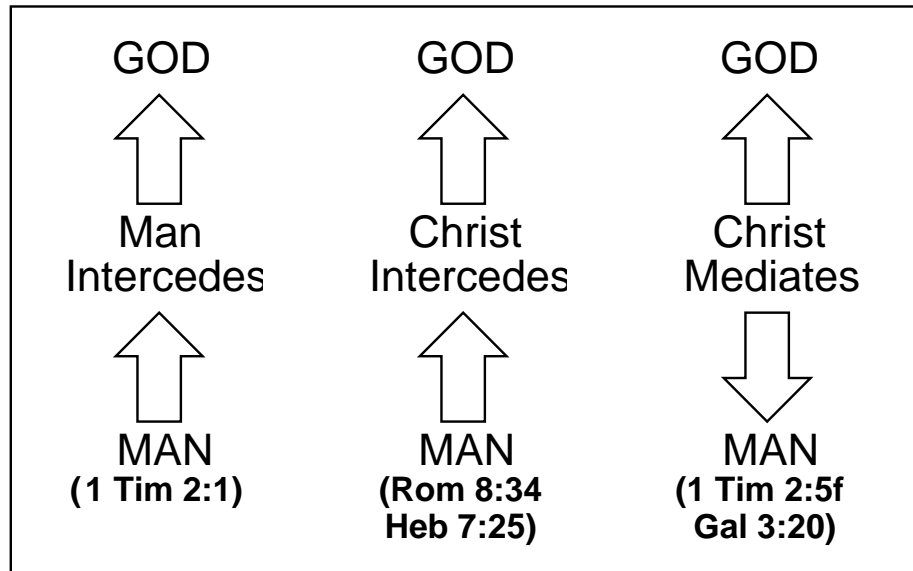
2. Is it possible for man to keep from sinning? (see 1 Cor 10:13) If it is impossible, how then is Christ our example? If it is possible, why then has no man been sinless except Christ? (see Jas 1:14-15)

D. Intercessor and Mediator

1. What is the definition of an intercessor?

2. What is the definition of a mediator?

CHRIST AS INTERCESSOR AND MEDIATOR



E. Advocate (see 1 Jn 2:1) What is an advocate? How is Jesus able to fill this role?

F. Propitiation (see 1 Jn 2:2) What does propitiation mean? In what way is Christ the propitiation?

II. UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Match the following unique features concerning the life of Christ with the appropriate scripture that supports the feature by placing the correct letter in the space to the left of each unique feature:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| ___ Jesus left heaven so we might go to heaven. | A. Col 2:13 |
| ___ Jesus was born of a woman so we might be born of God. | B. Gal 3:13-14 |
| ___ Jesus became poor so we might be rich. | C. Isa 53:3 |
| ___ Jesus was rejected of men so we might be accepted of God. | D. 1 Tim 1:15 |
| ___ Jesus was cursed so we might be blessed. | E. Gal 4:4-5 |
| ___ Jesus was put to death so we might be made alive. | F. 2 Cor. 8:9 |

III. ISSUES SURROUNDING JESUS CHRIST

- A. Was Jesus really God in the flesh, or was Jesus just a man? (Jn 1:1-14; Phil 2: 5-9; Rev 15:3)

- B. Was Jesus really born of a virgin? (see Isa 7:14; Mt 1:18-25)

- C. Was Jesus really resurrected from the dead? (see 1 Cor 15:12-19)

- D. Is Christ a King? Is the kingdom in existence now or will it come into existence at a later date? (see Lk 1:30-33; Mk 9:1; Jn 3:3-5; Rev 17:14; Col 1:13)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is the subject of considerable religious division and controversy. The primary issues are these: 1) what is meant by the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit? 2) what are the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit, and 3) can believers receive the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit today? Of the three persons comprising the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is the most obscure. We are provided some insight into His nature and work, but much remains a mystery only to be revealed in the last days. The word "spirit" as used in the Bible was translated from the Hebrew word "*ruach*" and the Greek word "*pneuma*." Both of these words can be translated in a variety of ways (e.g. spirit, ghost, breath, wind, life, etc. see Gen 6:17).

I. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Eternal (see Heb 9:14)
- B. Comforts the church (see Acts 9:31)
- C. Imparts the love of God (see Rom 5:5)
- D. Communicates love, joy, peace, etc. (see Rom 14:17; Gal 5:22)
 - 1. How does the Holy Spirit provide the fruit mentioned in Gal 5:22?
 - 2. Does the Holy Spirit provide these things to you? How?
- E. Source of wisdom to man (see Jn 14:26)

II. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Much confusion surrounds the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Match the scriptures below with the statements indicating who or what can dwell in us:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| ___ The human spirit | A. 1 John 4:12-13 |
| ___ The Holy Spirit | B. 1 Cor 2:11 |
| ___ Jesus Christ | C. 1 Cor 6:19 |
| ___ God | D. Eph 3:17 |
| ___ The Word | E. Rom 7:17 |
| ___ Sin | F. Col 3:16 |

- C. How does the Holy Spirit dwell in us? Some argue He dwells actually, literally and personally in the Christian. Others say the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian in a figurative sense. Does the Bible anywhere indicate that the Spirit dwells in us miraculously or in demonstration?

- D. Do Christians dwell in anyone? Who? (see Jn 6:56; 15:4-7; 1 Jn 4:12) What is the nature of that dwelling? Literal or figurative?

III. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Much division exists concerning the gift or gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Distinguish between the miraculous gifts bestowed on the Apostles in Acts 2 and the gifts of the Spirit described in Gal. 5:16-26.

- C. Using your Bible make a case proving that miracles performed by men have ceased (Hint: see 1 Cor 13:1-10 and then note Jas 1:25)

- D. How were miraculous abilities passed on to other men?

- E. What was blasphemy of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Mt 12:22-32? Can a person blaspheme against the Holy Spirit today?

ANGELS: AGENTS OF GOD

Of all the spiritual beings mentioned in the scriptures, angels are, perhaps, the least understood. While several biblical passages mention angels, little is known of their past and current work. While it is true that angels are created beings (Col.1:16), they are described in terms that cause wonder. In Isaiah 6:2 the Seraphims are described as having six wings, while the Cherubims in Exodus 37:9; 1 Kings 8:6; and Ezekiel 10:5 are simply described as "winged" angels.

I. THE NATURE OF ANGELS

- A. Angels wait on God (2 Chron 18:18; Psa 103:20-21)
- B. Angels are superhuman
 - 1. Man is a little lower than the angels (Heb 2:6-7)
 - 2. Angels are greater in power and might (2 Pet 2:11)
- C. Angels exercise authority
 - 1. Angel instructs Hagar to return to Sarah (Gen 16:8-9)
 - 2. An Angel instructs Elijah (2 Kings 1:15)
 - 3. An Angel commands Gad to speak to David (1 Chron 21:18)
- D. Angels inspire terror
 - 1. Balaam's ass afraid of angel (Num 22:23f)
 - 2. David afraid of an angel of the Lord (1 Chron 21:30)
 - 3. Cornelius afraid (Acts 10:3)
 - 4. Mary afraid of Gabriel (Lk 1:26-30)
- E. Angels inflict divine penalties (2 Sam 24:16; Psa 35:5-6)
- F. There are multitudes of angels (Mt 26:53; Heb 12:22; Rev 5:11)
- G. Angels take on different forms:

Indicate below what form(s) angels can take on as indicated by the scripture cited:

Gen 19:1-3 These angels appeared as _____

Exodus 3:2 This angel appeared as _____

Heb 1:7 Angels can appear as _____

H. Are angels to be worshipped? (see Psa 104:4; Heb 1:7; Heb 2:5)

II. ORIGIN OF ANGELS

- A. As noted, Colossians 1:16 explains the origin of all things. However, it does not explain the origin of both good and evil angels (i.e. demons?). Note the following statement from the *New Bible Dictionary* (2nd edition, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL 1982 pages 36-37):

"A biblical angel is, by derivation and function, a messenger of God, familiar with him face to face, therefore of an order of being higher than that of man. He is an . . . uncorrupted spirit in original essence, yet endowed with free will, therefore not necessarily impervious to temptation and sin."

This statement would explain the origin of both good and evil angels. God created good angels with free will, some of which fell and joined forces with Satan. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- B. Sinful angels were cast down to chains of darkness to await the judgment (Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4)

III. PURPOSE AND WORK OF ANGELS

- A. The English term angel comes from the Hebrew *malak* and the Greek *aggelos* which mean "messenger" or "agent."
- B. As noted earlier, angels were often messengers as well as those that carried out divine punishment.
- C. Angels also were an aid to the righteous:
 1. Daniel and the lions' den (Dan 6:21-22)
 2. Deliverance of the apostles from prison (Acts 5:19-20; 12:6-11)
 3. Guide to the children of Israel (Ex 23:20-21)
- D. What role will angels play in the second coming of Christ? (2 Thess 1:7)

IV. ANGELS TODAY

- A. As has been noted, angels often were sent by God as messengers to reveal His will (e.g. Mary and the birth of Jesus), however, since all has been revealed (Jude 3) angels do not act as messengers to man any longer.
- B. According to Heb 1:14 angels serve as "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." What does this mean?

- C. Are there such things as "guardian angels"?

1. Psa 34:7–The angel of the Lord encamps around those that fear Him and rescues them.
2. See also Psa 91: 11-12; Mt 18:10; Lk 22:43)

V. ANGELS: ADDITIONAL ISSUES

A. Is it possible for us to “entertain” angels today (see Heb 13:2)?

B. What is the meaning of the wrestling match between Jacob and the angel (Gen 32:22-32)?

SATAN: THE DECEIVER

Satan is a malignant reality who, throughout the Bible, is always hostile to God and God's people. He is referred to as the prince of the devils (Mt 12:24), the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), the prince of the world (Jn 14:30), Beelzebub (Mt 12:24), Belial (2 Cor 6:15), the father of lies (Jn 8:44), and Abaddon and Apollyon (Rev 9:11). Whatever his name, Satan has already been defeated as a result of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and his defeat will become obvious and complete in the end of the age (Mt 4:11; 1 Jn 3:8; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15)

I. THE ORIGIN OF SATAN

- A. Much discussion surrounds the origin of Satan. Did God create Satan? If so, how did he come to be evil, or was he evil from the beginning? (see Col 1:16, 1 Jn 3:8)

- B. Does Isa. 14:12-20 speak of Satan's fall from heaven?

- C. According to some scholars, Ezekiel 28:11-19 speaks of Satan's sinless condition prior to his fall: "... obviously transcends the reference to the Prince of Tyrus." Merrill Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Wheaton, IL, 1952

- D. See also Lk 10:17-20, 2 Pet 2:4 and Jude 6

- E. Is Satan a real being, or just a name given for the "absence of good"?

1. An American Catholic scholar: "No up to date theologian believes Satan is a person." *New York Times Magazine* Feb 4, 1973, p. 15.
2. Joseph Komonchak, professor at St. Joseph Catholic Seminary in New York: "For most theologians a personal devil is something of an embarrassment." *Newsweek*, August 16, 1971
3. Three scenes in the Bible emphasize Satan's reality:
 - a. Garden of Eden (curse pronounced against him proves his reality)
 - b. Job and the challenge (Satan is as real as God)
 - c. Jesus in the wilderness (Jesus's discussion was with a real being)

II. THE NATURE OF SATAN

- A. A Tempter
1. Tempter of Eve (Gen 3)
 2. Tempter of David (1 Chr 21:1)
 3. Tempter of Job (Job 2:7)
 4. Tempter of Christ (Mt 4:3-10)
 5. Desired to have Simon (Lk 22:31)

6. Enters into Judas (Lk 22:3; Jn 13:2)

7. Enters into Ananias (Acts 5:3)

QUESTION: Is it good for a person to be tempted? Why or why not? (see Jas 1:2-3)

B. He Works Lying Wonders (2 Thess 2:9) Where does Satan get his power? from God? Does Satan have authority? If so, where does he get it from?

C. Appears As an Angel of Light (2 Cor 11:14)

D. Is the Father of Lies (Jn 8:44)

E. How is Satan characterized in the following passages?

1. 1 Tim 3:6) _____

2. Eph 2:2; 6:12) _____

3. 1 Jn 2:13) _____

4. 2 Cor 11:3) _____

F. Satan takes the form of, or is compared to, at least four animals in the Bible. List below all the different animals you can think of that Satan took the form of or was compared to:

III. SATAN AT WORK TODAY

A. How does Satan work in men today?

B. According to 1 John 2:15-16, in what three ways are men enticed? (Note the three types may not be an exhaustive list)

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

C. Which of the three types of lust did Satan use on each of the following characters?

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Eve (Gen 3:1-6) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |
| 2. Esau (Gen 25:27-34) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |
| 3. Moses (Num 20:8-12) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |
| 4. Achan (Josh 7:19-26) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |
| 5. David (2 Sam 11:2-17) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |
| 6. Jonah (Jon 4:1-4) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |
| 7. Christ (Mt 4:1-11) | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of flesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | lust of eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | pride of life |

QUESTION: Which of the three types of lust are you most subject to?

QUESTION: Why did Satan use all three types of enticement in his dealings with Eve and Christ? What was the result of Eve's sin? What would have been the result if Christ had sinned?

DEMONS: INSTRUMENTS OF SATAN

As with the other spirit beings studied, much controversy surrounds the nature and power of biblical demons. Indeed, the greatest controversy centers on two questions: 1) are demons a reality, or are they a primitive people's explanation for various mental infirmities (e.g. epilepsy, mental illness, depression, etc.)? 2) if real, are demons able to "possess" men today as they did in the days of Christ and the early church?

I. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

- A. Translators of the KJV of the Bible did not distinguish between the Greek words *Diablos* and *daimon* (or *daimonion*). *Diablos* means "accuser" or "slanderer" and is one of the names for Satan. *Diablos* should always be rendered "Devil." *Daimon* or *daimonion* should be rendered "demon."
- B. *Daimon* may not always refer to an evil spirit. Apparently the Greeks used the term "demon" in referring to the spirits of the dead, whom they deified and worshipped as intermediary gods who held a position between man and their greater gods.
 - 1. In 1 Cor 10:20-21 Paul may be accommodating the Greeks by using "demon" to mean the "lesser gods" and not evil spirits.
 - 2. See 1 Cor 8 also.

II. ORIGIN OF BIBLICAL DEMONS

- A. What might Isa 14:12-20 be referencing?

- B. Satan a king with a kingdom (Mt 12:26)
- C. Demons part of Satan's kingdom (Mt 12:24)
- D. What might be the origin of demons according to Jn 8:44; 1 Pet 2:4; Jude 6?

III. CHARACTER OF BIBLICAL DEMONOLOGY

- A. Lofty in tone—not steeped in tradition
- B. Is biblical demonology congruous with man's free will?

- 1. No one choosing light can be invaded by evil forces (Rom 8:35-39; Jn 10:29) Contrast with passages concerning children who were possessed (Mt 17:18; Mk 9:24; Mk 7: 25) Did they invite possession?
- 2. King Saul "possessed" only after his continual willful disobedience (1 Sam 13:13; 15:22-23; 16:14; see also 1 Jn 5:16)
- 3. Rejection of the truth makes one susceptible to demon influence or possession (1 Tim 4:1)

IV. EXISTENCE OF DEMONS

A. Did the New Testament writers believe in demons? (Jas 2:19; Rev 9:20)

1. They describe their nature (Lk 4:33; 6:18)
2. They affirm their activity (1 Tim 4:1; Rev 16:14)
3. They mention their expulsion from humans (Lk 9:42)
4. They suggest their organization (Mt 12:26; Eph 6:12)
5. They indicate their abode (Lk 8:31; Rev 9:11)
6. They point out their final doom (Mt 25:41)

B. Christ shared identical views

1. He commanded His disciples to cast out demons (Mt 10:1; Lk 10)
2. He cast them out Himself (Mt 15:22, 28; Mk 1)
3. He rebuked them (Mk 5:8)
4. He has power over them (Mt 12:29)
5. He viewed His conquest over them and Satan (Lk 10:17-18)

QUESTION: Were demons simply diseases of the mind or body? (see Mk 5:7; Mt 8:32; Lk 10:20)
Respond to the question in the space below:

V. VARIOUS VIEWS OF DEMON POSSESSION

- A. Mythical Theory—the whole narrative of Jesus’s demon expulsions is merely symbolic, without actual foundation in fact. Demon possession, so-called, is but a vivid symbol of the prevalence of evil in the world, and the casting out of demons a corresponding figure of triumph over evil.
- B. Accommodation Theory—Jesus and His disciples, in making reference to demon possession, spoke only to accommodate the prevalent ignorance of the common people to whom they spoke. In reality, demons were mental diseases.
- C. Hallucination Theory—demon possession is a mere psychological delusion on the part of the “victim” which makes him, and those who observe him, believe he is actually demon possessed. There were and are no demons.
- D. Demons A Reality—demons were a reality in Christ’s day. To deny their existence is to deny Christ’s own assertion of their existence. The detailed accounts of their existence, their behavior, and their expulsion refute all other theories.

VI. CAN DEMONS POSSESS MEN TODAY?

- A. Arguments Used to Prove the Existence of Demon Possession Today
 1. Eph 6 indicates the Christian’s war is with the “principalities” and “rulers of darkness.” It is the armor of God which protects us from the “wiles of the devil.” Conversely, those not protected by the armor are open to all manner of evil influence—including demon possession.
 2. Rom 8:35-39 makes a promise that nothing can separate us from God. Of course, we can separate ourselves through disobedience. If we separate ourselves, are we not then subject to the evils of the dark one, including demon possession?

3. Demon possession was common both *before* and *after* the public ministry of Christ.
- 1 Sam 16:14; 19:9 indicates Saul was troubled by a spirit (i.e. demon?) Note: Was this an evil spirit (demon) or merely Saul's own depressed spirit?

Some have suggested the playing of the harp seemed to relieve Saul of his trouble (1 Sam 16:16) indicating it was depression from which he suffered.

- In Mt 12:27 Christ indicates that demons existed before His ministry when He says, "... by whom do your children cast them (demons) out?" Does this mean that demons existed before Christ's ministry?

- Mt 7:22 seems to indicate that demons existed and possessed men *before* Christ's ministry.

- Ax 16:16-18 suggests evil spirits possessing people *after* Christ's ascension to heaven.

The conclusion of some is that demons existed and possessed men long before the ministry of Christ. Most Bible scholars feel that the Jews who claimed to be exorcists could not cast out demons (see Ax 19:13-16 for proof that some who claimed to be able to cast out demons could not). If this is true, then demons possessed men when there were none who could cast them out—this sets a precedent for demon possession today.

B. Arguments Used to Disprove Demon Possession Today

- Satan was bound by Jesus—this includes demons (see Lk 10:18; Jn 12:31; Mt 12:29; Col 2:15; Rev 20:2-3; 1 Jn 3:8)
- Demons were cast into the abyss (see Mt 8:29; 12:26-29; 25:41; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)
- According to 1 Cor 10:13 there is a way of escape from any evil (including demons?). Christ and the apostles were the way of escape for those possessed of demons (see Lk 9:1). Since the power to cast demons out has ceased, is it true that God will no longer allow demons to possess men?

- A premise of the Bible is that man is a moral free agent (Gen 3). Demon possession (except in a time when it could be exorcised to show the power of God) would violate the premise.
- Demons were not mentioned at all in the Old Testament (Deut 32:17 and Psa 106:37 refer to idols, not evil spirits.) Therefore, demons only were allowed to possess persons in the days just before and after the founding of the church.

Their appearance at this time was to show Christ's power over evil and prove His claim to deity. Once the church was established and the perfect law completed, demons were no longer able to possess men. Further proof stems from the fact that children, who did not invite demon possession, were possessed so that the power of God could be seen (see Mk 9:24; Mk 7:25; Mt 17:18).

6. Jesus and the apostle possessed special powers. These powers for "good" required converse powers of "evil" so that man would still be a moral free agent. Demons provided the necessary balance of power.
7. Warnings to the early church of potential threats do not include references to demon possession (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Cor 4; Col 1; 2 Pet 1)
8. Zech 13:1-2 is a very controversial passage. Does the expression "unclean spirit" refer to demons, or to an attitude of irreverence?

- Theodore Laetsch translates the passage in this way: "And I will drive also the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness out of the land." (*Commentary on Minor Prophets*)
- Keil-Delitzsch translates it: "... and the prophets also and the spirit of uncleanness will I remove out of the land."
- Homer Hailey states: "Likewise, unclean spirits, the antithesis of the prophets, would cease. In the conquest of Christ over Satan and his forces, unclean spirits have ceased to control men as they did in the time of the ministry of Christ and the apostles (cf. also Micah 5:12-13)." (*Commentary on Minor Prophets*)
- Pulpit Commentary: "The unclean spirit . . . is the lying spirit which works in the false prophets (see 1 Kings 22:19-23), and which we find later denounced by the apostles (Ax 16:18; 1 Cor 10:20-21; 2 Thess 2:9-10)
- Homiletic Commentary: "Spirit of uncleanness, opposed to the Spirit of holiness."

QUESTION: Do you believe that demons can possess men today? Why or why not?

MAN: A SPIRITUAL BEING

Man is also a spiritual being according to the Bible. Controversy exists about the spiritual nature of man. Some argue that man does not have an eternal spirit, but that all references to his spirit have to do with his "life force." They argue that when man dies, he ceases to exist.

I. THE NATURE OF MAN

A. Man was created in God's image according to Gen 1:24-27. What does this mean?

B. How is man's eternal nature different than God's? (see Exod. 3:14; Isa. 57:15)

C. Does man cease to exist when he dies? (see Luke 16:19-31; 1Ths. 4:17)

Some argue that the story in Luke 16:19-31 is a parable? Is it, or isn't it?

D. What do the following passages suggest about man's spiritual nature?

1. Job 32:8 _____

2. Ps. 32:2 _____

3. Prov. 20:27 _____

4. Eccl. 3:21 _____

E. What can we learn of man's nature from the words Jesus spoke to the thief on the cross? (see Luke 23:43)

F. If man is a spirit, and if he is eternal, what then should he do? (see Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 7:21).

