

### DEMON POSSESSION - Part 2

July 28, 2012

As we continue to look at evidence that supports the idea that demons, which we read about in the New Testament, are not wicked angels but souls of departed wicked men, let's notice some things about the word, "demon." The study of the word itself teaches us that it is used to refer to human beings, not angels. Keep in mind that the Bible says nothing of "good" demons, only wicked ones are mentioned. This supports the idea that they are not angels.

Alexander Campbell lists at least five evidences for the conclusion that the word "demon" as used in paganism, Judaism, and Christianity has reference to the spirits of dead men:

1. All pagan authors of note affirm that demons were the spirits of dead men.
2. The Jewish Historians, Josephus and Philo, also agree.
3. Evangelists and apostles of Christ so understood the matter. (Campbell notes the following principle of Bible interpretation: "Every word not specially explained or defined in a particular sense, by any standard writer of any particular age and country, is to be taken and applied in the current or commonly received signification of that country and age in which the writer lived and wrote." His point is that nothing in the New Testament argues against the term demon being used in any sense except its common usage. Again, its common usage is that of a departed spirit of a human being. No inspired writer redefined or offered a special definition of the word.
4. Ignatius, the disciple of John, in his epistle to Smyrna, quotes the words of Jesus to Peter: "Handle me and see, for I am not *daimoon asomaton*-a disembodied demon" (i.e., a spirit without a body). Those of that day used the terms demon and departed spirit interchangeably.
5. The words, "demon" and "angel" are not synonyms nor are they used interchangeably in or out of the Scriptures.
  - a. In the Bible, angels:
    1. Were never said to enter into anyone;
    2. Have no affection for bodies, either as habitations or vehicles of action;
    3. Have no inclination or favoring for tombs and monuments of the dead.
  - b. On the other hand, demons:
    1. Have entered into human bodies and into the bodies of inferior creatures;
    2. Demonstrate a peculiar affection for human bodies and seem to desire them both as vehicles of action and as places of habitation, and
    3. Demonstrate a peculiar fondness for their former mortal tenements. We so often read of their carrying the possessed into graveyards, tombs, and sepulchers, where, perchance, their old mortalities lay in ruins.

McClintock and Strong make the following statement:

It is frequently supposed that the demons of the New Testament are fallen angels; on the contrary, it is maintained by Fanner that the word is never applied to the Devil and his angels, and that there is no sufficient reason for restricting the term to spirits of a higher order than mankind. They who uphold the former opinion urge that our Lord, when accused of casting out demons, replied, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" (Mark3:23, etc.). There is no doubt that Satan and Diabolus are the same,

and hence Beelzebub and Diabolus are evidently the same being. It is further urged that it is but fair and natural to suppose that the writers of the New Testament use the word demons in the same sense in which it was understood by their contemporaries, which, as it appears from Josephus and other authorities, was that of the spirits of the wicked, and that if these writings had meant anything else they would have given notice of so wide a deviation from popular usage.

We will notice the nature of demons next week as we continue to learn more about the word of God.