

CHAPTER ONE FALLEN ANGEL DEVIL

For centuries Christendom has taught that the devil is a fallen angel, and therefore a supernatural being. On the basis of certain Scriptures, it is claimed that his name is Lucifer, and that he was originally perfect and of very high rank, being an archangel. But due to pride he sinned by rebelling against God, resulting in being cast out of heaven to earth with one third of God's angels who supported his rebellion. Since that time, these rebel angels have been roaming the earth using their power to influence people against God, commencing at the very beginning of human history by using a serpent to bring about the fall of man.

Without a doubt there are many references to devil and satan in Scripture, but there is no foundation for this particular concept of the devil. A careful analysis of the foundation verses used to support Christendom's view, reveals that they have been taken out of context and misapplied.

UNDERMINES THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

The traditional view of the devil being a fallen angel is a serious error, because it undermines the Christian hope and creates numerous contradictions.

The hope that Jesus offered his disciples was that they will be resurrected and never die again because they will be equal with the angels (Lk. 20:35-36).

We learn from this that angels cannot die, which means they cannot sin, because death is the result of sin. And if they cannot sin they cannot be tempted, because the process of sin starts with temptation as we are taught in Jam. 1:14-15.

To affirm therefore that holy angels can and did succumb to temptation and sinned, is to contradict Scripture. It also undermines the Christian hope of being equal with them.

Let's face it: if divine holy angels can still be tempted, sin and rebel against God, and be cast out of heaven and ultimately perish, then what hope is it to be equal with them? If one third of God's angels were able to be tempted into sin, so could we! And if this is the case, then the divine immortal state is no better than the present, as far as isolation and insulation from sin is concerned.

CONTRADICTIONS

Even if angels could and did sin, it would be contrary to divine principle to allow them to continue as immortals, perpetuating their sin and rebellion. An immortal sinner is a contradiction of terms. All who rebel against God's authority and sin, incur the death penalty, and there are many examples of this in Scripture.

The idea of God casting out an immortal rebel from heaven down to earth where he can teach rebellion to one generation after another is nonsense. Rather than be a punishment, it would be a reward - the very thing a rebel would want to do.

If angels possessing the power of God sinned, would God, in banishing them, allow them to retain His power and use it against Him to inspire rebellion in others? No! This would be a kingdom divided against itself. God always withdraws His power from those who sin and rebel against Him, and there are examples in Scripture of this.

One thing is certain: God is the one and only source of supernatural power in the universe (Rom. 13:1). Angels do not originate their power themselves; they derive it from God. If a fallen angel had a separate source of supernatural power, he would be another God - a rival God. This is what the polytheism of paganism believed and taught, and this basically is what the traditional doctrine of the devil teaches.

The ancient Persians for example, as a result of the teaching of Zoroaster, believed that there were two major deities constantly in conflict with each other: Ahura Mazda, god of light and good, and Ahriman, god of darkness and evil. But significantly enough, in a prophecy in which Cyrus, a Persian king is being addressed, God declares that He alone is God, and creates both light and darkness, peace and evil (Isa. 45:1-7).

Being a Persian, Cyrus believed that good and evil came from two separate and mutually antagonistic supernatural sources. But God repudiates the idea of a supernatural rival. He alone is responsible for both good and evil (i.e. calamities and disasters like floods, famines, pestilence (disease), storms, earthquakes etc).

THE ANGELS THAT SINNED

There is a reference to angels that sinned in 2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude v6, but this does not contradict what has been said.

According to these verses, the angels did not stay within the limits of their authority, and they departed from their dwelling place, incurring

punishment from God. The punishment involved being cast down to the lower regions of the earth where they are in everlasting chains under darkness, reserved for the judgement of the great day.

Unfortunately, many do not understand or appreciate that the word “angel,” translated from the Greek word “angelos” simply means “messenger.” But the word itself does not denote the nature of the messenger. The messenger could be human or divine. The same word is applied equally to both in Scripture.

Realizing this, some translations of the Bible have tried to help make a distinction between the two, by translating angelos two different ways. When they thought that the reference was to a human messenger, they simply translated it “messenger.” But when they thought it referred to a divine messenger, they transliterated it; i.e. they carried the “angel” part of “angelos” straight over into the English.

“Angelos” has actually been translated “messenger” in relation to human messengers in the following places in the New Testament: Matt. 11:10. Mk. 1:2. Lk. 7:24, 27. 9:52. Jam. 2:25.

The same applies in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word “malak” is translated “angel” 111 times, and “messenger” 98 times.

The translators no doubt meant well when they gave us these two different words from one and the same Hebrew and Greek words, but did they get it right every time? They certainly didn’t get it right when they gave us “angels that sinned,” in view of the fact that angels, in the sense of divine immortal beings, cannot sin. The traditional translation has created a contradiction. It should read “messengers that sinned,” because it refers to human beings, not divine. Some translators do actually render it “messengers that sinned.”

There is only one incident in the Bible that fits the description of the men who did not stay within the limits of their authority and departed from their dwelling place, resulting in being cast down into the bowels of the earth, namely the rebellion led by Korah, recorded in Num. 16.

Korah was from the same priestly tribe of Levi as Moses and Aaron, but Moses and Aaron had been given more authority by God. Korah however, and his fellow Levite priests, although subordinate to Moses and Aaron, had an important office and ministry. They were given considerable authority in relation to the service of the tabernacle and their dwelling place was near the tabernacle on the south side.

Mal. 2:7 refers to the Levite priests and says that each one is “the messenger of the Lord.” The word “messenger” comes from the same Hebrew word elsewhere translated “angel.” The Levites were therefore

the “angels” of the Old Testament church!

In connection with this, it is interesting to note that the leaders of the New Testament church are also called angels in Rev. 1:20. 2:1, 8, 12, 18. 3:1, 7, 14.

It is also interesting to note that the marginal reference in Mal. 2:7 refers to Ecc. 5:6 which relates to a vow being declared before “the angel.” The fact that the translators have connected the messenger of the Lord with the angel indicates they believed the angel was a Levite - a priest. The Good News Bible actually translates it as “God’s priest” instead of angel.

Korah then, and his fellow priests were “angels,” and they certainly sinned. They did not stay within the limits of their authority as Num. 16 reveals. They became jealous of Moses and Aaron, resentful that they had more authority. So they stirred up a rebellion against them. They left their dwelling place south of the tabernacle and marched up to accuse Moses and Aaron of assuming too much authority. They claimed that they were just as entitled to do the things Moses and Aaron had been appointed to do, such as offering up incense.

Moses therefore invited them to attempt it and see the outcome. Being presumptuous and self-willed they did. The result was: “God did not spare them, but cast them down to hell.” We are told in Num. 16 that the ground opened up under them and swallowed them up, then closed over them. “They were delivered into chains under darkness, reserved for the judgement of the great day.”

It is significant to note that the verses in 2 Pet. 2:24 and Jude v6 relating to the angels that sinned, do not mention the words “devil” or “satan.” To affirm that these “angels” are a fallen angel devil and satan is an assumption. The text does not teach that.

Neither is there any mention of heaven being the place from which they were cast down. One does not have to be in heaven to be cast into the bowels of the earth.

Neither is there any hint or suggestion that those cast into hell are freely and actively roaming the earth, tempting people to sin and rebel. Quite the opposite. They have been delivered into everlasting chains, reserved for judgement.

THE SONS OF GOD TOOK WIVES

Gen. 6:1-4 is also regarded as teaching that angels sinned. The passage refers to the sons of God being attracted to the daughters of

men, and marrying them. Reference is also made to giants being there in those days. From this it has been concluded that the sons of God were angels, and the giants were the product of their marriage.

Now, it is true that angels are sometimes referred to as sons of God in the Bible, but so also are men. So how do we decide between the two? Quite easily, because Jesus plainly taught that angels do not marry! (Lk. 20:35-36). The sons of God in Gen. 6 must therefore be men.

It is natural to wonder why the sons of God are referred to as “of God,” and the women “of men.” The answer is that “of God” signifies spiritual birth, and “of men” signifies natural birth, i.e. of the flesh. For example, Jn. 1:13 says those who are converted and spiritual are “born, not of man, but of God.”

The world was divided into two groups: the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed, i.e. the church and the world. The woman’s seed were the descendants of Seth who “called upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26). The serpent’s seed were the descendants of Cain who were violent and vindictive (Gen. 4:23-24).

We read in Lk. 3:38 that Adam was a “son of God” and his genealogy through to Christ is traced through Seth. Seth’s line was the holy line, and consisted of many great holy men of God who were sons of God.

Noah and his family were descendants of Seth. They were “of God.” There were others also, but they started mingling with and marrying the descendants of Cain. They were attracted to the beautiful women of the world. Drawn away by the lust of the eye and flesh, they abandoned the divine principle that the holy seed should not mingle with the unholy, nor be unequally yoked together in marriage. This led to a great apostasy - a “falling away” from the faith, resulting in 8 people - Noah and his family, being the only ones left who faithfully walked with God.

Regarding the reference to the giants: A careful reading of Gen. 6:1-4 reveals that they were not the product of marriage between the sons of God and daughters of men. The record clearly states that there were already giants in existence beforehand.

LUCIFER

Isa. 14:12 is another foundation text used to support the view that the devil is a fallen angel. In the A.V. it reads:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut to the ground, you who have weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my

throne above the stars of God: I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.”

The saying that “a text without a context is a pretext,” is particularly true in this instance. By not taking into account the context of the statement, it has been misinterpreted and misapplied.

It is clearly stated in the fourth verse that it is a proverb against the king of Babylon. We learn from this that 2 key points govern the interpretation: 1. The discourse is a “proverb.” 2. It concerns “the king of Babylon,” not an angel. The words “angel,” “devil” and “satan” do not occur in the whole passage.

Verse 16 refers to Lucifer as “the man who made the earth to tremble.” The humanity and mortality of this man is reinforced in v11, 15 where, as a result of his fall, he is depicted lying down helpless in a grave as a rotting corpse, covered with worms and maggots. Did this happen to tradition’s sinful angels as a result of their fall?!

Isa. 14:10 says that as a result of Lucifer’s fall, he became weak and powerless like various kings he toppled from their thrones. Once again the weakness and powerlessness of Lucifer as a result of his fall is not consistent with the lively, active, powerful devil who is supposed to have been roaming the earth since his fall, seeking to devour like a lion.

In the first 3 verses of Isa. 14, reference is made to Israel receiving God’s mercy as a result of the enemy falling. Verse 3 says it results in “rest” for Israel and “rest, quiet, singing and rejoicing” for the rest of the earth (v7-8). Was this the result of the devil being cast out of heaven? According to tradition, quite the opposite was the case.

A careful reading of Isa. 14 reveals that the discourse is prophetic, not historical. It relates to the future not the past. The prophecy was given around 700 B.C. and relates to the fall of Babylon which took place 160 years later in 539 B.C. It has nothing to do with rebel angels being cast out of heaven over 3,000 years beforehand. Isa. 14 is at least 3,000 years too late to be predicting such an event!

A PROVERB

In attempting to interpret the passage, it is particularly important to keep in mind that it is a “proverb.” A proverb is a method of conveying truth by the use of metaphor and hyperbole - language which cannot be accepted on face value and which is not expected to be taken literally.

This is evident in v8 where nations, represented as trees which

Babylon had attacked and chopped down, are depicted as rejoicing over the fact that Babylon also has finally been chopped down like a tree.

In its context, the name Lucifer is applied to the king of Babylon. It has been translated from the Hebrew word “heylel” which means brightness, and relates to the morning star, i.e. the planet Venus. Many modern translations render it “bright morning star.”

The reason for the king of Babylon being likened to the planet Venus is because after climbing higher and higher in the sky morning by morning, Venus never reaches the zenith but hesitates, and then day by day sinks back to the horizon and disappears from sight. The sinking or falling takes place at a faster rate than its ascent.

In his pride, the king of Babylon likewise had a soaring ambition to rise above all kings and nations to be brighter and more conspicuous, but slipped back and fell into oblivion.

In the words of the New Bible Commentary: “The picture is of a highly metaphorical nature, and deals with the eclipse, overthrow and death of the Babylonian tyrant. The colours of the taunting poetry and imagery are superb and awesome ...”

ORIGIN OF THE WORD LUCIFER

It would be natural to wonder how the word “Lucifer” originated. During the third century B.C. the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, and the Hebrew word “heylel” was translated into the Greek word “phos,” from which the word “phosphorous” is derived, which means brightness, luminous. “Phos” was the name given by the Greeks to Venus.

About 650 years later, during the fourth century A.D. Jerome, the renowned Roman Catholic theologian, translated the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures into Latin. This translation became known as the Vulgate, and was accepted as the authentic text of the Scriptures by the Roman Catholic church.

Jerome translated the Hebrew “heylel” and the Greek “phos” into the Latin equivalent which was Lucifer, the Latin name for Venus. This is how the word originated. It is a Latin word, chosen by a Roman Catholic theologian, and first appeared in print in a Bible 300 years after New Testament times.

Most authorities agree that it was from around the period of Jerome, in the third century A.D. that Lucifer started to be regarded as the name of Satan - an angel cast out of heaven. But it is clear that the New Testament

Christians and those after them during the next few centuries never used the name!

During the sixteenth century, England broke away from the Roman Catholic church, resulting in the formation of the Church of England. Naturally, they wanted a Bible in their own language, so they translated the Vulgate into English.

The English people had, for centuries, espoused the Roman Catholic doctrine of Lucifer being the name of the devil, so they retained the name in their translation. Instead of translating Lucifer into English and giving “daystar” or “bright morning star,” they left it as it was and transliterated it, i.e. carried it over letter by letter. In so doing, they superimposed a Latin word on the English translation.

And so the name Lucifer was retained and perpetuated, resulting in millions of people throughout the ensuing centuries believing it was the name of a fallen angel devil.

But the simple truth is that Lucifer refers to the planet Venus and is applied metaphorically to the king of Babylon. Many modern Bible Dictionaries and Commentaries agree with this.

The footnote to Isa. 14:12 in an early edition of the Amplified Bible says this: “Light-bringer” or “shining one,” was originally translated “Lucifer,” but because of the association of that name with satan it is not now used. Conscientious students agree that the application of the name Lucifer to satan, in spite of long and confident teaching to that effect, is completely erroneous ... Nowhere in the Bible is satan called Lucifer. The misapplication of the name has existed since the third century A.D.”

I WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN

The metaphorical nature of the proverbial discourse in Isa. 14 is certainly apparent where the king is referred to as saying in his heart: “I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will be like the Most High.”

There are several ways of interpreting the king’s ambition to ascend into heaven:

A. In Dan. 4 the king of Babylon is represented by a tree which grew to a great height, reaching up to heaven, but which the Lord caused to be cut down and fall to the ground. It represented the king’s proud and soaring ambition to be great and exalted above all other kings and nations. Like many ancient pagan kings, he no doubt wanted to be deified and

regarded as a god.

It is evident that “heaven” in this instance, represents the political power and greatness of the king - his lofty, exalted and dominant position, not to mention the pride that went with it, which is mentioned in Dan. 4:30.

Clouds and heaven are used metaphorically in Job 20:6 in relation to the pride and soaring ambition of the ungodly: “Though his pride mount up to the heavens, and his head reach the clouds, yet he shall perish forever.”

The fall of Jerusalem and its king is described in Lam. 2:1 as “cast down from heaven upon earth.”

Similar language is applied to Babylon in Jer. 51:53: “Though Babylon should mount up to heaven and though she should fortify her strong height, yet from Me shall destroyers come to her says the Lord.”

Also the city of Capernaum: “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell” (Lk. 10:15).

A parallelism in Isa. 1:2 and 10 shows that “heavens” can signify “rulers” i.e. those in elevated positions.

Even though Christians have their feet firmly on the ground, they are referred to in Eph. 1:3, 10 as being in “heavenly places” because of their position in Christ. The same expression is also used in Eph. 3:10 and 6:12 in relation to political and secular rulers, i.e. governments and authorities, referred to as “principalities and powers” in the A.V. i.e. “higher powers” (Rom. 13:1).

These principalities and powers have nothing to do with fallen angels. This is evident in Titus 3:1 where Christians are told to be subject to them. This obviously does not mean they have to submit to, and obey sinful angels! The following statement explains the meaning: “Obey magistrates, to be ready for every good work.”

Eph. 3:10 refers to the church preaching to the principalities and powers to convert them. But the New Testament church was not commissioned to preach to fallen angels! It did, however, try to convert people in high places - kings, queens, princes, tetrarchs, governors etc.

B. Many Scriptures use the word “heaven” in a general sense to refer to the air or far distant horizon. In Isa. 13:5, the Medes (who lived in a mountainous area south of the Caspian Sea) are referred to as coming “from the end of heaven,” which is explained in the same verse to mean “from a far country.” Similar to this is a reference in Deu. 30:4 to Israel being driven to “the uttermost parts of heaven.” This refers to being dispersed to far distant horizons.

On this basis, the king of Babylon's words: "I will ascend into heaven" could mean: "I will go into a far country - to the far distant horizon - up into the remote mountains." If so, what place did he have in mind? A clue is given in the words that follow: "I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north ... I will be like the Most High."

THE MOUNT OF THE CONGREGATION IN THE SIDES OF THE NORTH

These same words are used in Ps. 48:1-2 to describe Jerusalem, the city of God. Being the place chosen by God for the tribes of Israel to congregate for worship, it was the "mount of the congregation."

The city of Jerusalem was on an elevated site consisting of a number of mountains, and the temple of God was built on one of these. Ps. 78:68-69 says it was built "like the high heavens" and its destruction by the Babylonians is referred to in Lam. 2:1 in terms of being "cast down from heaven."

Not only was the temple "in heaven" in the sense of being on an elevated site, but it also represented heaven, for the Lord dwelt in it. The ark of the covenant in the most holy place represented God's throne on earth.

In view of this, it is not difficult to see Isa. 14:13 as a prophecy foretelling the time when the king of Babylon would cast his proud and ambitious eyes toward the far distant horizon of heaven, to the mountain heights of Judah, and ascend there to the mount of the temple of the Lord, and sit there imagining in his conceit that he had usurped the throne of the Most High God of Israel.

ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD

The context of the reference to the king of Babylon's ambition to exalt his throne "above the stars of God," relates to ascending to Jerusalem and sitting on the holy temple mount.

As in the case of the "day star" (Lucifer) representing the king of Babylon, the stars of God are also metaphorical, not literal. They are associated with "the mount of the congregation" in Jerusalem, and therefore involve Israelites who were eventually conquered by the king of Babylon.

Stars were used as a metaphor for Israel very early in her history as

can be seen in Gen. 37:9-10.

Stars also represent Israelites in Dan. 8. Verses 9-10 refer to an enemy attacking “the army of heaven, the stars themselves, casting some of them to the ground and trampling upon them.” Verses 23-24 inform us that the stars represent “the holy people” (Jews) who were going to be cast down by a Gentile king.

The 12 stars in Rev. 12:1 of course, refer to the 12 tribes of Israel. Revelation chapter 12 is another passage which forms part of the foundation of the doctrine of the fallen angel devil and will be considered shortly.

WAS LUCIFER A TYPE?

Some concede that the primary reference in Isa. 14 is to the king of Babylon, but claim that it does not refer solely to him. They believe that the fall of the king of Babylon was a type of the fall of an angel-devil, and therefore a double fulfilment is involved. But a type must precede an antitype; it must occur before the event to which it points, and not point backwards to events that took place in the past. Isa. 14 is at least 3,000 years too late to be a type of the fall of tradition’s devil!

Whenever Scripture goes to the trouble of providing types, it also makes clear reference to the antitype. This is where the traditional concept of a fallen angel devil falls down badly. It claims that Isa. 14 (and Ezk. 28 which will be covered shortly) are a type of the fall of their angel-devil, but cannot provide an antitype in the Bible to back it up. It is like assuming a word has a certain meaning, then quoting the word to prove the meaning. We call this reasoning in a circle.

One exponent of the traditional view of the devil wrote these words: “If Isa. 14 and Ezk. 28 are not accepted as types of the fall of the devil, we would be left in the dark concerning the entrance of sin into the universe, and with little information concerning the history and ambitions of the enemy of God and man.”

This is quite an admission but very true. Take away Isa. 14 and Ezk. 28 as types and the doctrine has no foundation to stand upon, and this is the position. It is based upon self-appointed types. It is a concept that has no origin in the Word of God.

REVELATION TWELVE

Let us now turn to Rev. 12 which, as mentioned before, also forms part of the foundation of tradition's doctrine of a fallen angel devil.

This chapter refers to a woman in heaven clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of 12 stars. It also refers to a great red dragon in heaven, having 7 heads and 10 horns, who lashes out with his tail and casts one third of the woman's stars to the earth. Then Michael the archangel appears and fights against the dragon and casts him and his agents down to the earth.

Tradition tells us that the dragon refers to an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven along with one third of the angels who supported his rebellion. This was supposed to have happened around the time of the fall of man. But there are several problems with this interpretation.

First: the one third of the stars that were cast down to the earth belonged to the woman not the dragon. They were the woman's allies not the dragons. Tradition has muddled and twisted the facts. It claims God cast one third of the stars down because they were allies of the dragon. But that is not what the text says. It says the dragon cast the stars down because they belonged to the woman.

Second point: The book of Revelation is prophetic (Rev. 1:1, 3). The message relates to events that would take place "hereafter" (1:19. 4:1) i.e. after the first century when it was revealed. The message does not relate to historical events that took place prior to the first century. It is impossible therefore to relate Rev. 12 back to the time of the fall of man 4,000 years in the past. Rev. 12 is 4,000 years too late to account for the origin of tradition's devil. It relates to end time events, not events at the beginning of time.

Evidence that Rev. 12 is prophetic of end time events can be seen in Rev. 12 itself in v10 where we are told that as a result of the dragon being cast out, the kingdom of God comes. God's kingdom certainly didn't come when tradition's devil was supposed to have been cast down to earth. Paradise was lost, not regained! God's kingdom won't come until Christ comes, and Rev. 12 relates to events that will occur during that epoch of history.

As most students of Bible prophecy know, Israel is the focal centre of Bible prophecy, especially end time prophecy. Many prophecies teach that the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ will be precipitated by the invasion of Israel by anti-Israel forces.

Israel is certainly the focal centre of Rev. 12. She is signified by the woman with 12 stars. The 12 stars are the give-away sign! As far back as Joseph's dream of the stars in Gen. 37, 12 stars have symbolized the 12 tribes of Israel. (Also see Dan. 8:10, 24).

The dragon actually refers to the crocodile and in Old Testament times it symbolized the anti-Israel forces of Egypt and Babylon (Iraq today). These nations crushed, devoured and swallowed Israel. For examples of Egypt and Babylon being referred to as a dragon, see Jer. 51:34, 53. Isa. 51:9. In Isa. 27:1 Egypt is referred to not only as a dragon but also a serpent. And the fact that Isa. 51:9 refers to the Egyptian dragon being "in ancient times... in generations of old," we can see how Egypt could be referred to not only as "the great dragon" but also "that old serpent."

And she could certainly be called "devil" and "satan," which simply mean false accuser and adversary. As we shall see: anyone among fallen man, be it an individual, nation or nations, if they slander and oppose God or His people, they are devil and satan.

The dragon in Rev. 12 symbolizes anti-Israel forces which will invade and attack Israel and destroy one third of the Jewish population prior to divine deliverance. The symbol of the dragon can be compared with the beast in Dan. 7 which had 10 horns, and which represented a confederacy of nations which would persecute God's people, both natural and spiritual Israel.

My own personal view is that the dragon in Rev. 12 refers to Israel's old arch enemy Egypt and the 10 horns represent 10 anti-Israel Moslem nations who will confederate with Egypt in the end time and invade Israel. Several prophecies indicate that Egypt will turn against Israel in the end time and be her adversary (satan). See Joel 3:19.

We have to continually bear in mind that the language in Revelation is symbolic and cannot be taken literally. Reference to a woman in heaven clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and a third of the stars being cast upon the earth and travailing is obviously symbolic. Refusal to acknowledge this would force tradition into believing their fallen-angel devil is not an angel, but a hideous creature - a crocodile with 7 heads and 10 horns and a long swishing tail that extends light years out into space!

Reference to the woman and dragon being "in heaven" simply signifies, as in the Lucifer passage in Isa. 14, political power. And who can deny the political and military power that Israel has attained in the Middle East? She is the number one power. She even has nuclear warheads to cover and protect herself, which could be signified by being

clothed with the sun. (A nuclear warhead is a miniature sun, involving the same fiery process that takes place on the sun, generating incredibly intense heat).

The anti-Israel confederacy represented by the dragon and 10 horns, also occupies a position of power and for that reason is also depicted as being “in heaven.” It is important to note that both the woman and the dragon are depicted as being in heaven, not just the dragon. They are side by side in heaven. Significantly enough, the rise to political power of Moslem nations in the Middle East, due to oil wealth, has synchronized with Israel’s revival as a nation and rise to power.

Reference to being “in heaven” could also be designed to indicate the advent of aviation and aerial power in the form of an air force. One could well imagine the war that would take place “in heaven” i.e. in the atmosphere, in the event of enemy nations, including fighter planes, attacking Israel.

The fact that Michael the archangel comes to defend and deliver the woman from the dragon confirms that the woman signifies Israel, because it clearly taught in Dan. 12:1 that Michael’s mission is to have charge of and defend Israel.

Much more time could be spent on Rev. 12 explaining the various symbols, but a full exposition of this passage of Scripture does not come within the scope of this present treatise.

SATAN AS LIGHTNING FELL FROM HEAVEN

The statement of Jesus that he “beheld satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Lk. 10:18) is also quoted to support the fallen-angel devil theory. But nowhere is it stated that satan is a fallen angel, and as we shall see, the word satan does not mean that. And as far as “heaven” is concerned in Lk. 10:18, it is surely significant that only 3 verses before this, in v15, Jesus used the word metaphorically, saying: “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.”

The metaphorical usage of the word here, not to mention the other places in the Bible, should be taken into account before rushing in and giving it a literal application.

To regard satan in Lk. 10:18 as a fallen angel creates a contradiction. In its context, Jesus’ statement: “I beheld satan as lightning fall from heaven” was made in response to his disciples rejoicing over the fact that they had been successful in casting out demons, i.e. healing those who were mentally and physically sick.

Now, according to the common view, satan and his cohorts were cast out of heaven about 4,000 years before Christ. And, as a result of being expelled, they are supposed to have been functioning as demons invading and possessing people, afflicting them with mental and physical sicknesses.

But Lk. 10:18 teaches the opposite. Instead of linking demon possession with the fall of satan, it links dispossession. Instead of teaching that demons invade people as a result of satan's fall, it teaches that demons were being cast out of people as a result of satan's fall. Jesus clearly equates victory and success over sickness and disease with satan's fall, whereas tradition equates the advent of sickness with satan's fall.

Whoever satan was, he "fell" during Christ's ministry when power over sickness was manifested, not 4,000 years beforehand. And the "fall" was very conspicuous by the remarkable and outstanding healings that were taking place. Jesus referred to lightning flashing across a dark cloudy sky as an example of the conspicuousness.

As shall be pointed out, "satan" simply means adversary, and has a number of applications in Scripture. In Lk. 10:18 the adversary is the cause of people being inflicted with sickness. This immediately identifies the adversary as sin, because sin is constantly presented in Scripture as the cause of sickness. For this reason sin is frequently personified in Scripture. It is treated as a personal, malignant enemy, enthroned over the world, ruling with great power, tempting people to disobey God, and causing people to be inflicted with sickness, disease and death.

When Jesus came, sin was a great champion, having ruled and reigned over everyone. But Jesus toppled this enemy from his high tower as prince of the world, and cast him down, and this was evident in the spectacular deliverances from sickness and death performed by Jesus and his disciples.

SATAN TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

In looking at the passages of Scripture which are thought to teach that satan is a fallen angel, 2 Cor. 11:14-15 should be included. It reads:

"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness"

This statement says nothing about satan having once been, or now being in reality, an angel, let alone a fallen angel. It says satan "transforms" himself into an angel. But how could he transform himself

into an angel if he was already an angel?

The word “transform” means to change into something different. Some modern translations use the word “disguise” or “masquerade.” This means that whoever the satan is, he is not really an angel; he only gives the appearance of being one; he disguises or masquerades as such.

Keeping in mind the fact that “satan” simply means adversary, and “angel” means “messenger,” and can apply to humans, it is not difficult to understand the statement as referring to a human adversary (a false teacher), under the power of sin, masquerading as a messenger of God.

The context of 2 Cor. 11:14-15 confirms this application. A careful comparison between verses 14, 15, 23, reveals that the phrase “messenger of light” runs parallel with “ministers of righteousness,” and “ministers of Christ.” It is clear from this that the word “light” relates to “righteousness” which of course relates to Christ.

The “satan” or adversary in 2 Cor. 11:14 relates to an enemy of Christ claiming to be a light bearer of divine truths and whose followers claimed to be ministers of Christ. In actual fact they were “false apostles and deceitful workers” as we read in verse 13.

This section of Scripture has nothing to do with fallen angels, but apostate Jews who were undermining Paul’s influence in the church. Paul indicates this when he says: “Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I” (v22).

THE ANOINTED CHERUB

Ezk. 28 is also one of the foundation texts for the doctrine of a fallen angel devil. This chapter refers to a certain person who had been in “Eden the garden of God,” and upon “the holy mountain of God.” He was “perfect” from the day he was created until his heart got filled with pride, causing him to sin and be cast out.

There is no mention of the words devil, satan, angel or heaven in this passage. To conclude that it refers to an angel-devil cast out of heaven is to assume something that is not stated in the text.

According to v12, the whole discourse is “a lamentation over the king of Tyre.” It concerns a man, not an angel. The word “man” is stated twice in v2, 9, but never “angel.”

TYRE

Tyre was a city on the Mediterranean coast of Phoenicia, known as Lebanon today. She was a great maritime power and her fleets of ships traded far and wide with many nations. This is what is meant by the statement: “You have been in Eden, the garden of God.” This does not refer to the “garden eastward in Eden” in which the Lord placed Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:8). “Eden the garden of God” is quite a different description from “a garden eastward in Eden.” Eden was a large extensive area of land throughout which Tyre traded and did business. But the garden in which Adam was placed was not all Eden, but “eastward in Eden,” i.e. the garden did not occupy the whole territory of Eden, but just an eastern sector of it.

The following references in Scripture to Eden indicate that it was a large and extensive area, at least encompassing the whole of Mesopotamia, if not the whole territory of the Assyrian empire: 2 Kng. 19:12 and Isa. 37:12. Ezk. 31. Ezk. 27:33.

According to Ezk. 27:17, Judah (the Jews) and Israel were also among Tyre’s merchants who traded with her, and the land of Israel could very well have been encompassed in the area designated “Eden.”

“The holy mountain of God” referred to in Ezk. 28:14 on which the king of Tyre had walked, refers to the holy mount in Jerusalem, as many Scriptures testify. (Ezk. 20:40. Dan. 9:16, 20. 11:45. Ps. 48:1. Obad. v16).

The “holy mountain of God” is actually the same place referred to as “the mount of the congregation” in Isa. 14:13 where the king of Babylon aspired to sit.

It is not surprising that the king of Tyre had been there in view of the fact that he had supplied timber for the temple that was built there, and sent craftsmen to help construct it.

The king of Tyre became very rich through his extensive trade, and accumulated great wealth, including precious stones of all varieties. “Every precious stone was thy covering” is how it is put in Ezk. 28:13 in the A.V. The Good News Bible puts it like this: “You wore gems of every kind.” This is simply stating that the king adorned himself, and no doubt his palace and temples, with the treasures he accumulated.

In the early days, the king was “perfect” i.e. blameless; of exemplary character. He loved David, the king of Israel, and when David’s son Solomon ascended the throne, the king of Tyre rejoiced and praised the God of Israel. A league was made between them which is referred to in Amos 1:9 as a “brotherly covenant.” As already mentioned, the king of

Tyre provided Solomon with servants and materials to build a palace and temple at Jerusalem (1 Kng. 5. 2 Sam. 5:11. 2 Chr. 2:12-14).

INIQUITY WAS FOUND

But the king's high standard of conduct was not maintained. As Ezk. 28:15 says: "Iniquity was found in you." The nature of his sin is indicated in v16-18: "Your commerce grew so great, lawlessness filled your heart and you went wrong ... Your beauty made you arrogant; you misused your wisdom to increase your dignity ... So great was your sin in your wicked trading, that you desecrated your sanctuaries."

The beauty of the king's port and his own adornment, and the success of trade went to his head. Riches and prosperity filled him with pride and greed, causing him to stoop to unrighteous trading and corrupt attitudes and practices.

The king became so power drunk and inflated with pride, that he started thinking of himself in terms of being a god, imagining himself to be wiser than Daniel (Ezk. 28:1-3). He became obsessed with an ambition to be wiser than one of Israel's wisest men. This competitive spirit suggests rivalry and jealousy - an unhealthy attitude towards Israel.

This attitude stood in sharp contrast to the attitude of the king in David and Solomon's day. Solomon was the wisest man in Israel in his time and the king of Tyre was happy to acknowledge it and not try and compete in a proud and jealous spirit (2 Chr. 2:12).

Times have clearly changed in Ezk. 28. The king is no longer kindly disposed towards Israel. In fact, as Ezk. 26:1-2 indicates, Tyre had become quite hateful towards Israel, reacting with great joy and rejoicing when the Babylonians destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple with fire, and took the surviving Jews captive. In fact, some see the reference in Ezk. 28:14 to the king of Tyre walking up and down among the stones of fire on the holy mountain, as referring to him walking among the smouldering ruins of the temple, gloating over its destruction.

Ezk. 26:2 makes reference to Tyre rejoicing over the downfall of Jerusalem, being delighted because Israel's commercial power was broken, and she stood to gain in trade as a result.

To make matters worse, they captured Jewish fugitives fleeing from the Babylonians, and handed them over to their enemy, the Edomites. Both Lam. 1:2 and Amos 1:9 refer to this, saying that Tyre did not keep the treaty of friendship she had made, and betrayed her ally.

Tyre failed to realize that her prosperity was due to blessing Israel,

and that the moment she turned against Israel, she would sign her death warrant and come under God's curse. It was Ezekiel's duty to draw attention to this, and this is what chapters 26 to 28 are all about. A sinful fallen angel is totally irrelevant!

ANOINTED CHERUB

The reference to the anointed cherub that covers in Ezk. 28:14 is applied to the king of Tyre in the A.V. but Hebrew scholars point out that it is an obscure and uncertain passage in the Hebrew text and difficult to decipher.

Many modern translations do not give the sense that the king of Tyre himself was the anointed cherub. They render it to mean that an anointed cherub was provided by God to be a covering or guardian for Tyre. This teaches that God provided Tyre with special protection during the time of exemplary character when supporting Israel. But, because Tyre turned against Israel, God turned against her. The anointed cherub that covered and protected her, destroyed and banished her by making her fall prey to the Babylonians.

Even if the A.V. was correct and the king of Tyre himself was referred to as "the anointed cherub that covers," it could still be understood in that light without having to apply it to an angel.

For example, Cyrus the king of Persia is referred to as the Lord's "anointed," because he was specially appointed by God to conquer Babylon, and release the Jewish captives so that they could return to their land and rebuild the temple (Isa. 44:28 to 45:4). Tyre was likewise "anointed" to help Israel build the temple, and to "cover" Israel by acting as a buffer zone, protecting her from armies invading from the north. The covenant or league into which Tyre and Israel entered, no doubt involved agreement to "cover" for each other in the event of invasion by an enemy.

Regarding the "cherub" being applied to the king of Tyre: Hastings Bible Dictionary presents the view that the king is being compared to a holy angel i.e. the king was "like an angel." the N.I.V. seems to give this sense: 'You were anointed as a guardian cherub.'

If so, this would not be the first time that a man was likened to an angel. Four times in the Old Testament we read that David was "as an angel of God" (1 Sam. 29:9. 2 Sam. 14:17, 20. 19:27). In Zech. 12:8 we read the Jews at Jerusalem "shall be as the angel of the Lord," and it is recorded in Gal. 4:14 that Paul said to the church: "You received me as an angel of God."

Those who believe that the guardian cherub in Ezk. 28 is a fallen angel, usually maintain that he is the same person as the cherubim in Gen. 3:24 which guarded the path to the tree of life.

In answer to this it needs to be pointed out that the cherubim in Gen. 3 took up the position to guard the path after Adam and Eve sinned and were expelled from the garden. If, as tradition believes, the rebel angel was cast out of heaven before Adam and Eve sinned, and used the serpent to tempt them into sin, would God use that same sinful angel to guard the entrance to the garden to keep sinners out? Would God use an unholy being to guard and protect holy things? Not likely!

THE SERPENT

In seeking to understand the origin and true nature of the devil, we need to go back to the beginning to the time when sin originated. Attention must therefore be directed to the serpent in Gen. 3. Original sin was clearly caused by the serpent deceiving Eve into disobeying a command to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

THREE MAJOR FACTORS

There were three major factors which led to sin and the fall of our first parents: 1. The tree of knowledge of good and evil. 2. The command to not eat from it. 3. The serpent who deceived Eve into eating, by telling a lie. Take away any one of these factors and the sin would not have been committed. All three played a part in the process.

Now, if we were to ask the question, "Who made the tree, the command and the serpent?" the answer of Scripture is "God." He was responsible for all three. (Gen. 2:8-9; 16-17. 3:1). God, of course, did not make the serpent lie or Adam and Eve sin, and we need to be clear about that. However, it is an unavoidable fact that He did make the tree, the command and the serpent, and that they were involved in the circumstances which led to the fall.

Now, God in His foreknowledge would have foreseen this, yet He still brought those three factors into existence. This being the case, there must have been a good reason for so doing. Unfortunately, failure to understand this has led to misconceptions concerning the serpent, so we need to go back to the beginning to get the proper perspective.

VERY GOOD - NO GOOD

Gen. 1:31 tells us that “God saw everything He had made, and behold, it was very good.” This “very good” condition prior to the fall of man, is contrasted in Rom. 7:18 with the condition after the fall: “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” Paul is referring, as he says in v 17, to “sin that dwells within me.” It is evident from the context that Paul is referring to sinful impulses and inclinations deep within his flesh nature which are opposed to law and righteousness and have a constant bias towards evil.

Originally, man was not created with such sinful propensities. He was created “very good.” However, this does not mean that Adam and Eve were created with a ready-made, fully developed and mature godly character. This is not how God goes about developing such character. This is not what “very good” means in Gen. 1:31, as is evident from the fact that the statement is applied to “everything God had made.” This includes not just man, but animals, birds, fish etc which are incapable of the moral and spiritual qualities and attributes that are usually associated with a godly character from the divine point of view.

Everything was very good in a natural physical sense, being well formed, well ordered and constituted. As far as man was concerned, he was a good physical being with a good body and brain. The mind functioned well in its thinking and reasoning processes, and all the bodily parts worked perfectly.

But man was made with these things. He didn’t have to develop them himself. No personal effort was required. He didn’t have to exercise any moral or spiritual powers to acquire them.

NOT CREATED WITH CHARACTER

Character, however, is an entirely different matter. It cannot be immediately or mechanically produced. It cannot be instantly or automatically printed on a person’s mind like words or pictures are printed on a piece of paper as it passes through a photo-copy machine.

Character is something that grows and develops through personal experiences, which require exercising and applying moral and spiritual principles and making decisions and choices.

In this respect, God’s work on man was not finished or complete. The divine edict “Let us make man in our image” had more in view than just a good physical body with a good brain mechanism. The sequel reveals that

the Creator particularly had in mind a man who was good spiritually, who took His word seriously and who made decisions and choices that pleased Him.

MORE WORK TO BE DONE

So then, at the end of the six days of creation, God's physical external work of creation was completed and very good, but in another sense - an internal spiritual sense, it was a work about to begin. There lay ahead a deeper and more wonderful development on a moral and spiritual plane, before God's glory could be fully manifested in man - before man could become in the image of God in the fullest sense.

As we know, physical development and strength requires physical exercise, otherwise the muscles get weak and the flesh goes flabby. And so Adam was required to do physical exercise. He had to cultivate and till the ground (Gen. 2:5, 15). Spiritual development and strength also requires exercise. Heb. 5:14 informs us that spiritually minded people are those who have "exercised their senses to discern both good and evil." It is not difficult to infer from this that both good and evil have to co-exist and be confronted and encountered, before spiritual discernment and the development of godly character can be achieved. Other Scriptures, as we shall see, certainly teach this.

INNOCENT OF GOOD AND EVIL

Now, when Adam and Eve were first created, they were ignorant of both good and evil, and therefore had no opportunity to exercise their senses to discern between the two and develop character. This is obvious from the reference to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If Adam and Eve already had knowledge of, and knew good and evil, and had exercised their senses to discern between them, why is the tree referred to as the source of such knowledge and why are they told not to partake of it?

It is not difficult to conclude that the reason for the tree being put there was to lay a basis upon which a particular series of circumstances could be set in motion, to give Adam and Eve the opportunity to "exercise their senses to discern both good and evil", and so set in motion the processes required for the development of godly character.

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Godly character is obviously character that pleases God, and this can be summed up in two words: “faith” and “obedience.” Faith, according to the Bible’s definition in Heb. 11:1 is “confidence in things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Faith is basically to believe in God and His promises. We are told in Rom. 10:17 that “faith comes from hearing the word of God”, but other Scriptures make it clear that if faith stops at just hearing and doesn’t result in doing, i.e. obedience, it is valueless. True faith is not passive but active. This is the kind of faith Heb. 11:6 refers to when it says “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Obedient faith is the key to godly character!

It should be evident from this then, as mentioned before, that nobody, including Adam, starts life with a ready-made, fully developed, obedient faith. Had this been the case with Adam, he would not have disobeyed God and sinned!

It should also be evident that faith does not grow naturally and automatically like hair or nails, without any spiritual influence or input. No! It requires contact with the word of God and a positive obedient response and application. No one, including Adam and Eve, starts life with this obedient faith, but most are born with the potential for it to be developed.

Being created in the likeness of God, man has a mind endowed with tremendous capabilities. He is capable of tremendous good or evil. He is capable of being very believing or unbelieving, obedient or disobedient, positive or negative, constructive or destructive, divine or diabolical. It is all a question of how he allows his creative potential to be exploited, influenced and directed.

NO BASIS FOR FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Now, some may feel it is incorrect to say that Adam was not created with a ready-made fully developed obedient faith. This point should therefore be clarified. As pointed out before, faith is defined in Heb. 11:1 as “confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Now, when first created, Adam was not required to be convinced of things not seen, not even as far as the presence of God was concerned because divine visitations were made, during which Adam could see and talk to the Lord (Gen. 3:8).

Neither was Adam required to confidently anticipate or hope for

anything. He had everything a man could hope for! He lived in perfect conditions - a paradise in which there were no weeds, wild animals, sickness, disease, war, famine, pestilence and no prospect or fear of death. There were not even any neighbours to argue and contend with or neighbours' wives or husbands to covet.

Adam had perfect uninterrupted fellowship and peace with God. Man, God and all creation were united. Total harmony reigned. As things stood, the conditions requiring faith and hope were non-existent. There was no basis upon which they could develop and be manifested.

The same applies to obedience. When first created, Adam was not obedient in the real sense of the word. He lacked opportunity to exercise obedience because there were not, at that stage, any commandments to obey. At this point, the need for the Lord making a commandment should start to be appreciated. Otherwise it is hard to see the sense in putting a tree in the garden and then commanding them to keep away from it.

A STATE OF FLUX

It would be wrong, of course, to say that Adam was unbelieving and disobedient. This was equally impossible because he had nothing to disbelieve or disobey. Without a law or commandments, both obedience and disobedience are impossible. So Adam was neither believing nor unbelieving, obedient nor disobedient in the strict sense of the words. He was in what has been styled "a provisional state" - a state of flux - a neutral gear, able to go into either forward or reverse.

Adam was innocent of both good and evil, yet capable of both. It all hinged on how he would react and respond when placed under the appropriate conditions and confronted with the opportunity to make his own decision and choice.

Adam was unquestionably in a unique situation and it required a unique set of circumstances to make faith and obedience possible, and this is what the early chapters in Genesis are all about, concerning the tree, the command and the serpent. God was setting in motion a certain train of events to lay a basis on which godly character could be developed.

The command involved a simple law - a prohibition notice on one particular tree, as we read in Gen. 2:16-17: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat, dying you shall die."

GOOD AND EVIL

The penalty for disobedience was mortality and death. This is the “evil” that would result from partaking of the forbidden fruit. With mortality, of course, would come all sorts of other evils as well, such as sickness, disease, sorrow and countless other pressures and problems. And, as a result of experiencing such evils, they would then “know,” as never before (i.e. know experimentally), the “good” they had been experiencing beforehand.

Good and evil are relative conditions and the one cannot be properly known without the other. The same applies to hot and cold, fast and slow, light and dark etc. A person would not really know or understand and appreciate the one without experiencing the other. And so it is with good and evil. One who only saw and experienced good and never evil, would not know how good the good was, and would know nothing about evil. It is the experiencing of evil that throws good into sharp relief, and reveals its goodness. The prodigal son, and many other sons and daughters since, discovered this when they ran away from a good home which they took for granted, and ended up in a bad one.

In the light of all this, it should be appreciated why the forbidden tree is called “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” To partake of this tree constituted transgression of law, which is sin, which results in a bad and guilty conscience, a sense of condemnation and alienation from God, and fear of death.

The fruit of the tree, whatever it was, was not necessary to produce such evils, for they were all the effect of the act of disobedience. For this reason the whole emphasis in the Bible is on sin and death entering the world through the act of disobedience. For this reason also we are not told what kind of fruit it was and we need not be concerned about knowing.

TEMPTING AND TESTING

It cannot be denied that God deliberately placed something forbidden before Adam and Eve - something “good for food and pleasant to the eyes - a tree to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6). Yet He refused to let them have access and partake, and warned that death would result if they did.

Now, this clearly was not a case of God tempting them because it is emphatically affirmed in the Bible that He will never do this (Jam. 1:13). However, He does test and there is a difference, although the Authorised

Version has failed to make the distinction in some places, as for example in Gen. 22:1.

According to Jam. 1:14-15 temptation involves a person being lured and enticed by their own lust or desire. So when the Bible says God does not tempt, it means He does not physically manipulate our mind or emotions or perform some sort of surgical operation, or exercise an hypnotic influence on our brain to inflame and excite our desires and make us sin.

He does, however, test, by arranging or allowing an opportunity to sin to be placed before us. For example He sometimes creates situations which arouse sinful desires, but whether or not we sin, depends on whether we yield to the desires or resist them.

One thing is certain: God will never make us yield. We can never blame Him for that. His desire is that we resist and conquer the desires that lead to sin and build up a strong godly character as a result.

There are many examples in the Bible of God testing His people. For example, He allowed or maybe providentially arranged for David to see Bathsheba in her birthday suit, but He did not inflame David's passions and make him sin. David was lured and enticed into adultery by his own desires and sinned due to yielding to them instead of resisting them.

Such tests are not laying a trap to make people stumble and fall. No! It is a case of "all things working together for good." This is a major theme in the Bible and it starts in the garden of Eden.

Now, in the simple law given to Adam and Eve, they were given something to believe and obey, which they didn't have up till that point of time. They now had opportunity to be convinced of something they could not see, and which their natural senses had never experienced, namely, death. Because sin had not been committed at that stage, the death sentence had not been passed. Death was an unknown quantity. Adam was therefore required to believe the word of God and be convinced of the certainty and reality of what God had stated. Such belief constituted faith, and this had to be put into practice by obeying the commandment.

Of course, as already mentioned, not only did the law provide a basis and opportunity for faith and obedience, but also unbelief and disobedience.

FREEWILL

It should be evident from all this, that man was created with freewill. If not, there was no point in giving him the commandment. Freewill - the

power of choice, is one of the unique abilities with which man has been created. It permits him to decide his own destiny. It enables him to voluntarily follow or defy God.

God, of course, could have made man to be a scrupulously obedient robot if He had desired a mechanical type obedience. He could have placed a fixed printed circuit in man's head, as men do to robots and machines, causing him to only do what the Creator wanted. But God clearly did not want man to be a human machine that blindly obeys without thought, reason or choice. For this reason, God risked the entrance of sin into the world, so that man might be bound to Him by love and not force. God clearly desires moral obedience, not mechanical.

If man's mind had been "programmed" to automatically obey, there could not have been a voluntary love relationship springing from his own personal spontaneous will and desire. There would be no character or depth in it. It would be a very artificial and superficial arrangement, like teaching a parrot to say "I love you," or hypnotising a member of the opposite sex to love and be loyal to you. There could be no satisfaction with that kind of love and loyalty, knowing that it did not spring from the person's own will and desire and choice. There would be no heart and soul in such a relationship. And so, because God is love - a moral God with heart and soul, He would not settle for anything less than a voluntary relationship - a relationship in which His children personally chose to love, serve and obey Him.

It was inevitable therefore, that not only would He create man with freewill, but that He would also create a situation which would provide him with the opportunity to exercise it. This, of course, required two different directions from which to choose - the way of obeying God's word and the way of disobeying.

In view of this, it should be evident how wise and necessary it was for Adam to have access not only to a tree of life in the garden, but also a tree of death, and for God to issue the command in relation to the tree of death.

THE THIRD FACTOR

We now turn our attention to the third major factor which led to the fall of Adam and Eve - the serpent. Can the wisdom of God be seen in making this creature and allowing him to come on the scene? God in His foreknowledge would have known that the serpent would use his subtlety to question and challenge the commandment, yet He allowed it.

Did He allow it as a test of faith and obedience, as a result of which the utmost good could come if the right response was given? Or was the serpent an unwanted, underhanded and unnecessary intrusion and interference by an enemy of God whose presence in the garden could do no possible good at all? Let's think about this and do some digging beneath the surface.

A TESTED FAITH

As we have seen, the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the commandment to not eat from it, were necessary as part of a process designed to bring about obedient faith. However, a passive quiescent faith is one thing, but a tried and tested and active faith is quite another. And it is emphasized throughout the Bible that an untried and untested faith is of no value to God. It is only the faith that stands the test of trials that is "much more precious than gold" (1 Pet. 1:7).

You see, it is relatively easy to believe and have faith when nothing questions, challenges or opposes it. It is easy to have faith when it is never subjected to pressure, criticism, contradiction and opposition. It is easy to have faith when a wall of protection surrounds us, preventing us from being exposed to adverse and antagonistic influences.

Faith can look good like hot-house plants which are protected from the elements, but which can't survive being exposed to the real world - to fluctuating temperatures, wind, hail, frost and snow.

The wise man Solomon wrote: "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (Prov. 24:10). And so God in His wisdom allows His people to be subjected to adversity and conflicts of faith to test and develop them. See 1 Pet. 4:12. Jam. 1:12. Job. 23:10.

GOD ALLOWS EVIL FOR GOOD

When everything is good and going well there can be no trial. Whether we like it or not, there has to be evil - adverse circumstances - negative pressures, before trials can take place. So it should not surprise us that the testing processes of God require the existence of evil, and He therefore allows it. But He does not require fallen angels to produce it! Let's look at some examples.

In Gen. 22 we read that God put Abraham to the test by allowing a message to come to him asking him to do something which in reality was contrary to the divine will, and which God never really intended to be

carried out, namely, the killing of his own son Isaac.

In Judg. 2:21 to 3:3, we read that in order to test Israel, to see whether or not they would be obedient, the Lord left the Canaanites in the land and did not drive them out. In a sense it was like leaving serpents in the garden to test and develop faith and obedience.

In Deu. 13:1-4 we are told that the Lord, in order to test the love and loyalty of His people, would allow false prophets to come in among them telling lies trying to deceive them into turning their back on God and His word.

In some cases, when God's people are bent on pursuing a wrong course and abandoning truth and righteousness, God will actually confirm and strengthen their deception and hurry them to their destruction. An example of this can be found in 1 Kng. 22. This chapter relates to wicked king Ahab who pushed the patience of God too far, resulting in Him sending an angel to be a "lying spirit" in the mouth of the king's prophets. Through these prophets, the angel deceived Ahab into leading his army out to do battle with the Syrians, resulting in his defeat and death.

In Num. 22 we read that due to the prophet Balaam's persistence, God put him to the test by telling him to do something that he had previously been told not to do and was angry with him when he did it. Balaam was expected to know that God does not change His mind in such matters and it proved to be fatal for the prophet.

We learn from 2 Sam. 24:1 and 1 Chr. 21:1 that God put David to the test by allowing him to be provoked into taking a course of action that was contrary to the Divine will. This action involved assessing his military strength by numbering Israel.

In 2 Thes. 2:10-12 the apostle Paul goes so far to say that God will send a strong delusion to those who refuse to welcome and love the truth, causing them to believe a lie, resulting in them being condemned.

GOD CREATES GOOD AND EVIL

It should be clear from these examples that God not only allows evil, but sometimes even creates it. Scripture in fact plainly states this in Isa. 45:7: "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." The word "evil" here means adversity - adverse circumstances, including affliction and death.

Sometimes God does this simply to provide a basis upon which the faith and obedience of His people can be tested and developed, in much the same way as a manufacturer deliberately creates harsh and adverse

conditions and climate to test the strength and endurance of his product before getting a seal of approval. He doesn't do it because he hates his product but because he wants it to be strong and successful.

Other times God creates evil to punish sin. So we need to clearly understand that reference to God creating evil does not mean He creates sin. No! He creates evil to punish sin, and some of the evils He creates to do this are floods, earthquakes, famines and pestilences. There are many examples in the Bible of God doing this.

EVIL ANGELS

More often than not, God uses His holy angels to inflict these evils. For this reason they are referred to in Ps. 78:49 as "evil angels" (Authorised Version). Modern translations render it "destroying angels," or "messengers of calamity" - "messengers of adversity." Because angels are "spirits," the Berkley translation renders "evil angels" as "evil spirits."

Now, when an holy angel is used by God to adversely affect someone, whether it be to test their faith or to punish sin, it is not uncommon for that angel to be referred to as "satan," which means "adversary." An example of this can be found in Num. 22:22 where an angel is called "adversary," which is "satan" in Hebrew, because he stood in the middle of a narrow path forcing Balaam's ass to move over and crush his foot against the wall.

JOB'S SATAN

A particularly good example of God using an angel to create adverse circumstances as a test, is recorded in the book of Job. This angel is referred to as "satan" because of the adversity he inflicted upon Job. But this was no fallen angel. He had not been cast out or banished from heaven. Quite the opposite! He had free access to heaven and engaged in conversation with God, and all the adversity he inflicted on Job was done with the Lord's permission. Throughout the book of Job, the "evil" he experienced is attributed to God many times, but never to a fallen-angel devil! (More about this later).

Job, like Adam, had an hedge around him and his life was pleasant and sweet. He was protected and prospered by God. Under the circumstances it was relatively easy to have faith and be obedient. So God, in His wisdom, allowed the angel to make a breach in the hedge

around Job's "garden", and let waves of adversity enter.

This "evil" had a twofold purpose. It acted as a test and trial of Job's faith and obedience, resulting in him being purged of some deep-rooted and hidden weaknesses, and becoming a stronger and more mature character. And it acted as a punishment upon Job's sinful sons and daughters to whom life had become just one continual round of partying and pleasure seeking.

BACK TO ADAM AND EVE

With these thoughts in mind we come back to Adam and Eve. As things stood, when God first presented them with the commandment to not eat from the tree, there was nothing difficult about this. It wasn't hard to believe and obey. Being innocent and ignorant of good and evil, they simply believed God without doubting, questioning or challenging the commandment. By itself, the commandment did not present a trial to their faith.

Adam and Eve's response was totally passive. There was no resistance, objection or opposition, just total unquestioning submission. The reason for this is because sin had not entered the world at that stage. As pointed out earlier, there was no "sin in the flesh." Their nature was "very good" in contrast to becoming "no good" when sin was finally committed.

When the commandment was presented to Adam, it would not have awakened any desire within him to disobey. At that stage, there was no natural bias or tendency in the flesh nature to rebel against law, as there was afterwards as a result of sin. Human nature since the fall is affected by law quite differently. Rom. 7:9 explains it in these words: "When law comes, sin springs to life."

ANTI-AUTHORITY SPIRIT

Because of sin, a rebellious, anti-law, anti-authority spirit took possession of fallen man, resulting in law having a negative effect. Law and authority provokes and aggravates sin, causing it to manifest itself in rebellion and disobedience. Where there is no law, there is no restraint or restriction on sin. The flesh is left free to do as it pleases and fulfil its ungodly lusts without any sense of shame or guilt. But, when law is imposed, sin resists the restraints and restrictions, and resents not being able to be free to please itself.

Since the fall, sin in the flesh became the prime source of testing of the faith and obedience of God's people. It is the daily battle with this enemy of God that develops godly character.

However, it is important to remember that when God's law was given to Adam and Eve, it did not cause any rebellious thoughts to intrude and resist, because there were no negative or sinful propensities in their nature. The flesh, at that stage, could not produce the desire to disobey and sin.

So, no trial of their faith and obedience was involved up to this point. Something else - another element or factor was required to make the character-developing process complete. Obviously, some adverse circumstance was needed - some dissenting voice which challenged God's commandment and questioned their faith and obedience. Adam and Eve needed to be subjected to a pressure situation in which their freewill could be exercised by making a choice between believing or not believing - obeying or not obeying God.

SIGNIFICANT TIMING

Is it not significant, therefore, that it is precisely at this very point in the Genesis narrative that we are introduced to the serpent, and that he fulfilled the very function that was required to complete the basis on which faith and obedience could be tested? It is very significant indeed, and with these thoughts in mind, we are in a better position to appreciate the role that the serpent played.

THE SERPENT

Gen. 3:1-6 is God's revelation of how sin originated. We are not "left in the dark and with little information" as one exponent of the traditional view has stated, if we don't regard Isa. 14, Ezk. 28 and Rev. 12 as relating to a fallen-angel. Gen. 3 provides us with all the information we need to explain the origin of sin, and if it is not enough to explain the traditional belief, then there is something wrong with that belief. If we are still in the dark after reading Gen. 3, then we are truly in the dark, because all the light that is necessary to explain the origin of sin is shed in this chapter.

Taking it as it stands, Gen. 3 speaks about a serpent "more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." This "beast" (creature) suggested a course of action be taken contrary to what

God commanded. It involved crossing the law-line established by God. This aroused Eve's desires and induced them in a direction opposite to God's will. She yielded to these newly excited lusts and allowed them to take control of her mind and emotions and lure her into committing sin, and Adam later followed suit.

A STRAIGHTFORWARD ACCOUNT

This is Scripture's simple straightforward account of how sin originated and entered the world. We read this account and ask ourselves; "where is tradition's fallen-angel devil in this transaction?" We are directed to the tempter. We have a good look at him, and find that he is a serpent, an animal - a creature of the field which the Lord made more subtle than any other creature. We say, "Here is the tempter, a serpent, but where is the fallen angel?"

Tradition tells us that the fallen angel used the serpent to bring about the fall. We ask for proof - just one verse in the Bible will do, but not one is forthcoming. All that can be offered is the argument that it is impossible for a serpent to speak by itself, and therefore it must have been someone else. This assumption is the point at which all the error starts. This is the big stumbling-block. It is, in fact, from this single point that the doctrine of a fallen-angel devil has developed.

TRUTH CAN BE STRANGER THAN FICTION

In view of the fact that there is no foundation in the Bible for a fallen-angel devil, and no reference to such a devil speaking through the serpent, requires us, whether we like it or not, to accept what Gen. 3 says about the serpent speaking himself. To reject this on the grounds that we have never heard a serpent speak is not good enough.

Asses don't normally speak either, but it is recorded in Num. 22 that Balaam's ass did, and the New Testament confirms this (2 Pet. 2:15-16). Do we conclude it could not have been the ass himself who spoke, simply because we have never heard one speak? Are we going to use our own experiences as a yardstick to decide what is possible and impossible in God's purposes?

Serpents don't normally turn into sticks or swallow other serpents, but Ex. 7:9-12 says God caused this to happen. Whales don't normally swallow men and vomit them out alive on the shore three days later, but God arranged for this to happen to Jonah. Ravens don't normally bring

food to a man each day to sustain him during famine, but God arranged it for Elijah. The sun dial doesn't normally go back ten degrees, and neither do axe heads float in water.....

In Balaam's day, God's purpose required the ass to speak, so this ability was bestowed upon the animal. The same applies to the serpent in Gen. 3, and no one believing in the power of God should have any difficulty accepting it.

GOD CHOOSES FOOLISH THINGS

Human nature, governed by its own natural earth-bound instincts and intellect, tends to shudder and back away from the idea of a serpent speaking. It does, on the face of it, seem a foolish thing to have to believe. But this is fully in accord with the way God often works, as we read in 1 Cor. 1:27: "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

Tradition, claiming to be wise, regards it as foolish to believe the serpent himself spoke. And this has resulted in attempting to rationalize Gen. 3 away with another idea, to make it more plausible and palatable to the human instinct and intellect. As a result, many minds have been confused and confounded, as is evident in the twisting and misapplication of so many Scriptures to support the rather bizarre doctrine that one third of God's holy angels rebelled against Him, and were expelled to earth to use His power to teach others to rebel, and have been allowed to continue doing this for 6000 years without being stopped or punished.

How true, as the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thes. 2:10-12, that when the truth is not accepted, strong delusion will be the result, causing lies to be believed. In the final analysis, refusal to accept the truth stated in Gen. 3 that the serpent himself spoke, is at the root of tradition's doctrine of a fallen-angel devil.

FACING THE FACTS

The fact is that the Genesis record gives us a serpent and nothing but a serpent. To add a fallen angel to this is to add to the divine record which we are clearly warned against doing. It is evident that the circumstances at the time required Adam and Eve's faith and obedience to be put to the test and this required a challenge from an external source. Had there been a fallen-angel devil available, God may have allowed him to make the challenge. But there wasn't, so God had to allow the adverse

influence to come from one of the other living creatures which He had created on earth. And the serpent, due to being more subtle than all the creatures God had made, became the creature that fulfilled that function.

A talking serpent could not, of course, be produced by nature or human power, but nothing is impossible for divine Power. In a parrot we have an example of a speaking creature minus ideas and reasoning powers. In the serpent we have a creature who not only spoke, but also reasoned and expressed ideas, because “God made it more subtle than any other creature.”

A DIVINE ARRANGEMENT

The Sovereign Lord, not a sinful angel, was in control. Divine wisdom, not diabolical devilry, was behind the whole arrangement, with the utmost good in mind for man. This was not a sneaky, unnecessary and unwanted attempt behind God’s back, to undermine His purpose by an arch enemy. No! It was something the providence of God permitted in order to develop faith and obedience in the progenitors of the human race.

Left to themselves, obedience would have been a matter of course. But it is not obedience of this mild passive type that is well pleasing to God. Obedience under trial is what pleases Him. Obedience without pressures and problems is a flimsy superficial type of obedience - a mere circumstantial type due to favourable circumstances and conditions.

God’s purpose was to produce willing obedience in a free-willed race. Willing obedience requires the opportunity to obey or disobey, and this required God to arrange circumstances that would make that choice possible. This was achieved by the serpent.

As far as Gen. 3 is concerned, God tested Adam and Eve, the serpent beguiled (deceived) them by making sin sound logical and plausible, and Adam and Eve were tempted by yielding to the sinful desires aroused within them by the serpent, resulting in them being drawn away into sin. Jam. 1:13-15 quite clearly states that God does not tempt, and that man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust.

A LITERAL SERPENT

It is obviously significant that prior to saying the serpent spoke and reasoned, it is expressly stated in Gen. 3 that God created it more subtle than any other creature. This information surely indicates that the serpent itself had something to do with the ideas it expressed. After all,

why create the serpent subtle if it was merely a tool used by a subtle fallen angel to speak through? Under such circumstances the serpent would not need to be subtle. It could have been a dumb speechless animal and it would not have made any difference.

Referring to the serpent, Jesus said: “When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44). Jesus teaches here that the serpent spoke “of his own” i.e. the speech came from the serpent itself, not a fallen angel.

2 Cor. 11:3 confirms this: “The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety.” Paul affirms two things here:

1. It was a literal serpent who beguiled Eve.

2. The serpent beguiled Eve “through his subtlety” i.e. the subtlety of the serpent itself was what led to Eve being beguiled, not the subtlety of someone else.

That it was the serpent who spoke is further indicated by the fact that firstly, Eve blamed the serpent and not someone else saying: “The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.” Secondly: God cursed the serpent saying: “Thou hast done this... cursed art thou... upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

Thirdly: The serpent, although subtle, and able to speak, did not deny the accusation and made no attempt to shift the blame to a fallen angel. “Of course not” someone may reply, “Because the real cause, Lucifer, had made a quick exit leaving the serpent speechless.”

But if this were the case, would not Omniscient God know that? Of course He would! Then why did He direct His question to a dumb speechless animal if a fallen angel was really to blame? And why would He punish the serpent if it was an innocent helpless creature, and let the real culprit go free to cause more rebellion?

God would not pick on a snake if an angel was to blame, and any doctrine that implies He did would be a serious reflection on His intelligence. Such a doctrine makes a mockery of Gen. 3, and raises far more moral and spiritual problems than the view which believes the account means what it says, and takes the serpent literally.

So then, Gen. 3 deals with 3 parties: Adam, Eve and the serpent. An alleged 4th party - a fallen angel, is not mentioned or even hinted at, neither here nor in any other Scripture. He is purely and simply an added extra of human speculation and tradition - a myth. In view of this, one cannot help call to mind Paul’s warning in 2 Tim. 4:3-4 that: “The time will come when sound teaching will not be tolerated... ears will turn away from the truth, causing people to wander into myths.”

THE SERPENT AND SIN

The serpent's statement actually represented sin, for sin is transgression of the law, and this is what the serpent advocated. As a result of Adam and Eve hearkening to the serpent and disobeying God, sin entered the world, and a bias or propensity to sin became established in the flesh.

Prior to the fall, there was no sinful tendency in the flesh that tempted man and inclined him towards disobedience, because God did not create him with this. Man was created "very good" (Gen. 1:31) but when man decided to yield to the sinful desires inflamed and aroused in his mind by the serpent, a propensity towards that choice became implanted in the human-spirit in the deep sub-conscious part of the brain. The Bible calls it "sin in the flesh" and says it is "no good." All who are born of the flesh inherit it (Rom. 7 to 8:3). The effects of one man's sin were obviously imputed to all his posterity by reason of genetic connection.

The individual historical serpent in Eden has, of course, long since passed away, but the effects of sin aroused by his lie continue to live on in the sinful nature of all who descend from Adam, which is the whole human race. In this sense the serpent is still very much alive in the world today, and will continue to exert influence as long as sinful desires in the flesh assert themselves against God.

Because sin was originally aroused by a personal agent, the serpent; it is often personified in Scripture and referred to in terms which connect it with the serpent. Barclay in his book on New Testament words points out that in Paul's writings "sin becomes almost personalized until sin could be spelled with a capital letter, and could be thought of as a malignant, personal power which has man in its grasp."

As we shall see, the same applies to the word "devil" due to it being in many cases, a synonym for the tempting power and influence of sin in the flesh. If we could regard every temptation as an enactment of the original temptation in Eden, it would greatly help us in our warfare against sin.

The relationship between the serpent and sin is quite an impressive theme in the New Testament. For example, Rom. 7:7-11 refers to sin as a personal enemy which seeks opportunity through God's law to produce in man all manner of lust. Verse 9 speaks about sin springing to life as soon as God's commandment is given. Verse 11 goes on to speak about sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, "deceived me, and by it killed me."

Sin is personified in quite a dramatic way here. It is referred to as a personal wicked being, seeking to use God's law as a means of arousing ungodly lust in man, which is what the serpent did in Eden.

The reference in v9 to sin springing to life as soon as God's commandment came, also calls to mind the fact that the serpent appeared on the scene when God's commandment came to Adam. And the serpent's action of finding opportunity in God's commandment to deceive and kill, was no doubt in Paul's mind in v11 where he refers to the working of sin in the same terms.

In every respect, Paul describes the working of sin in terms which link up with the original serpent. The various figures of speech, principles and processes which originally related to the serpent, have been transferred to, and applied to sin. Originally, the deceit which led to sin and death, came from the serpent. But since the fall, Scripture says deceit springs from man's sinful heart (Heb. 3:13. Mk. 7:21-22. Jer. 17:9).

The serpent not only became a symbol of the sinful desires of the flesh, but also the people whose lives are ruled and controlled by those desires and who become the physical embodiment of them. Such people are referred to as the "seed" of the serpent in Gen. 3:15, and are called "serpents" in many places e.g. Matt. 3:7. 12:34. 23:33.

THE HUMAN HEART IS THE SOURCE

Once man was induced to sin by the serpent in Eden and ended up with a sin-prone nature, it is difficult to understand why some fallen-angel devil should be needed to keep the process of sin going. It gathers force under its own momentum. As the flesh population multiplies, so does sin which resides within it! All the necessary tests for faith and obedience are provided within the human race itself, without needing super human influences to be added. The sin in fallen man is more than enough to cope with, without throwing fallen angels against him as well.

Jam. 1:13-15 plainly teaches that "every man is tempted when drawn away by his own lust." And Jam. 4:1-3 goes on to say that wars and fightings spring from man's own lusts.

The words of Jesus on this subject, recorded in Matt. 15:16-20. Mk. 7:15-23, are very instructive: "Are you without understanding? ... There is nothing outside of man that can enter and defile the man. The things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

Listen also to Paul's words in Gal. 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh (i.e. the effects of sin in the flesh) are clear, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lust, idolatry, witchcraft, (i.e. spiritualism), hatred, quarrels, jealousy, bad temper, strife, divisions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and other things like these."

Now, the question that needs to be asked is: If the flesh produces all these sins - if they all arise out of man's own sinful nature, what is there left for a fallen angel to do? Can anyone think of a sin which is not covered in this list? It is clearly wrong to attribute to fallen angels what Scripture attributes to fallen man.

SERPENT, SIN, DEVIL AND SATAN

As mentioned before, the word "devil" in many cases is a synonym for sin the flesh. It is therefore to be expected that there will be a connection between the serpent and the devil as there is between the serpent and sin. This can be seen in Rev. 12:9 where reference is made to "that old serpent called the devil and satan." It is evident here that the words serpent, devil and satan are interchangeable terms.

Another example of serpent and devil being synonymous is in Jn. 8:44 where Jesus refers to the serpent as "devil." Speaking to the serpent's seed, i.e. the Jews who falsely accused him and were intent on "bruising" him, Jesus said: "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from himself, for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Notice how Jesus links the sinful lusts of fallen man with the serpent who originally aroused them! It seems clear from what Jesus says here that the Bible devil originated with the serpent in the garden of Eden, and not in a rebellion of angels in heaven. There is no reference in Scripture to a devil becoming a serpent. It was the serpent who became devil!

One of the best examples of the word devil relating to sin in the flesh can be seen in the parallel between Rom. 8:3 and Heb. 2:14.

Romans 8:3.

1. Made in the likeness of sinful flesh.
2. As a sacrifice for sin.
3. Condemned.
4. Sin in the flesh.

Hebrews 2:14.

1. Took part of the same flesh.
2. Through his death.
3. Destroyed.
4. The devil.

The last item in this list of parallels indicates that the devil is sin in

the flesh. This is why Jesus had to be conceived by a woman and partake of the same flesh in order to condemn and destroy the devil. He achieved this by never succumbing to the prompting of sin in his flesh and finally once and for all putting them to death in his body of flesh upon the cross.

The fact that Jesus had to partake of the same flesh as fallen man and put it to death in order to destroy the devil, is proof positive that the devil relates to the flesh. If the devil was a supernatural fallen angel, surely Jesus would have come as a supernatural being to fight him. How could the death of Christ's flesh on the cross, destroy a supernatural angel? And if it did destroy him, why does tradition teach that he is still alive and well?

REASONING IN A CIRCLE

Although the words "devil" and "satan" occur many times in the Bible, there is not a single verse that defines them in terms of a fallen angel. The concept of a fallen angel is read into these words as a result of doctrinal prejudice, but they do not mean or teach that. Tradition, without any foundation at all, has put its own particular sense on these words, then quotes the words to prove the sense. It is another case of reasoning in a circle.

For example: reference is made in 1 Pet. 5:8 to the devil being an adversary who, like a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour. And Rev. 2:10 refers to the devil casting Christians into prison. But neither of these statements say that the devil is a fallen angel, so they cannot be quoted to prove that. Careful study reveals that the devil on these occasions is fallen man ruled by sin, resulting in opposition and persecution of the church.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Many quote the account of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness by the devil as proof of a fallen angel, but none of the gospel records define the devil in these terms.

If the devil was a fallen angel, Jesus would know him. This being the case, can it be seriously imagined that he would allow such a diabolical person to lead, carry and remove him physically from place to place, miles across the wilderness to Jerusalem up to the pinnacle of the temple, and up the steep slopes of a high mountain, before saying "no"?

The temptation took place in the wilderness, but the temple was at

Jerusalem, not in the wilderness. And there are no mountains in the wilderness (or anywhere else on earth), from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen, let alone the glory of them.

These facts strongly indicate that the temptation experiences of Jesus were subjective, i.e. in the mind, prompted by his own flesh nature as in the case of all other men. After all, every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own will (Jam. 1:14), and Jesus was “tempted in all points like us” (Heb. 4:15). And we are all certainly aware of how quickly our minds can transport us to other places and give flashes of thoughts that appeal to the flesh.

Gal. 5:17 says: “The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary to each other.” We all know from experience how contrary the thoughts of the flesh are to the spirit, and how they can speak to us, prompting us to act contrary to the spirit. Being the same flesh, Jesus experienced this, and in his temptation we see a conflict or “war” between his flesh and the spirit. But he won the battle because his resolve was: “Not as I (the flesh) will but as you (God) will” (Matt. 26:39). This is what spiritual warfare is all about - a battle between the flesh and the spirit. (The word “war” is used in this respect in Jam. 4:1. 1 Pet. 2:11).

Christ’s temptations did not involve literal physical journeys to a temple pinnacle and mountain. They were short and brief struggles in his mind, as is indicated in Lk. 4:5 where reference to one of them says it took place “in a moment of time” i.e. it was a temporary, fleeting thought.

Jesus’ mind, in a moment of time, while meditating in the wilderness, transported him to certain vantage points, to consider options that were open to him. He would not have been human or the same flesh, had he not been capable of doing this. He was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tested after receiving the Holy Spirit at his baptism, prior to commencing his ministry. It was therefore a test ordained by God to see if His son would allow his newly acquired powers to be controlled by the flesh or the spirit - to see if he would use the power for self-satisfaction, pleasure and glory, or for the pleasure and glory of God.

When the personification of sin in the Word of God is understood and appreciated; being presented as a personal malignant enemy who sets out to tempt, manipulate, master and rule over man; reference to the devil coming to Jesus and speaking to him can easily be understood in this light. Compare the language in Gen. 4:7: “Sin is crouching at the door and his desire is towards you, but you must rule over him.”

Sin in the flesh, alias the devil, is personified to remind us of the

original temptation of our first parents through the prompting of the serpent. According to 1 Jn. 2:16, the 3 main avenues along which temptation comes are: “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.” These were involved in Adam and Eve’s temptation. Gen. 3:6 says Eve “saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eye), and a tree to be desired to make one wise, and to become as the gods,” i.e. divine (pride of life).

Significantly enough, these same 3 avenues of temptation were involved in Christ’s temptation in the wilderness.

Adam and Eve failed their test by yielding to temptation and sinning, bringing sin and death upon the world. But Jesus, as a “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45) dealt with the problem that the “first Adam” caused, and he did this by conquering the serpent, called the devil.

For this reason, sin in the flesh (devil) is very appropriately personified. It is as if it were the actual original serpent himself standing before Jesus seeking his downfall, so that we might see Jesus as the woman’s seed who was to come and bruise the serpent on the head.

That the devil who tempted Jesus was the prompting of the natural impulses of his own flesh, is particularly evident in the statement that: “All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them belongs to me, and I can give it to anyone I choose.”

There is no evidence anywhere in Scripture that God handed over the kingdoms of the world to a fallen angel, and gave him permission to give it to anyone else.

Jesus knew the Scriptures which taught “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness of it” and “the most High God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whoever He will,” and that He has never given it to rebel angels.

The only person God has ever promised to give the kingdoms of the world to and all glory, and the authority to share it with others; is Jesus himself (Ps. 2:7-8. Jn. 3:35. 13:3. Rev. 11:15. 2:26. 3:21).

GET REAL!

Now, imagine if you were promised an estate by your father as your inheritance, and it had been signed and sealed in his will. Then someone you know to be a liar and a deceiver, who does not even belong to your family, comes to you claiming the inheritance is his and offers to give it to you if you serve him. Such a claim would be so outrageous and preposterous that it would be funny if it were not so serious. You would

think the person was either joking or had gone mad.

The temptation would not be real. It would be no temptation at all. For a temptation to be real and a challenge and test of faith, it has to be feasible, plausible and credible. So we must interpret the temptation of Christ in a way that meets such requirements, otherwise we can end up making a farce of the whole account.

There was no one besides Jesus himself who could claim that the kingdom and glory belonged to him, and this is really the key to it all. In view of this, the subjective nature of the temptation is again made apparent, being a battle in Jesus' own mind between the will of the flesh and the will of the spirit - between submitting to and serving the flesh or God. Jesus had a choice between doing things his own way and in his own time, or doing it God's way and in His time.

The temptation could be paraphrased something like this: "All these kingdoms have been promised to me and are mine for the taking. I could take possession of them now for I have the power to do so." It was a temptation to look after self and put self first - to take control of the kingdoms there and then, without denying himself and going to the cross first. It was a very appealing thought to the flesh which hates pain, suffering and dishonour. It was a flesh-inspired temptation seeking to bring Jesus into subjection to its selfish and flesh centred ways. But the spirit in Christ immediately rejected and crucified it before it could conceive and bring forth sin.

Other examples of this duality of flesh and spirit contending with each other in Jesus' mind: i.e. situations where his own flesh produced the temptation, and the spirit gave the answer, all without any other party being involved; can be seen in Jn. 12:27. Matt. 26:39, 51-54.

DIABOLOS

Two different Greek words, "diabolos" and "daimon," have both been translated "devil" in the A.V. but the Revised versions correctly make a distinction between them, translating diabolos as "devil" and daimon as "demon." Diabolos is the subject at the moment and basically means "false accuser" or "slanderer," and can refer to anyone or anything in human circles which has a smearing or sinister effect on the Christian faith or community. It is an appropriate title for sin, but as in the case of "serpent," the word "devil" not only relates to the sinful prompting of the flesh, but also those who are ruled and controlled by them, and who become the physical embodiment and manifestation of them. Such people

are not only called serpents, but also devil and satan.

An example of this can be seen in relation to Judas. We read in Jn. 13:2 that the devil put it into his heart to betray Jesus. Verse 27 says: “satan entered into him.” This refers to sin’s impulses welling up from the flesh, entering the heart and poisoning the mind. When Judas yielded to the temptation, he became the physical embodiment and manifestation of the devil principle, and is therefore called devil by Jesus: “Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?” (Jn. 6:70). (The devil here is clearly defined as one of the 12 apostles, not one of God’s angels)!

Another example can be seen in relation to Peter. Lk. 22:31 records Jesus as saying to him: “Satan has desired to have you,” which simply means, in the words of Gen. 4:7: “Sin is crouching at the door (of your heart), and his desire is toward you.” But when Peter allowed the thoughts of the flesh to take control and expressed them, Jesus called him satan, saying: “Get behind me satan” (Matt. 16:23).

It is particularly of interest to note that Jesus explains why he called Peter satan. He did not call him satan because his thoughts were inspired by, or according to the will of a fallen angel, but because they were according to the will of man! He said: “Get behind me satan: you are a stumbling block to me, for you do not savour the things that are of God, but those that be of men.”

Once again the link between satan and fallen man can be seen here!

Also compare Act. 5:3 where Peter said to Ananias: “Why has satan filled your heart to lie?” But v4 makes it clear that no external influences from a fallen angel were involved, for it says: “Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?” Jesus made it clear that lies (false witness) come from the human heart (Matt. 15:19).

The expression “satan filled your heart” can be compared with “sorrow filled your heart” (Jn. 16:6). Nobody concludes from this that sorrow is a personal morbid external being. As in the case of the personification of sin or the devil, the human emotion of sorrow is also personified.

Coming back to the Greek word diabolos, translated devil: the same word is also translated “slanderers” in 1 Tim. 3:11 and “false accusers” in 2 Tim. 3:3. Titus 2:3: In each of these places, as in the case of Judas, diabolos relates to fallen humanity, not fallen angels. It relates to people ruled and controlled by sin in the flesh.

Inconsistency on the part of the translators who held to the traditional view is evident here. When they came across diabolos in places where it obviously applied to fallen man, and could not be applied to their fallen

angel, they translated it “false accuser” or “slanderer.” But in other places where they felt it could be applied to their fallen angel, they translated it “devil.” It is a figment of the imagination, borrowed from pagan mythology and superstition.

SATAN

The word “satan” occurs 16 times in the Old Testament and 37 times in the New Testament. It is not an English word translated from Hebrew or Greek, but a Hebrew word that has been transliterated, i.e. carried over letter by letter from the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek New Testament, and from the Greek into English.

In Hebrew, “satan” is quite an ordinary word with a simple meaning, namely: adversary; one who opposes, attacks or accuses another. As in the case of the word “devil,” there is nothing in the word itself which signifies fallen angel, and none of the verses where the word occurs defines it in terms of a fallen angel.

The word satan has a variety of applications, for the simple reason that an adversary can be good, bad or indifferent, all depending on who or what he opposes. A good person can be an adversary (satan) to an evil person, and an evil person can be an adversary (satan) to a good person. For this reason the word satan is applied to fallen man as well as holy angels, but never fallen angels.

As in the case of the word devil, the translators have also been inconsistent in their translation of satan. When it was obvious from the context that the word applied to man or a holy angel, they translated it “adversary.” But when they felt it could be made to apply to their fallen-angel devil, they transliterated it “satan.” Not content with that, they also gave it a capital “S” and treated it as a proper noun instead of an appellative.

The actual Hebrew word satan occurs 30 times in the Old Testament, but as already mentioned, has only been rendered “satan” 16 times. On the other 14 occasions it has been translated into its proper English equivalent. It has been translated “withstand” once, “resist” once, and “adversary” or “adversaries” 12 times.

For example, in 1 Sam. 29:4 we read that the Philistines did not want David to join them in battle against Israel “lest in battle he be an adversary to us.” In the Hebrew text this literally reads: “lest in battle he be satan to us.” This clearly demonstrates that the word satan does not mean fallen angel.

2 Sam. 19:22 records David saying to certain men in his army who had made life difficult for him: “You have become adversaries to me” i.e. you have become satan to me.”

At the peak of his power Solomon said: “The Lord has given me rest on every side, so that there is no adversary” (satan).

This is particularly interesting because it says there was no satan during this period of Solomon’s reign. No wonder the King James translators gave the word “adversary” here instead of “satan,” because the concept of there being no satan at any time in history did not fit in with their traditional doctrine of an ever active, tireless fallen angel.

The reference to no satan simply refers to the fact that the surrounding enemy nations of Israel were subdued. They were “bound” and unable to make war against Israel.

As we have previously seen, this is the significance of the dragon, called “satan” in Rev. 20, being bound during the millennial reign of the “greater than Solomon,” Jesus Christ. The coalition of nations signified by the dragon, which is anti-Israel and therefore Israel’s “satan” (adversary), will be “bound with chains” i.e. subdued by Christ at his second coming.

Towards the end of Christ’s millennial reign, the divine restraint on sin and rebellion will be lifted, enabling rebellious hearts to be manifested, giving the flesh one last opportunity to assert itself and defy Christ’s rule. This will result in a dramatic and decisive judgement on all flesh, giving a grand finale to the millennium, resulting in God becoming “all in all.”

This rebellion resulting from the lifting of divine restraint is expressed in Rev. 20 in symbolic terms as the dragon being loosed from his prison. And a similar thing happened at the end of Solomon’s reign, although for quite a different reason and with a different outcome.

We read in 1 Kng. 11:14 that “the Lord stirred up an adversary (satan) unto Solomon.” Reference is made here to the enemy nation of Edom, on the south-east border of Israel. During Solomon’s reign, this nation, along with all others around Israel, was subdued and in subjection to Solomon’s rule, resulting, as we have seen, in there being “no adversary” i.e. no satan. But the Lord lifted the restraint and “stirred up an adversary.” Up until this time, Edom was confined and restricted - kept in “chains” so to speak. Then the Lord loosed him out of prison.

1 Kng. 11:23 goes on to say that “God stirred up another adversary (satan) against Solomon.” Another satan! How would tradition interpret this? The passage goes on to explain that it refers to “Rezon,” who was king of Syria. Verse 25 says he was “an adversary” (satan) to Israel all the

days of Solomon.

The satan in Zech. 3:1 refers to the adversaries mentioned in Ezra 4:1 who opposed the rebuilding of the Jewish temple at Jerusalem. But the Lord through Michael the archangel, rebuked the adversary and the way in which he did this is recorded in Ezra 6. Jude refers to this in his epistle (v9) and refers to the Jews as “the body of Moses.” Because the nation had been “baptized unto Moses” (1 Cor. 10:2), they are called the body of Moses in the same way that those baptized into Christ are called the body of Christ.

Other examples of satan being translated “adversary” in reference to men are in Ps. 38:20. 71:13. 109:4, 6, 20, 29.

AN HOLY ANGEL CAN ALSO BE SATAN

It should be quite evident from all this, that satan is not the name of any particular person, but simply a term or title used to describe anyone who is an adversary to another. And it is also clear that one does not have to be sinister or sinful to be referred to as satan, as is evident in the case of David being referred to as satan by the Philistines.

This is further demonstrated by the fact that even a righteous holy angel, due to resisting and opposing a person, is referred to as that person’s satan. We see this in Num. 22:22 where we read that God’s anger was aroused because the prophet Balaam went on a journey he had been told not to take; “and the angel of the Lord stood on the road as his adversary” (satan). Verse 32 says the angel said to Balaam: “I went out to withstand you.” The words “to withstand you” are “satan” in the Hebrew text, and literally mean “to be satan.” The marginal reference in the King James translation says: “to be an adversary to you.”

Here then, is a case of an angel being satan - a supernatural satan! But it is far removed from the fallen-angel concept.

With these thoughts in mind, we turn to 2 Sam. 24:1: “The anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David to number Israel.” 1 Chr. 21:1 is a parallel account of this and says: “Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.”

By comparing these two parallel accounts, we see that what one attributes to the Lord, the other attributes to satan. 2 Sam. 24:1 says the Lord moved David to number Israel, and 1 Chr. 21:1 says satan did it. This either means the Lord was satan, or he used an adversary (angel or man) to do it. Either view could be correct. Whatever view we take makes no difference for it amounts to the same thing, namely; that it was the

Lord's will and purpose for David to be provoked into numbering Israel. Why else would 2 Sam. 24:1 say the Lord moved David to do it?

JOB'S SATAN

With these facts before us we turn to the satan in the book of Job who encouraged God to put Job through a severe testing of his faith.

There can be no doubt that this satan was an angel, but he certainly wasn't a fallen angel, because he had free access to heaven and was able to come into the presence of God with other angels and talk with God. This for a start is inconsistent with the traditional view which maintains satan was cast out of heaven and "delivered into chains under darkness, reserved for the judgement of the great day."

It is really quite bizarre to believe that an unholy maligning monster such as tradition's fallen angel devil, who has been cast out of heaven for sin and rebellion, would be able to freely go back to heaven with the holy angels and stand before God in his filthy rags of deception and sin, and put propositions to Him and move Him to hurt one of His finest servants. This concept casts a grave reflection on God's wisdom, righteousness and intelligence, and has been a major stumblingblock, preventing many people from becoming believers.

But, as has been pointed out, an angel does not have to be fallen or sinful just because he is called satan. The word simply means adversary and can be applied to a holy angel if he takes an adverse stand against someone. We have seen this in relation to the angel who adversely affected Balam, causing his foot to get crushed against the wall by his donkey.

It needs to be stressed that "satan" is not an angel's name, but simply a title, as in 1 Chr. 21:1 where it should read "the adversary." The angel is given this title because it describes his ministry and mission, which is to take an adverse position in relation to someone. It is possible that a specific angel has been appointed by God to execute affliction, calamity and disaster wherever and whenever God deems it expedient to be executed. "Satan" would certainly be an appropriate title in such a case!

One thing is certain: in the book of Job, satan's power is God's power. He has no power or authority of his own to bring trials upon Job. His power was derived from, and delegated by God. He could only do what God permitted him to do and no more. He was not a law to himself. He was not free to do as he pleased. In relation to this, see Job 1:12. 2:6.

Satan was governed and directed by God throughout Job's whole ordeal. This being the case, God was responsible for all of Satan's actions, and this presents an entirely different perspective from the traditional view, which maintains that Satan is in opposition to God, trying to frustrate, negate and thwart His purposes on earth.

If Job's Satan was a free agent, why didn't he simply go ahead under his own steam and do his worst to Job without going up to heaven first to get God's permission, and be bound by God's restrictions and restraints?

Throughout the whole book of Job it is recognized and acknowledged that God was responsible for Job's trials. Satan is only referred to in the first two chapters of Job and then disappears. But statement after statement occurs throughout the next 40 chapters, attributing Job's calamities to God. For example see: Job. 2:9-10. 19:21. 23:10. 42:11.

If some find it hard to believe that a holy righteous angel could encourage God to inflict Job with severe trials, it is much harder to believe that an unholy wicked angel could do this!

PAGAN INFLUENCE

In view of these references to holy and righteous angels being called "Satan," due to being used by God to be an adversary and cause affliction, how do we account for the change in concept from Satan being an holy angel to Satan being an unholy fallen angel?

Pear's Encyclopaedia as quoted earlier, makes an interesting observation, and should be quoted again: "The Satan of the Old Testament was first regarded as one of God's servants, but when the Jews returned from their captivity (in Babylon) Satan had become identified with Ahriman. (Ahriman was the Persian's spirit or god of evil, who was supposed to be in continual conflict with Ahura Mazda, the god of good).

Pear's Encyclopaedia goes on to say: "The conception of a supreme source of evil took place among the Jews during their sojourn in Babylon under the influence of Zoroastrianism, a religion in which the struggle between the two spirits, good and evil, reached its height in the imagination of the ancient world." The encyclopaedia then goes on to point out that originally both good and evil were ascribed to one and the same power alone (God), but division into God and the devil developed later.

Zoroastrianism was the religion of the ancient Persians, during the sixth century B.C. He taught that there was a constant conflict between Ahura Mazda, god of light and good, and Ahriman, god of darkness and

evil. Although Zoroaster eliminated the many gods of the pagans, and reduced them to just two major rival deities, it was still polytheism.

Significantly enough, the statement in Isa. 45:7 that God creates both good and evil, forms part of a prophecy in which Cyrus, the Persian king who released Israel from Babylon, is addressed. Being a Persian, he believed that good and evil came from two separate and mutually antagonistic supernatural sources. But God refutes this concept, saying: “I am the Lord and there is none else; there is no God beside Me... I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.” In this statement, God indignantly repudiates the idea of a supernatural rival. He alone is responsible for both good and evil. “Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord has not done it?” (Amos 3:6). Because of sin, the Lord said to David: “I will raise up evil against you” (2 Sam. 12:10-11). Because of sin, “an evil spirit from the Lord troubled” king Saul (1 Sam. 16). In Jer. 21:10 we read about God setting His face against the city of Jerusalem “for evil and not for good.” These verses and many others demonstrate the truth of God’s statement in Isa. 45:7 that He creates evil as well as good. In view of His repudiation of a supernatural rival who creates evil, we are in very good company when we reject the doctrine of a supernatural fallen angel devil!



CHAPTER TWO DEMONS

In any discussion on the subject of the devil it is inevitable and unavoidable that the subject of demons will come up. They are referred to frequently in the New Testament and tradition sees in them evidence of fallen angels. There is of course, no foundation in the Bible for the doctrine of a fallen angel devil, and neither are there any verses that identify demons with fallen angels. The belief that demons are fallen angels is based on assumption.

Scripture is actually silent regarding the origin and identity of demons, and this is freely admitted by some writers who believe the devil is a fallen angel. Myer Pearlman, for example, says: “The Scriptures do not describe the origin of demons; that question seems to be part of the mystery surrounding the origin of evil.” Once it is realized that fallen angels do not exist, and that none of the references to demons can be applied to them, a void is created which has to be filled with other facts.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN DEVIL AND DEMONS

But before proceeding any further, it should be pointed out that two different Greek words have been translated “devil” in the Authorized Version. The two words are “diabolos” and “daimon.” They are quite distinct from each other and have a different meaning. Unfortunately the King James translation has made no distinction between them, and has indiscriminately translated them both into the same English word “devil” causing unnecessary confusion. It would have been better if they had translated “daimon” by its obvious derivative “demon,” and only used the word “devil” for diabolos. Many modern translations have done this. Diabolos, relates to both the sinful impulses in the flesh as well as the people who are ruled by them e.g. Judas. But demons relate to invisible malignant influences that invade the body and mind, causing both physical and mental illnesses, and there are many references to them in the New Testament. Diabolos, being sin in the flesh, is the cause of pride, envy, jealousy, anger, hatred etc as we read in Gal. 5:19-21. However, the effects of demons is quite different for they have nothing to do with sinful propensities. There are no references to demon possessed people being envious and jealous, denying or defying God or belittling Christ, or trying to set up a false counterfeit religion. Quite the opposite! Jam. 2:19 says demons believe in God and tremble, and during the ministry of Jesus they

confessed him as the son of God. Even Hal Lindsay although a believer in the fallen angel devil, in his book, "Satan Is Alive and Well On Planet Earth," points out that some Christians have a tendency to go overboard about demons, and attribute to demons what is actually the work of the flesh. He says: "I want to be sure no one falls into the trap of attributing to demons what is actually the work of the flesh." He correctly points out that in spite of what people say about a "lust demon" or "envy demon" etc, there is no such thing, and the Bible never talks in such terms. Lust and envy are sins which come from the propensity of sin in the flesh, and we need to be careful about assigning things to their proper source and cause.

DEMONS NOT SUPERNATURAL

Not only does the Bible never identify demons with fallen angels, neither does it teach that they are supernatural. Quite the opposite! On one occasion Jesus eliminated demons by transferring them from a demoniac into a herd of pigs, which stampeded down a hill over a cliff into the sea and drowned. Someone may suggest that the demons vacated the pigs before they hit the water. If this was the case, what was the point in Jesus allowing the pigs to plunge into the sea? Was he tricked and outwitted by the demons, because it was in response to their request that he transferred them into the swine? If the demons were not destroyed, but escaped, then Jesus was deceived by a Brer Rabbit tactic. But if they were destroyed by drowning, then they were not supernatural, which is the point at issue.

There is no doubt that those possessed by demons sometimes manifest abnormal strength, but this is quite different from supernatural strength, and this distinction needs to be made. For example, reference is made in the Gospels to a demoniac who broke a chain by which he was bound. What we are not told is how well the chain was made - how rusty it may have been, or how much of a hammering and tugging it endured before finally breaking loose. In contrast to this, Samson manifested supernatural strength. When the Philistines bound him with two new ropes, the Spirit of God came upon him, and the ropes "became as flax that was burnt with fire and they dropped off his hands" (Judg. 15). Samson also took hold of a city gate and pulled it up - doors, posts, lock and all, and carried it upon his shoulders to the top of a hill many kilometres away (Judg. 16). He also took hold of the two central pillars of a Philistine temple and pulled them over, causing the whole structure to

collapse (Judg. 16). Now that was supernatural!

It is well documented today that anger and fear can set the adrenaline surging, resulting, under certain circumstances, in amazing increases of strength and feats of strength, like a woman lifting the back of her car off the ground to release her child upon whom it rolled. Hypnotism has also revealed the latent powers of the mind and body and some amazing feats of strength have been demonstrated.

Being made in the image of God i.e. inferior replicas of God, we all have the potential for greater strength, but in certain mental conditions, when the mechanism malfunctions, or gets out of control, as in the case of demoniacs, the strength can become dangerous and life-threatening.

In ancient times, when people tended to be very superstitious, there was a tendency to regard anything outside the realm of normal strength as being supernatural. The same applied to magic. For example, we read in Act. 8:9-11 that as a result of magic practised by Simon, the people concluded he had the power of God. Just because he could do things not normally done, his ability was attributed to supernatural power.

It does seem however, that there were some in New Testament times who believed that demons had limited power. This is inferred from Jn. 10:21 which records some of the Jews saying: "Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" Why not, if they are supernatural?

DEMONS ARE "SPIRITS"

In studying the subject of demons, comparing the various verses where the word occurs, several facts emerge. One of those facts is that demons are sometimes referred to as "spirits" ("evil spirits"). The Greek word is pneuma and, although it is a different word from daimon, the two words are used interchangeably in the New Testament. Sometimes a demon or spirit is referred to as being "unclean," because those who were possessed, especially the mentally deranged, were driven into unclean habits and conditions making them ritually unclean according to the Jewish law. For example, reference is made in the Gospels to demoniacs living naked among tombs and dead bodies, no doubt not observing basic laws of hygiene and sanitation. This is not uncommon with the insane.

DEMONS ALSO CAUSE PHYSICAL DISORDERS

Another fact to be observed in relation to demons is that they are not always and only associated with mental illness. They are also

associated with physical disorders. For example, deafness, epilepsy and convulsions are attributed to demons: (Matt. 4:24. 17:15. Mk. 1:23-26. 9:17-25. Lk. 4:35. 9:37-).

In Matt. 12:22 blindness is attributed to a demon. And in view of the way Jesus “rebuked” a demon in Lk. 4:35, and then “rebuked” a fever in v38-39, suggests demons were regarded as the cause of fever.

In Lk. 13:11 we read about a woman “who had a spirit of infirmity,” i.e. a demon causing infirmity. The infirmity was a physical one. For 18 years she was bent over and couldn’t straighten her back. She suffered from what we would call curvature of the spine or arthritis. It is evident that in New Testament times, anyone who did not speak or act normally, was regarded as being possessed by a demon. For this reason, because John the Baptist’s behaviour pattern was different from normal, in relation to his eating, drinking and clothing, the people said: “He has a demon” (Matt. 11:18).

And, because Jesus’ teaching and ministry was radical, he was also regarded as being mad. He was accused of being possessed by a demon on 4 different occasions (Jn. 7:20. 8:48, 52. 10:20). He was even accused of being in league with Beelzebub the prince of demons (Matt. 10:25. 12:24).

WRONG DIAGNOSIS

It is clear that the ministry-methods and mannerisms of John and Jesus were wrongly diagnosed by the people. How wrong can you be?! What the people attributed to an evil spirit (demon) was in fact the work of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the point that arises out of this is: If what they thought was demon possession in relation to Jesus and John, had nothing to do with demons at all, on how many other occasions was their diagnosis wrong? In how many other instances did they blame demons when it had nothing to do with demons at all. Another point to observe is this: Although it is recorded that Jesus and John were regarded as demon possessed, the New Testament simply tells us what the people thought, and what their diagnosis was, not expecting us to believe the same. This should be kept in mind in other cases where the people blamed demons for certain maladies.

In New Testament times, the disorders attributed to demons were mostly those that could not be related to a simple, obvious condition. Lameness, for instance, was not attributed to demons, because the

abnormal condition of lame people's limbs provided a physical explanation for the way they walked. But mentally deranged people, deaf and dumb people looked like others - there was no simple physiological explanation - no obvious physical manifestation of illness that they knew of. So, not knowing the cause, the disorder was attributed to demons. Demons were a convenient scapegoat to blame for every disorder that could not be medically or scientifically diagnosed. Basically, demons were a cover-up for ignorance.

NO REFERENCE TO DEMONS IN OLD TESTAMENT

In laying a foundation for the subject in hand, it is of particular interest to note that there are no references to demons in the Old Testament. Although the Old Testament covers nearly 4,000 years of history from the creation of man, no illness, mental or physical is ever attributed to demons. Naturally, the Old Testament does not record a single exorcism. This is significant, and provides one of the keys to the understanding of the origin and nature of demons.

But before that line of enquiry be pursued, it should be pointed out that the word "devils" does occur in the King James translation of the Old Testament but it has nothing to do with the devils (demons) in the New Testament. The word "devils" only occurs 4 times in the Old Testament, and has been translated from 2 different Hebrew words. The 4 occasions where the word occurs are in Lev. 17:7. 2 Chr. 11:15. Deu. 32:16-17 and Ps. 106:36-39 and the 2 Hebrew words are "sair" and "shed."

"Sair" is used in the first two in relation to sacrifice and worship being offered to "devils." This Hebrew word "sair" literally means "hairy one" and is translated "goat" 23 times and "kid" 28 times. A careful reading of the context reveals that the "devils" to whom the sacrifices were being offered, were not fallen angels, but idols having the appearance of goats.

Goats and calves were a symbol of fertility and therefore figured prominently in the fertility cults and rituals of the pagan nations, and Israel got caught up in this false worship. From goat to demon in pagan belief was an easy transition, due to ascribing inherent powers to their goat idols. Among the many gods worshipped by the pagans was one regarded as half man and half goat; an hairy creature with horns, tail and goat's legs. In the light of these pagan deities, it is not difficult to see how the idea of an hairy devil, complete with horns, cloven hooves and tail, was adopted by an apostate Christendom which, as Paul predicted,

departed from the faith into myths and fables and pagan doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1. 2 Tim. 4:3-4). The whole concept of such a devil or demons as taught in Christendom, finds its origin in heathen idolatry and was superimposed on the Bible devil.

The other Hebrew word “shed” which is translated “devils” in the Authorized Version in the other 2 verses also relates to false gods (idols). A careful reading of those verses in their context soon reveals that the devils are explained to be idols, the work of men’s hands, the product of human invention.

The passage in Deu. 32:16-17 is particularly instructive. It says: “... they sacrificed unto devils which were no gods...” i.e. not gods. This statement affirms that the “devils” were regarded as gods by those who worshipped them, but then states that they were, in fact, “no gods” i.e. they did not in reality exist as supernatural deities. They were a figment of the imagination. There is only one God - one supernatural power. (Incidentally, when the Old Testament was translated into Greek, about 270 B.C. the Hebrew word “shed” in Deu. 32:17 was exchanged for “daimon.” That is why daimon occurs in 1 Cor. 10:20 where Deu. 32:17 is quoted from the Greek version).

DOES THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT CONTRADICT?

So then, there is no reference to demons in the original Hebrew Old Testament and no ailments are attributed to them there. This is significant. But of particular significance is the fact that certain disorders mentioned in the New Testament as being caused by demons, are mentioned in the Old Testament as being caused by God. God is the one and only supernatural power associated with sickness and disease in the Old Testament.

For example 1 Sam. 16:14 says Saul’s evil spirit came from the Lord, not a demon. Also Dan. 4 refers to a mental illness inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, causing him to grovel on the ground and act like an animal, and it is attributed to God - a judgement of God. In New Testament times it would have been attributed to demons. In Ex. 4:11 the Lord says: “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?” But in the New Testament in Matt. 12:22. Mk. 9:25 etc. deafness, dumbness and blindness are attributed to demons.

The point was made earlier that the way in which Jesus “rebuked” a fever, suggests it was regarded as being caused by a demon. But in the

Old Testament in Deu. 28:22 fever is listed as being inflicted by God.

Not knowing the cause of leprosy and having no cure for it, those in New Testament times attributed it to demons. But in the Old Testament, cases of leprosy are attributed to God (Ex. 4:6. Num. 12. 2 Kng. 5).

The number of references in the Old Testament to God sending a plague or pestilence upon people are too many to mention. The diseases caused by these plagues would have been attributed to demons in New Testament times, but the Old Testament is emphatic: they were caused by the one and only God, the God of Israel. God made it clear to Israel at Sinai that if they rebelled against Him, He would punish them with “pestilence, wasting disease, fever, madness, blindness, inflammation, boils, ulcers, scurvy, incurable itch...” (Deu. 28:21-29). He then went on to say: “Every sickness (mental and physical) and every plague” not mentioned in the list, will be sent by God. (Not a fallen angel devil).

The question therefore, that must be addressed is: “Why is it that demons are not associated with mental or physical disorders in the Old Testament but they are in the New Testament? Why does the Old Testament attribute sickness and disease to God, but the New Testament to demons? Does the Old and New contradict? What are the demons in the New Testament associated with disorders?”

NOT A NEW REVELATION

The fact that demons are not associated with mental or physical disorders in the Old Testament but are in the New Testament, indicates that this form of diagnosis came into fashion among the Jews during the inter-Testament period i.e. during the period between Malachi (the last book in the Old Testament) and Matthew (the first book in the New Testament). Malachi was written around 400 B.C. which means the inter-Testament period was about 400 years.

The question is therefore, did God give a new special revelation during this period that demons had become the cause? No! there is no record of such a revelation. All the indications are to the contrary. Take for example, the prophecy in Am. 8:11: “Behold, the days come says the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord (i.e. a prophet who speaks it) and shall not find it.” This was the position during the 400 years between the two testaments. The sun went down on the prophets, resulting in no new revelation from

God. That is one of the reasons why there is a gap in the canon of Scripture between Malachi and Matthew. And the problem was in Israel's history, that when they had no prophets to keep them on the straight and narrow, they became an easy prey to pagan philosophy and practise. They strayed from Old Testament truths, and wandered into superstitious fables and myths. The same also applied even when they had prophets if they refused to listen to them.

INFLUENCE OF THE INTER-TESTAMENT PERIOD

Now, consider this: The 400 year inter-Testament period followed the period of exile in Babylon, during which the Jews came under the influence of the pagan doctrines of Babylon, Persia and Greece. And, as Pear's Encyclopaedia points out: "Satan in the Old Testament (particularly in the book of Job) was first regarded as one of God's servants used to inflict adversity. But as a result of Persian influence, satan came to be identified with Ahrim, the Persian god or spirit of evil and darkness, who was in continual conflict with Ahura Mazda, the god of good and light." Originally both good and evil were ascribed to one and the same power alone (God), but division into God and the devil developed later when the Jews returned from Babylon.

Funk and Wagnall's encyclopaedia says the belief in a supreme spirit of evil in opposition to God "developed gradually in Hebrew theology and was affected by extranational influences" (i.e. the influence of other pagan nations such as Babylon, Persia, Greece). The same encyclopaedia also says that "In the Apocrypha (a collection of uninspired Jewish writings written during the inter-Testament period) which reveals both Babylonian, Persian and Egyptian influences, the older Hebrew doctrine that misfortune comes from the angel of Jehovah, disappears, and demons or evil spirits are for the first time (i.e. in Jewish writings) mentioned as the authors of calamities..."

Note that point: Demons or evil spirits are first mentioned in Jewish writings in the Apocrypha as a result of the influence of pagan nations. The same encyclopaedia goes on to say: "During the period preceding the birth of Jesus, the Hebrew concept of angels, the devil and demons was modified and influenced by Persian Zoroastrianism." It goes on to confirm that "The idea of spiritual hierarchies and orders and names of specific spirits and demons was drawn from pagan sources." Hastings Bible Dictionary agrees, saying: "The Jewish exile, covering the larger part of the sixth century B.C. and the close of the seventh, wrought a great

change” (i.e. in thinking from the original Old Testament concept of satan). “... the roots of the conception of fallen national deities may be found in the influences of the exile.”

This is basically saying that the concept of satan being a fallen angel has its roots, origin and source in pagan doctrine. The World Book Encyclopaedia puts it in a nutshell: “In the Old Testament (Job) satan is not God’s opponent. Instead, he searches out people’s sins, and accuses humanity before God. In the Apocrypha, satan is the author of evil, and rules over a host of angels.”

So then, the general consensus of opinion of these and other encyclopaedias, is that as a result of pagan influences during and after the exile in Babylon, the Jews abandoned the Biblical teaching on satan and the true cause of adversities such as sickness and disease, and ended up adopting and embracing the pagan doctrines of devils and demons.

It was of course, during the inter-Testament period, that the power of Greece arose under Alexander the Great, and conquered the world. During this period, not only the Greek language, but also Greek philosophy and mythology made a huge impact and had a profound effect on the world, greatly influencing all races, including the Jews.

Rather than be guided by the divine revelation in the Scriptures, they preferred to lean on their own reasonings and imaginations, which are based on human assumption and supposition. God’s Word and ways, especially the cross of Christ and resurrection were foolishness to them. They were of course largely influenced by the heathen philosophies of the pagan empires that preceded them, which had stamped the world with their superstitious myths and legends. They filled the air and the underworld with a whole host of devils and demons, surrounding themselves on every side with them.

Whether we like it or not, we have to face the fact that all references to demons in the New Testament come from a Greek word, not a Hebrew word! Daimon, the Greek word translated “devil” or “demon,” is a word that has no origin or connection with the original Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. The word traces back, not to the Old Testament but to the inter-Testament period when the Greeks rose to power and stamped their language and philosophies upon the nations.

THE GREEK CONNECTION

The word daimon existed in the Greek language from an early period, and the true original meaning can only be obtained from the writings

of the ancient Greek writers. So the all-important question is: In what sense was the word daimon used by the Greeks? What was their concept of evil spirits? The answer to this is important, because it will tell us what those in New Testament times thought demons were.

Volumes of ancient Greek literature is available, making our investigation quite simple and easy. We don't have to assume anything because the Greek view on the subject is well documented. According to most Lexicons, daimon means divine, deity, divinity, a god or spirit - a minor deity, being inferior and subordinate to major deities. For this reason the noun daimonion is translated "gods" in Act. 17:18 in the Authorised Version and refers to those gods of Greek mythology.

Renowned Greek philosophers and poets such as Plato, Socrates, Homer, Hesiod, Lucian etc all believed and taught that demons are immortal souls i.e. the departed spirits of the dead which live on as gods i.e. minor deities. The encyclopaedia Britannica therefore is quite right when it says demonology finds its basis in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

It is evident from the Greek writings that they believed the souls of men were, at death, promoted i.e. canonised (deified) and became "daimon" (demons). They were elevated to the rank of gods i.e. minor deities, and acted as intermediaries or mediators between the major superior gods and men, and were used by them to distribute good and evil. In view of this, it is significant that "demon" is derived from "daio," which means "to distribute."

It was believed that the immortal souls of evil men became evil spirits and the immortal souls of good men became good spirits. Because they believed these spirits were immaterial, they believed they could enter and possess humans, and that the evil ones could inflict evil like physical and mental ailments and disorders.

The Roman Catholics adopted a similar doctrine by canonising the departed spirits of certain people, and elevating them to special ranks of sainthood. These saints (particularly Mary) are regarded as intermediaries between the Supreme God and men, and are prayed to and supplicated for help. They have the power to protect or punish, to do good or evil, as did the pagan demons. For this reason, in the prayer before Mass, Roman Catholics invoke the aid of not only "all angels," but also "all saints."

There is no doubt that the Jews were influenced by the Greek doctrine of demons. It was deeply rooted and ingrained in their minds when Jesus came on the scene. Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament says Josephus (first century Jewish historian) makes

mention of demons taking possession of men, but he sees in them not bad sinful angels, but the spirits of wicked men deceased. Josephus clearly believed in the immortality of the soul and asserts that those called daimonia are the “spirits” of wicked men who enter the living, and kill those who receive no help.

Being a Jew, Josephus reflected the current Jewish teaching on demons during the period the New Testament was written. This reveals that the Jewish concept was the same as the Greek. No wonder Jesus said to the leaders and teachers of the day: “How ingeniously you neutralize the Word of God by your traditions.” “In vain do you worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of man.”

SUPERSTITIOUS NONSENSE

That the doctrine of demons believed by the Jews was superstitious nonsense, is evident in Josephus’ writings and the Apocrypha. References are made in these writings to things relating to demons and exorcisms that are downright ridiculous, and one would have to be naive and gullible to believe it.

For example, Josephus makes reference to releasing a person of a demon by putting the root of a particular plant to the nostrils of the person, and drawing the demon out through the nostrils. Another reference is made to a certain shrub which produces a particular root, which, if either the urine or menstrual blood of a woman is poured on it, and is then carried away hanging in a downward position from the hand, it can then be used successfully to drive out demons.

Reference is also made to setting up a cup of water a little distance from a demoniac, and commanding the demon to overturn it as he went out of the man, and thereby let the spectators know he had left.

The pagan doctrine of demons gave rise to all sorts of extravagant imaginations and claims, and still does in some circles today. It soon becomes obvious why the writings of Josephus and the Apocrypha never found their way into the canon of Scripture.

In the Apocrypha, reference is made to driving out a demon by making smoke from the liver, heart and gall of a fish, and holding it in front of a person possessed. A case is also given of a woman who had 7 husbands, all of whom died. The reason given is because a demon was in love with her, and killed her husbands out of envy. The demon was driven away by making smoke from the organs of a fish in the bride chamber.

Superstitions such as these were typical of those held by the Jews

who had been influenced by the pagan doctrine of demons. It is painfully obvious that if demons are supernatural forces, they would not be frightened away by smoke. But such superstitious methods could be effective in chasing away illnesses and ailments that were imagined or psychological, i.e. ailments that only exist in the mind which are only imagined but not real. This would particularly be the case with hypochondriacs, who have a morbid concern and anxiety about their health, always imagining something is wrong with them. In the event of believing that their problem is caused by a demon, they will immediately feel better if convinced the demon is cast out. The power of the mind over matter is a real phenomenon, and much has been observed and written about the effects that positive and negative suggestions can have on people.

The ease with which man believes in invisible unearthly powers working against him has been well documented throughout history. And both history and experience have shown that, once people become convinced that their troubles are due to a demon, it is very difficult to reason with them and convince them otherwise. Often, those who try to help them, even when it is known that their problem has nothing to do with a demon, have to “go along” with them in their delusion, initially at least, to make any headway.

When a person firmly believes he is possessed by a demon, and that a particular kind of ritual exorcism is the only way he can be delivered, then such a method has to be adopted. Some missionaries working among primitive tribes have found this out and have resorted to ritual exorcism, even though they knew what the medical problem was, and had the medicine to cure it. As could be expected, such missionaries perform the exorcism in the name of Jesus, and attribute the cure to the power of God and give Him the glory.

THE LAW OF ACCOMMODATION

The main point of what has been said so far, is that those living in New Testament times, contemporary with Christ and the apostles, believed demons were departed spirits of the dead, elevated to the rank of gods. They did not believe they were fallen angels but elevated men! This means therefore, that not only does Christendom’s view that demons are fallen angels have no foundation in Scripture, but is also different from, and contrary to what was believed and taught by the Jews in the first century.

This puts tradition in an awkward position, because it has no foundation for its present view, and would be against adopting the other view that demons are the departed spirits of the dead. Even though tradition believes in the immortality of the soul, it does not believe that the human spirit can return after death to possess another body and communicate with it or through it. Spiritualism believes this and is condemned in the Bible. Gal. 5:19-20 says it is a work of the flesh i.e. it is the product of human deception.

Tradition is therefore forced to conclude that although Jesus used the Greek word *daimon*, he did not sanction or endorse the pagan concept behind it. Jesus accommodated himself to the language and terminology of the time, without necessarily believing or supporting the false concepts behind it. This would mean that when people talked to Jesus about demons, they had departed human spirits in mind, but he had something quite different in mind.

It is significant to note that, although Jesus ministered on many occasions to people possessed with demons, he never identified the demons with departed spirits of the dead or fallen angels. As stated earlier: The New Testament never explains the origin, nature or identity of demons.

At this point it is inevitable that the question will be asked: "Would it be right for Jesus to use the word "demon," which had a false pagan concept behind it, if he didn't believe it?" Well, it has always been a common practise to use a word or expression which has a false theory behind it, without actually endorsing the concept. And when this is done, very few would be so legalistic to say it is dishonest, deceitful and hypocritical to do so. We all do it all the time, sometimes without realizing it! It is one of those inevitable and unavoidable facts of life, and Jesus was not the first or last to do it.

EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATION

For example, we, like those in New Testament times refer to a mentally deranged person as being a "lunatic" (Matt. 4:24. 17:15). The word literally means "moon struck" and originated in the superstition that madness is caused by the moon's influence. But how many today when using the word, are endorsing such a myth? And who would be so unreasonable to say the Bible must believe this myth because it uses the word?

The same applies to the word "bewitched" which was used by Paul in

Gal. 3:1 and which is still used today. But such use doesn't mean we subscribe to the pagan belief of a witch having someone under her spell.

When we use the word "demonstrators" (demon-strators), we don't mean that all who are involved are demon possessed. And when we use the word "pandemonium," derived from pan-demon, we don't believe that all the demons have been let loose, causing uproar and confusion.

Consider also Beelzebub. According to Jewish belief, Beelzebub was the prince of the demons, and the Jewish leaders claimed that it was through being in league with him that Jesus was able to do his miracles and healings. But in reality, Beelzebub was one of the imaginary gods of the Philistines, as we read in 2 Kng. 1. Yet, in spite of this, Jesus replied to the accusation of being in league with him, by saying: "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your disciples cast them out." But the word "if" indicates that Jesus' statement is hypothetical. It could be paraphrased: "If, as you say, I by Beelzebub..." It is not a statement of fact, affirming personal belief in Beelzebub. Jesus would not have believed in, or endorsed such a pagan belief, but it didn't stop him using the terminology.

The words of Professor Rendle Short are worth quoting, taken from his book: "The Bible and Medicine": "The Bible describes people as they were, without glossing over their irrational beliefs and shortcomings. Even when it does not state that the beliefs were irrational, it by no means follows that it asks us to accept them."

Failure to realize this has led many astray. It is truly amazing how many read the utterances of demon possessed people in the New Testament (especially the Gadarene maniac) and take these utterances as being true and rational, and build a doctrine of demons on such a basis. Building a doctrine of demons on the irrational utterances of the insane, is irrational in itself and can only result in insane doctrines. Paul may have had this sort of thing in mind when he warned that some would depart from the faith, giving heed to "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

So many examples could be given of words and expressions which we use denominatively, which have a pagan or superstitious origin, without believing the fictions originally represented by them. Many of the names used to label the months and days of each week, were originally borrowed from pagan sources and relate to pagan gods or rulers. "January" for example, was named after Janus, a Roman god, and "Sunday" literally means "day of the sun" - a day which pagan sun worshippers held sacred to the sun. Today these are contemporary colloquial expressions and we use them freely, but we do not have in

mind, and do not endorse their pagan origins.

The ancients believed the earth was flat and had 4 corners. We now know that this idea was incorrect and unscientific. Scripture however, in spite of knowing the earth was round (Isa. 40:22), accommodated the terminology of the pagan concept, and referred to “the 4 corners of the earth” Rev. 7:1. But using such words which had a colloquial significance, did not mean an endorsement of the false unscientific view which originated it.

The Bible likewise accommodated the expression of the sun rising and setting, but this did not endorse the false theory that the earth was stationary and the sun travelled around it. We still use the expression today, but do not sanction unscientific notions about the solar system.

The fact of the matter is that man had to wait for the science of astronomy to advance and for knowledge of outer space to increase, before he could arrive at the truth of the solar system, not to mention many other sciences. The invention of the telescope was the key to this, and revolutionized man’s knowledge of outer space.

And, as we shall see, the same applies to the “inner space” of man’s mind and body where the demons operate. The invention of the microscope has proved to be the key to this and has revolutionized man’s knowledge of sickness and disease and the real causes of it.

But, unfortunately, many prefer the old wine and think it is better. Many minds are like concrete: all mixed up and permanently set! Traditions are so important to some that even when science proves beyond all doubt they are wrong, people still cling tenaciously to them. Doctrinal pride and prejudice prevents them from moving on to higher ground. When Galileo and other astronomers, as a result of the telescope, could prove that the earth was not the centre of the universe; that it revolved on its axis, and that it travelled around the sun instead of vice versa, the church (Roman Catholics) branded them as heretics and threatened to burn them at the stake unless they repudiated such notions which contradicted long held traditional teaching which was believed to be based on the Bible!

Had that church had its way, we would still be living in the dark ages today, holding to all manner of superstitious unscientific beliefs that originated in paganism.

There are some today who still believe the earth is flat. They are known as “The Flat Earth Society.” Talk about none being as blind as those who say they can see! But, as we shall see, current traditional thinking on demons is just as outdated, unscientific and unbiblical, and is

not far removed from the superstitious beliefs of the pagans.

SCIENCE FILLS THE VOID

When it is realized that demons are neither fallen angels nor departed spirits from the dead, a void is created which has to be filled with some other information. In finding that information, it is important to remember that although demons in the New Testament are mostly associated with mental disorders, they are also associated with physical disorders such as deafness, dumbness, blindness, fever, curvature of the spine. It is also important to remember that for the most part, disorders which cannot be related to a simple obvious condition, were attributed to demons. Unless there was a physiological explanation that they knew of, demons were blamed. Demons were a convenient scapegoat for all disorders that could not be medically or scientifically diagnosed.

It hardly needs to be pointed out that medical science 2,000 years ago in New Testament times, was very backward and primitive compared with today. Men were extremely limited in their understanding of the causes and effects of disease, and therefore very limited in their ability to properly diagnose.

In view of this therefore, it goes without saying, that it would not be surprising if certain mental and physical conditions which they did not understand, and therefore attributed to demons, are now understood in quite a different light i.e. what used to be attributed to demons still have the same symptoms today, but are diagnosed in different terminology.

The fact must also be taken into account that certain mental and physical disorders which used to be attributed to demons, can now be cured or controlled by drugs, antibiotics, immunization, surgery, physiotherapy, chemo-therapy, laser, psychiatric treatment etc. And one thing is certain: disorders caused by supernatural powers would not be able to be controlled or cured by such human methods.

Take for example, epilepsy, which is attributed to an evil spirit in Mk. 9:22. The father of an epileptic son said to Jesus: "Many times the evil spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him in the fire and into water." This is how epileptic fits and convulsions were interpreted in those times. If an epileptic had a fit near fire or water and ended up falling in, this was interpreted to mean the demon was trying to kill him.

But it is now known that epileptic fits are caused by a short circuiting of, or surge of energy in the brain, and can now be monitored and controlled by drugs. The fact of the matter is that our body is controlled

by the mind, and the thought processes of the mind are electrical impulses. As in any electrical circuit, wires can get crossed, touched or damaged, causing a short circuiting and malfunction of the system, resulting in sparks flying and a blackout.

Cases can be cited of people undergoing a brain probe or surgery; whose arm or leg would jerk or convulse when a particular part of the brain was touched, or hear voices or music. This helps us to understand how pressure in the brain through a tumour or blood clot, can result in unusual and irregular actions and manifestations of the body, and sounds in the brain. In New Testament times it would be attributed to demons, but today we are more enlightened.

COMPLEX CHEMICAL CONSTITUTION

Certain cases of delusion and hallucination, which used to be attributed to demons, can now be treated by anti-psychotic drugs, which affect the chemicals in the brain, which those in New Testament times knew nothing about. A doctor in an interview once referred to demons in terms of “unseen complex chemicals which, in a state of imbalance, cause mania.”

There is no doubt about it: the human body is one vast complex chemical factory, and if the chemical combinations get out of balance, an imbalance in mind and body functions can result. This is evident in the effect of hallucinogenic drugs, which distort a person’s understanding of himself and his surroundings, causing things to be seen and heard which in reality do not exist, except in his own distorted brain.

Some hallucinogenic drugs come from plants and have long been used by primitive peoples. In ancient times, the effects would have been attributed to demons. In view of this, it is significant that demons in Rev. 9:20 are linked with “sorceries” v21. The Greek word for sorceries is pharmakeia from which our English word “pharmacy” is derived and relates to drugs. Sorcerers used drugs to induce hallucination and psychic reactions. In sorcery, the use of drugs was generally accompanied by an appeal to occult powers. But Gal. 5:19-20 says it was all a work of the flesh. It certainly had nothing to do with fallen angels or departed spirits of the dead.

In ancient times, men of unusually tall stature (giants) were regarded as the offspring of demons. But it is now known that size and height is controlled by a chemical from the pituitary gland. Specialists are now able to inject the chemical into children stunted in growth, with positive

effects. In the early stages of experimentation, before the right dosage was known, overdose resulted in some children growing to abnormal height.

VIRUS-RELATED DISORDERS

Up until our present end time knowledge explosion era, prophesied in Dan. 12:4, men knew next to nothing about the chemical balance, genetic make-up etc involved in human beings, not to mention bacteria, viruses, cells in the blood and tissue, hormones, atoms, electrons, protons etc. In the past, men were ignorant of simple basic facts such as too little sugar in the blood can affect the way the mind functions. In our modern times of increased knowledge, man is discovering that his theories regarding the inner space of the human mind and body were as unscientific, primitive and naive, as his knowledge of outer space.

Consider Parkinson's disease which causes those inflicted, to shake and tremble. It was once called "the shaking palsy," and was attributed to demons, because no medical explanation could be given for the shaking. But it is now known it is caused by a virus, which attacks and damages a particular internal region of the brain, resulting in a disorder of the central nervous system. Drugs have been developed which have helped those suffering with the disease.

Herpes is caused by a virus which can get into the brain and affect the memory and learning.

Multiple sclerosis, legionnaires disease etc are also caused by viruses, but in ancient times were attributed to demons.

As mentioned before: blindness, in certain instances, was attributed to demons in New Testament times. We now know that there can be many causes of blindness, such as diabetes, glaucoma, cataract. Tropical germs can cause inflammation of the eye, and result in blindness due to lack of proper attention. And there are certain cancers that cause blindness. Those in ancient times knew nothing about any of these, so they blamed demons.

Dumbness, of course, was also attributed to demons in the past. But many cases of dumbness (i.e. inability to speak) was simply due to being born deaf, and not being able to hear words and learn to speak. Because the person had ears and a tongue and looked normal, there seemed to be no physical reason why he couldn't hear and speak, so demon possession was postulated as the cause. Significantly enough, in some places in the New Testament demon possession involving dumbness, is linked with deafness (Mk. 9:25. 7:37).

Dumbness or mental retardation can also be caused by a malfunction

of the brain cell development of a baby in the womb, or brain damage at birth, or a knock on the head, or blood clot in the brain. A blood clot in the brain can cause a stroke, affecting people in different ways. Some become speechless (dumb) and paralysed down one side of the body. In the past people were ignorant of this and would have claimed that a demon had invaded the brain or body when it was, in fact, a blood clot that invaded.

Even severe emotional traumas can cause temporary paralysis. Sometimes a mental shock can leave a person with a stammer, making it difficult to get the words out. Fear can paralyse and even kill. But the ancients did not have knowledge of such things so demons were the stock and trade answer.

Demons were blamed for fever in New Testament times but it is now known that fever is usually caused by an anti-body such as a bacterium or virus. It was in fact, as a result of bacteria and viruses being discovered, that the major breakthrough was achieved concerning the cause of many sicknesses and diseases, both mental and physical.

A DEMON-VIRUS CONNECTION

An honest and impartial consideration of all these facts, indicates that there is some connection in some instances between demons and viruses. Viruses and bacteria are malignant forces, invisible to the naked eye, which invade and possess the body and brain, inflicting physical and mental diseases and disorders. Healing requires expulsion - expelling them - casting them out, and Jesus achieved this by the power of God.

The proposition is therefore, that many of the “demons” expelled by Jesus were what are now called viruses and bacteria. It is clear that the language used in the New Testament in relation to demons, presents them as malignant influences, invisible to the naked eye, which invade and possess people, inflicting them with various disorders. This precisely, is what germs do, and “evil spirits” would be quite an apt description of them, in view of the fact that the word “spirit” signified something invisible that could pass into, and possess humans. The Greeks were on the right track in principle, but went wrong by philosophising about it.

In modern medical circles today, the language relating to bacteria and viruses is not far removed from the ancient description of demons. Such antibodies have to be attacked, and the person “possessed” has to be dispossessed. The bacteria or virus has to be “driven out.”

Viewed in this light, the supposed pagan demon, though a myth theologically, was a reality physiologically. The disorder in each case of

demon possession was caused by a real disturbing presence, and the popular name for it was “demon.” Therefore, when referring to this and removing it, Jesus called it “demon” - the name by which it was universally known. Jesus came to deal with facts, not their names. He did not come to attempt to teach science to an unscientific and primitive world, but to teach the Gospel and manifest the power of God. He left the scientific explanations for the scientific age, when knowledge on such matters increased and the evidence was made available to the people.

Jesus no doubt knew more about the true origin and nature of disease than what he let on, but concealed it due to the inability of the people to comprehend. As Pr. 12:23 says: “A prudent man conceals knowledge.” Facts can be quite confusing to those who are not ready for them and not capable of comprehending. It would have been a hopeless task for Jesus to try and explain viruses to the people in his day. There were no words available in the vocabulary of those times to describe such micro-organisms, and no microscopes to prove that they existed. Had Jesus attempted to teach the people about them, he would probably have been regarded as more “possessed” (mad) than ever.

After all, many centuries later, in 1687, when the microscope was first invented, and germs (bacteria) could actually be seen, they were not connected with disease, and when it was first suggested there was a connection, the response was ridicule from both the public and the medical profession. It was not until the nineteenth century that man started to suspect that they were the cause of many sicknesses.

Viruses, of course, could not be seen until the electron microscope was invented, which is hundreds of times more powerful than an optical microscope

EXORCISMS INVOLVED “HEALING”

In reaching a satisfactory conclusion regarding the nature of demons, it is helpful to note that the word “healing” is used synonymously with “casting out” i.e. sometimes reference is made to a person having a demon “cast out,” and sometimes that person is simply referred to as being “healed” or “cured” (Matt. 4:24. 12:22. Lk. 7:21).

The Greek word for “healed” and “cured” is “therapeuo” from which our English word “therapy” is derived. It is used many times in the New Testament primarily in relation to curing physical disorders resulting from physical causes. Damage to the cells of both body and brain, by virus attack, fit into this category. Such a disorder in the brain is just as much a

physical disorder as any disorder in any other part of the body. For this reason the words ‘healed’ and ‘cured’ are equally applied to both physical and mental sickness in the New Testament and not just to physical. And it should also be pointed out that in the New Testament both physical and mental sicknesses are “rebuked” “cast out” and caused to “depart.” This language is not restricted to just mental disorders (Lk. 4:39. Act. 19:12).

THE DEVIL-DEMONS CONNECTION

Most accept that there are connections in Scripture between sickness and sin. For this reason, those who are healed of a sickness caused by a demon, are sometimes told to sin no more. This connection between sin and demons is interesting in view of the connection made in some Scriptures between satan i.e. the devil and demons. For example: one possessed by demons can be referred to as being bound by satan. It is apparent that although devil (diabolos) and demons (daimon) are quite different words, and relate to different things, there is nevertheless a connection, and it is not difficult to discern the nature of the relationship. As has been demonstrated, the devil relates to the propensity of sin in the flesh which is the cause of all acts of sin, resulting in God sometimes inflicting sickness as a punishment. And demons relate to malignant forces, such as viruses and bacteria, which cause sickness and disorders. In this sense, demons are the devil’s ministers (servants) or, putting it another way: satan’s messengers (angels).

This ties in perfectly with the Scriptures which teach that God creates evil, such as sickness and disease, as a punishment for sin. But because sin is the fact or principle that moves God to inflict disorders, sin i.e. the devil or satan, is referred to as the first cause in the matter. For this reason some Scriptures refer to the devil or satan being responsible for afflicting people with disorders. In reality, it is God who afflicts on the basis of sin becoming enthroned in people’s lives.

Therefore, as far as sickness and disease are concerned, God is the One who inflicts; sin (the devil and satan) is the principle that moves God to inflict, and demons (viruses etc) are the method or process by which God’s affliction takes place. After all, who made the viruses and bacteria? The answer is: the same person who made the thistles and thorns, mosquitoes snakes and scorpions - God, not a fallen angel.

TRADITION IN NO POSITION TO THROW STONES

The suggestion that demons can relate to viruses etc, and that Jesus simply accommodated himself to the language of the day, has been rejected by some traditionalists on the grounds that it makes Jesus a deceiver, encouraging error instead of truth. It is argued that if Jesus did not have the same view on demons as his contemporaries, he should not have used the word.

However, tradition is in no position to argue this way because it is forced to adopt the same approach. In view of the fact that demons were believed to be departed spirits from the dead in New Testament times, and tradition does not accept that view, but believes they are fallen angels, it also, in order to uphold conviction, has to fall back on the principle that Jesus simply accommodated the word demon without endorsing the pagan concept behind it. If not, tradition would be compelled to believe that demons are departed spirits of the dead, not fallen angels.

WOULD JESUS SPEAK TO VIRUSES?

If Demons relate to viruses etc, the question will naturally be asked: “How could they speak and be spoken to by Jesus as is recorded in the Gospels? How could they be rebuked, cast out and caused to depart?” “Surely” it will be argued: “demons must be personal intelligent entities, not impersonal unintelligent forces like viruses etc.”

In answer to this, it is firstly significant to note that there are examples of Jesus using the same kind of language, action and procedure when dealing with disorders caused by a virus or bacteria, not to mention other things in the natural world which do not have personal intelligent existence.

For example, as we have seen, in Lk. 4:39, Jesus “rebuked” a fever, which we now know is caused by bacteria or virus. Reference is also made in Matt. 8:26 to Jesus “rebuking” the wind and sea. But who today, on that basis, would argue that the wind and sea must be personal intelligent forces?

Regarding the references to demons “departing” from people: the same language is also used elsewhere in relation to diseases caused by bacteria and viruses. For example, we read in Mk. 1:42 that when Jesus gave the word for a leper to be healed, and touched him, “immediately the leprosy departed from him.” We now know that leprosy is caused by a germ (bacterium), and so when it says: “the leprosy departed from him,” it

means the germ was driven out of his body. It is well known today that many germs are contagious and can travel from one person to another by coughing, sneezing, kissing. In 2 Kng. 5:27 we read that God caused leprosy to depart from one man to another: from Naaman to Gehazi.

Act. 19:12 also refers to diseases “departing” from the sick during Paul’s ministry - the same word used elsewhere in relation to demons.

The expression “cast out” is also used in Scripture not only in connection with demons, but also in relation to abstract things such as sins and sorrows. See Job 39:3. Mic. 7:19.

There are in fact, many examples in both the Old and New Testaments of impersonal unintelligent things being addressed and spoken to, prior to the power of God being brought to bear upon them. For example: Moses spoke to a rock (Num. 20:8). Joshua addressed the sun and moon (Josh. 10:12). Ezekiel spoke to dry bones in a valley, and to mountains, hills, rivers, valleys (6:1-3. Ch. 37). Jesus spoke to a fig tree and cursed it (Matt. 21:19. Mk. 11:21).

Speaking to demons therefore, in view of these examples, does not necessarily have to mean they were personal entities.

COULD VIRUSES SPEAK TO JESUS?

“Yes, but” someone will reply, “demons were not only spoken to, but unlike rocks, trees, and bones, they also spoke. How do you explain that if they were not personal entities?” Well, for a start, it is important to understand that sometimes references to demons actually refer to the people themselves who were possessed. Much in the same way that those who are full of sin (devil) and become the embodiment and manifestation of it, become a devil and are called “a devil” as Judas was. He was “a devil” because “the devil” (sin) was in his heart and in control of his speech and actions. In this light, it is not difficult to understand how the devil or demons can speak.

A similar principle can be seen in Pr. 20:1: “Wine is a mocker.” But this reference to drink speaking doesn’t mean it is a separate personality from the person it possesses and influences.

Even though we might say: “It is the drink speaking,” in reality drink by itself could never speak or mock; it needs a human brain, tongue and voice to do that. Alcohol affects the brain cells and can change a personality and cause a person to be irrational (insane). Demons by themselves cannot speak either, but when these malignant influences affect the brain as some of them can and do, and cause irrational speech,

they can, as in the case of alcohol, be referred to as speaking themselves.

An example of the people themselves who were possessed being referred to as demons can be seen in Mk. 3:11 where reference is made to demons falling down before Jesus and crying out. The demons clearly refer to the people who were possessed. How else could it be explained that they “fell down.”

Another example can be seen in Jam. 2:19 where it is said that demons believe and tremble. The word “tremble” means to quiver or shake. It is a physical action and requires a body. If demons are disembodied, immaterial and invisible entities that have no body and cannot be seen, then how can they tremble and be seen to be trembling? James is obviously referring to the people themselves who were possessed by demons, who fell down at the feet of Jesus, crying out to him, imploring him not to torment them, trembling as they spoke. (Demonic in those days were subjected to all sorts of tortures in attempts to drive out their demons, and they were afraid of being hurt).

The close association between a demoniac and demon can also be seen in the revised translations of Matt. 17:18 which, instead of saying Jesus rebuked a demon, says he rebuked the demoniac.

DUMB DEMONS

Also consider references to a “dumb demon” (Mk. 9:17. Lk. 11:14). The record in Lk. 11:14 goes on to say: “And it came to pass, when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke.” In these verses both the demoniac and demon are referred to as being dumb i.e. unable to speak, usually due to being born deaf. (Those in New Testament times believed that people who were dumb were possessed by the spirit of those who were once dumb). How do those who believe that demons are fallen angels interpret these references to dumb demons? Do they believe these fallen angels are dumb? How could supernatural angels be dumb? If supernatural, they could heal themselves.

At this point I think tradition would gladly accept that it was the demoniac himself who was dumb, and that the principle of metonymy is involved in the reference to a dumb demon.

In relation to demons speaking, it is evident from a careful reading of some of the passages concerned, by the shift of pronouns from the demon to the demoniac, that it was the person possessed who was speaking and being spoken to. This is particularly evident in the episode of the Gadarene maniac, who had a multiple personality disorder. Being

mentally deranged he was irrational and under the delusion that he was someone else, and spoke as if he was that someone else. This is not uncommon in some forms of insanity.

He said his name was “Legion” because “many” demons had entered him. A legion was a division of 6,000 men in the Roman army. So the question that must seriously be asked is: Was this man possessed by 6,000 fallen angels? No! But he could have had thousands of viruses in his brain from diseased pig meat! Being possessed by 6,000 demons (departed spirits of the dead) was the delusion or hallucination of the madman’s deranged mind.

Common sense dictates that when a mentally deranged person is convinced he is someone else, you cannot come straight out into the open and frankly tell him that it is all a delusion - imagination - just in his own mind, and tell him to pull himself together and stop being an idiot. You cannot rationalize with an irrational person, especially if brain cells are damaged. For this reason, when the man told Jesus that his name was Legion, Jesus did not deny it or tell him he was deluded. He initially went along with him in his delusion, drew it out and delivered him from it. He did this in a very dramatic way, by transferring the madness to a herd of 3,000 pigs nearby, which, according to Jewish law, were illegal and not allowed to be reared and eaten. They could have very well been the source of the demoniac’s disorder, and for that reason were made to rush headlong over the cliff into the sea. This gave the demoniac visible physical proof that the demons were gone and he was delivered. The demons were drowned in the sea! So much for them being supernatural fallen angels!

The effect on the onlookers would also have been very dramatic. They could not deny that an outstanding miracle had taken place. Nothing therefore could stand in the way of receiving the man back into society and treating him as a normal person. So much good was accomplished by this event. Sin was judged and condemned; God’s law was justified and vindicated; the madman was healed and restored; future source of disease was eliminated, and the name of Jesus was held in awe and glorified. Truly, he did all things well through the power and wisdom given by the Father.

