

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 10: Angelology: Fallen Angels

Systematic Theologies:
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INTRODUCTION:

We come to our last section on Angels. We've already looked at angels in an overarching sense, elect angels, and Satan. We now turn our attention to the existence, nature, and activity of "fallen angels" also known as demons.

Q1: *Do demons exist?*

Q2: *What are fallen angels like?*

Q3: *What activities do demons engage in?*

I. The Existence of Fallen Angels

A. *The Testimony of the Scriptures*

1. The Bible speaks to the reality of Demons...
2. The Old Testament...
 - a. Obviously all of the texts related to Satan also apply here...
 - b. **Deut 32:16-17** "They made Him jealous with strange *gods*; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. ¹⁷ "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New *gods* who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread.
 - c. **Psalm 106:35** But they mingled with the nations And learned their practices, ³⁶ And served their idols, Which became a snare to them. ³⁷ They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons,
 - d. **Judges 9:23** Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,
 - e. **1 Sam 16:14-16** Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. ¹⁵ And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. ¹⁶ "Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play *the harp* with his hand, and you will be well." (see also **I Sam 18:10, 19:9**)
 - f. **1 Kings 22:19-23** Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. ²⁰ "The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. ²¹ "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' ²² "The LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice *him* and also prevail. Go and do so.' ²³ "Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you." (see also **2 Chron 18:18-22**)
3. Demonic activity during Jesus' ministry...
 - a. Christ's taught that Satan was the ruler of the demons – **Matt 12:22-28**

- b. Exercising authority over, casting them out (7 or 8 reported incidents) – examples:
 - (1) A demon-possessed man who was blind and mute – **Matthew 12:22-29**
 - (2) A Canaanite woman’s daughter – **Matt 15:22-28**
 - (3) A man’s son who was a lunatic, falling into fire and water – **Matt 17:14-20**
 - (4) A man possessed with demons called Legion – **Mark 5:1-16**
- c. Giving His disciple’s authority over them
 - (1) **Matthew 10:1** Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.
 - (2) **Ryrie**, “Never did our Lord correct anyone for their acceptance of the reality of demons (**Lk 10:17**), yet He was willing on many other points to correct false theology.”
- 4. The Rest of the New Testament...
 - a. Demons are mentioned by every NT writer except the author of Hebrews (who emphasizes elect/good angels)
 - b. **1 Corinthians 10:20-21** *No*, but *I say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to **demons** and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in **demons**.²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of **demons**; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of **demons**.
 - c. **1 Timothy 4:1** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of **demons**,
 - d. **James 2:19** You believe that God is one. You do well; the **demons** also believe, and shudder.
 - e. **Revelation 9:20** The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship **demons**, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

B. Where did Demons come from? What are they?

- 1. They are “fallen angels”
- 2. Satan is designated the “prince of the demons” (**Matt 12:24**) – since Satan, their leader, is an angel, the demons must also be angels, but fallen like Satan. We also know there fall must have occurred after Gen 1:31 (God’s declaration that everything was “very good”)... They might have fallen with Satan (as their “federal head”)...
- 3. Demons are referred to as “unclean spirits”... In **Matt 17:18** a “demon” is mentioned and in the parallel account in **Mark 9:25** he is referred to as an “unclean spirit.”
- 4. Same parallel in **Luke 10:17-20** The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the **demons** are subject to us in Your name."¹⁸ And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.¹⁹ "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.²⁰ "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."
- 5. **Matthew 8:16** When evening came, they brought to Him many who were **demon-possessed**; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.
- 6. **Matthew 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
- 7. *This evidence leads us to the conclusion that demons are “fallen angels”*

C. Types of Fallen Angels...

1. Loose and Active Demons –
 - a. **Eph 6:11-12** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.
 - b. Here we have indicated that we are in a struggle with demonic forces...
2. Confined Demons (the abyss)
 - a. **Luke 8:31** Legion “were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.”
 - b. **Romans 10:6-7** But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), ⁷ or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."
 - c. *Read **Rev 9:1-15... 11:7, 17:8, 20:1-15**
 - d. **Length of confinement...**
 - (1) *Temporary freeing for some demons: Rev 9:1-15 (above)*
 - (2) *Permanent confinement for some:*
 - o **2 Peter 2:4-9** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell [from **ταρταρόω** (hapax) – hurl into tartarus] and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter; ⁷ and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men ⁸ (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds), ⁹ *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,
 - **Tartarus** – Greeks considered this a place of torment below Hades... possibly parallel to the Jewish thought of “gehenna” or our thought of “hell”
 - Is the “angelic sin” connected with the days of Noah? - this is where some see added connection to the “sons of God” being “fallen angels”...
 - Especially with the contextual discussion of “Sodom and Gomorrah”
 - This is used as an example of how the Lord can rescue the godly from temptation and reserve the unrighteous for the day of judgment.
 - o **Jude 1:6-7** And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds [**δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις**] under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

- Again, see the connection between these angels reserved for judgment, being kept in eternal bonds... Comparison is made again to “Sodom and Gomorrah” who indulged in immorality and went after strange flesh
- **Louis Berkhof** speaks against this view due to the implications of Matt 22:30 that there is no sexual life among angels... “They are lost and hopeless spirits. They are even now chained to hell and pits of darkness, and though not yet limited to one place, yet, as Calvin says, drag their chains with them wherever they go (**II Pet 2:4, Jude 6**).”

II. The Nature of Fallen Angels

A. They are “Persons”

1. Just as the devil, they demonstrate “personality”
2. Christ asked the demon, “What is your name?” (**Lk 8:30**)
3. They can communicate – they hear and speak... and notice the personal pronouns being used to refer to the demon... (**Lk 4:33-35**)
4. They demonstrate intelligence – recognized who Jesus Christ was (**Mk 1:23-24**), and seem to understand the coming judgment (**Matthew 8:29**). They also develop and promote their own systems of doctrine (**1 Tim 4:1-3**).
5. They reveal emotion... fear/trembling in judgment (**Lk 8:28, Ja 2:19**) and express desires/will (**Lk 8:32**).

B. They are “Spirits”

1. **Matthew 8:16** When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.
2. **Luke 10:17-20** The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." ¹⁸ And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. ¹⁹ "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. ²⁰ "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."
3. **Ephesians 6:12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.
4. **Although** their “spiritual existence” is a “localized” one – not omnipresent as God is.

C. They are Immoral

1. Their intellect, sensibility, and will are twisted...
2. **Ryrie**, “They are designated as “unclean spirits” (**Matt 10:1**), as “evil spirits” (**Lk 7:21**), as “the spirit of an unclean demon” (**Luke 4:33**), and “spiritual forces of wickedness” (**Eph 6:12**).”

D. They have Limited Supernatural Power

1. Demons can exhibit superhuman strength when possessing a person – **Mark 5:2** When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, ³ and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; ⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and

- chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.
2. The sons of Sceva were overpowered by the demon-possessed man in **Acts 19:16**.
 3. The demons are limited in power, though... as seen in Jesus conversation with Legion (Luke 8) – (see also angelic conflicts in Daniel 10:10-14).

III. The Activity of Fallen Angels

A. Overall Summary...

1. **Ryrie**, “In general demons act as Satan’s emissaries to promote his purpose to thwart the plan of God. Though Satan experiences creaturely limitations, demons extend his power and activities greatly. In fact, at times it may seem that Satan enjoys omniscience and omnipresence, though in actuality he does not. It is just that the demons extends Satan’s activities so much that one might think Satan himself is doing it all (**Eph 6:11-12**).”
2. **Calvin**, “The tendency of all that Scripture teaches concerning devils is to put us on guard against their wiles and machinations, that we may provide ourselves with weapons strong enough to drive away the most formidable foes... Being forewarned of the constant presence of an enemy the most daring, the most powerful, the most crafty, the most indefatigable [unrelenting], the most completely equipped with all the engines and the most expert in the science of war, let us not allow ourselves to be overtaken by sloth of cowardice, but, on the contrary, with minds aroused and ever on the alert, let us stand ready to resist; and, knowing that this warfare is terminated only by death, let us study to persevere. Above all, fully conscious of our weakness and want of skill, let us invoke the help of God, and attempt nothing without trusting in him, since it is his alone to supply counsel, and strength, and courage, and arms.”
3. **Ultimately, demonic activity can be described as rebellion against God, or opposition to the purposes of God in the world.** But as we’ve already mentioned God ends up using demons as part of his sovereign plan...

B. False Religion

1. Demons attempt to influence false worship...
2. They blind the minds of the unsaved to keep them from seeing God’s salvation – **2 Cor 4:3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
3. They put forward worthless gods or idols (see above) – idolatry linked to worship of demons! Attempting to lead people to follow things that cannot save them! (Lev 17:7, Deut 32:17, Ps 96:4-5, 106:36-38, Is 65:11, Rev 13:4,15)
4. Their teachings are anti-Christ, denying his genuine substitutionary sacrifice for the sin of man – **1 John 2:22** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son... **4:1-4** “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the

- antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.
⁴ You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”
5. They promote cults – they pervert the Christ of the Bible... introducing heresies whenever possible to distort the purity of devotion to the truth.
 6. They purport their own “doctrines” - **1 Timothy 4:1-4** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³ *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; - leading people to believe they can save themselves...
 7. They promote a wisdom from below – **James 3:14-16** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.
 8. They cause persecution against the genuine church – **Revelation 2:8-10** "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: ⁹ 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

C. *Temptation*

1. **C.S. Lewis** in *Screwtape Letters*, “Some have paid me an undeserved compliment by supposing that my *Letters* were the ripe fruit of many years’ study in moral and ascetic theology. They forgot that there is an equally reliable, though less credible, way of learning how temptation works. “My heart”—I need no other’s—“showeth me the wickedness of the ungodly.”
2. **James 1:13-15** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his **own lust**. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
3. All of this is orchestrated to oppose the spiritual progress of God’s people.
4. **Ephesians 6:12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

D. *Possession*

1. Wayne Grudem doesn’t even like this term... he believes it is fraught with ambiguities. The word “possessed” is not in the Gr. Instead the word is “demonized” which could be understood as internal or external to a person...
2. When we speak of “demon possession” we mean “the direct control of a human being by a demon’s residence within him.” All people are affected by demon activity, but not all are possessed.

3. The characteristics of demon possession are varied as recorded in the Scriptures...
 - a. The term “to be demonized” occurs 13x in the NT (all in the Gospels)
 - b. **Matt 4:24; 8:16,28,33; 9:32; 12:22; 15:22; Mk 1:32; 5:15f, 18; Lk 8:36; Jn 10:21**
 - c. **Ryrie**, “Symptoms include physical abnormalities (muteness, blindness, convulsions) – (Matt 9:32, 12:22, Lk 9:39), tendencies to self-destruction (Mk 5:5, Lk 9:42), insanity (Jn 10:20), superhuman strength (Mk 5:3-4), and occult powers (Acts 16:16-18)
 - d. **But note** that not all “illnesses” are attributed to the activity of demons (there are distinctions made in which Jesus healed sickness, and cast out demons – Lk 4:40-41, 9:1, 13:32, Matt 10:8, Mark 1:34, 6:13.
4. **Calvin**, “God thus turning the unclean spirits hither and thither at his pleasure, employs them in exercising believers by warring against them, assailing them with wiles, urging them with solicitations, pressing close upon them, disturbing, alarming, and occasionally wounding, but never conquering or oppressing them; whereas they hold the wicked in thralldom, exercise dominion over their minds and bodies, and employ them as bond-slaves in all kinds of iniquity.”
5. Believers can be “affected” by demons...
 - a. **Ephesians 4:27** and do not give the devil an opportunity.
 - b. **1 Peter 5:8-9** Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.
 - c. **2 Corinthians 12:7** Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me-- to keep me from exalting myself.
6. **Calvin**, “Christ overcame Satan and triumphed over all his hosts that they might not injure the church, which otherwise would suffer from them every moment. For (such being our weakness, and his raging fury) how could we withstand his manifold and unintermitted assaults for any period, however short, if we did not trust to the victory of our leader? God, therefore, does not allow Satan to have dominion over the souls of believers, but only gives over to his sway the impious and unbelieving, whom he deigns not to number among his flock. For the devil is said to have undisputed possession of this world until he is disposed by Christ.”
 - a. **Rom 8:37-39** But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - b. **1 John 4:4** **You** are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because **greater** is **He** who is **in you** than **he** who is **in** the world.
7. **Practically speaking Wayne Grudem provides good direction:**
 - a. “If we think of the overall emphasis of the NT epistles, we realize that very little space is given to discussing demonic activity in the lives of believers or methods to resist and oppose such activity. The emphasis is on telling believers not to sin but to live lives of righteousness. For example, in I Corinthians, when there is a

problem of “dissensions,” Paul does not tell the church to rebuke a spirit of dissension, but simply urges them to “agree” and “be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (**I Cor 1:10**). When there is a problem of incest, he does not tell the Corinthians to rebuke a spirit of incest, but tells them that they ought to be outraged and that they should exercise church discipline until the offender repents (**I Cor 5:1-5**). When there is a problem of Christians going to court to sue other believers, Paul does not command them to cast out a spirit of litigation (or selfishness, or strife), but simply tells them to settle those cases within the church and to be willing to give up their own self-interest (**I Cor 6:1-8**). When there is disorder at the Lord’s Supper, he does not command them to cast out a spirit of disorder or gluttony or selfishness, but simply tells them that they should “wait for one another” and that each person should “examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (**I Cor 11:33, 28**)...

- b. So while demons are operating and promoting sin, our attention is drawn to repentance and obedience unto God, not to pronouncements against demonic forces.
- c. Our priority and task is to preach the gospel, knowing that God has invested it with power to change lives!
- d. Remember Jesus’ conversation with His disciples, **Luke 10:17-20** “The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”¹⁸ And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”¹⁹ “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.”²⁰ “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”
- e. **Culver** adds a few closing thoughts, “That there may be real contact with evil spirits (demons) in some forms of spiritualism, parapsychology, psychic prophecy and other occult practices may not be denied. It is also certain that much, if not most, is quackery, deceiving people by trickery—in either case to be strictly avoided.” He then offers several other helpful tips:
 - (1) We do not need to know signs and symptoms of “demon possession” today. It is enough to be informed that all our wrestling is against spiritual forces of evil, and be assured that God has provided us with the resources necessary (the full armor of God) to stand against the wiles of the enemy.
 - (2) There is no formal instruction given in the Scriptures for believers to engage in formal exorcisms of demons.
 - (3) If one should be presented with a situation where one feels “demonizing” is present, the resource of *prayer* in the name of Jesus surely will be as effective as a command (exorcism) addressed to the ‘resident’ demon.
 - (4) We are told to “resist the devil, and he will flee from you” even if he does roar and threaten.
 - (5) The Law of Moses forbids consulting any person who claims powers supernatural or occult – these are an abomination to the Lord – **Deut 18:12**.