



1. The abundance of biblical and extrabiblical evidence regarding demons and demon possession should leave no doubt of their existence.

The religious (or Christian) community is not the only one who acknowledges the existence of demons and demon possession. Demons and demon possession are also confirmed in the research and observation of many within the scientific community including those in the fields of philosophy, social science, psychiatry and physics.

(Who then are the demons?)

2. The Bible seems to indicate that demons are cherubs or priestly angels, who because of their rebellion, forfeited not only their position as anointed guardians of God's throne, earthly kingdom and people, but also the privilege of possessing third-dimensional, material or physical bodies.

The loss of these bodies is among the main contributing factors to the demons becoming "body-snatchers" (i.e. seeking to possess the bodies of other sentient/reasoning beings – humans).

An ancient Jewish source teaches that God killed the original serpent and gave its skin as a covering to the man and woman before their banishment from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:21),

"The Holy One, blessed be He, took the skin which the snake sloughed off and made it into garments of skins and clothed them." – Rabbi Ilai (*Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*)

If this is true, then it is reasonable to conclude:

- 1) the serpent (Satan's) skin was a priestly garment (Eze 28:13 w/Exo 28:1-41),
- 2) Satan and the other cherubim in the garden (possessing physical bodies) represented the first priesthood – Satan being the high priest (Eze 28:14 – "anointed...cherub" = Term used in relation to the priest; Eze 28:14, 16 - "guardian cherub" = This too can only refer to priesthood (guarding/preserving the truth, instructing A&E in holiness in the garden sanctuary – see vv17-18) since at this point, there was no sin and therefore no need for a military),
- 3) clothing Adam and Eve w/the serpent's skin represented not only their atonement (through the death of their high priest), but also the transfer of the priesthood to the human race (Gen 3:15b – "he [imperfect verb, present/future - bruises] your head [fatal blow/death], you [imperfect verb, present/future - bruise] his heel [non-fatal – referring to Satan's deception of A&E] = Could this be referring to Gen 3:21?; Replacing a serpent was a part of Christ's atonement for us - Num 21:9 w/Joh 3:14; Consider also Num 35:25; Heb 7:23-28),
- 4) this is among the reasons such enmity exists between humans and the demonic realm (Gen 3:15a),
- 5) the woman's excuse to God is less of a cop-out and possibly the basis for God's leniency in sentencing when compared to Satan (Gen 3:13 = A&E were deceived by the one they should have been able to trust w/God's word, their high priest – Jam 3:1).

3. The combination of losing of their physical bodies (in Eden) along with their (later) defeat by Christ (in a heavenly war), has intensified the demons' efforts in destroying God's kingdom and people on earth.

Correction to last week's guesstimate as to the number of demons. (Rev 12:4-12 w/Rev 5:11 – "myriads upon myriads" > 10k x 10k = 100m) = (.67x = 100m) ~ 150m/3.33 = 44.7 million demons (~1 demon per 175 people).

4. The best way to accomplish the demons' mission of destruction against the church (God's kingdom and people) is through bewitching and possessing Christians.

IOW: Christians *can be* 1) bewitched = under a demon's persuasive power/listening to them and 2) possessed = under a demon's persuasive power *and* physical control.

IMPORTANT POINT NOT TO MISS = We are Satan and the demonic realm's number one target for bewitching/possession (1Pe 5:8). How can we be demon possessed if we are already "possessed" by the Holy Spirit? B/C we can "quench the spirit" (1Th 5:19).

5. Since possession affords demons respite from incarceration in Hades, they will also possess non-Christians.

(Zec 9:11 w/Luk 11:14 = Place without rest; Luk 16:22-23/2Pe 2:3 = Place of fiery torment).

6. Demon possession usually manifests itself through mental illness.

God promised to strike people w/mental illness as punishment for their rebellion. The source of such mental illness however can be demon possession (Deu 28:28 w/Rev 18:2 w/Mat 12:43-45; e.g. 1Sa 16:14 w/18:10); e.g. Mar 5:1-9; Luk 4:31-35).

7. Demonic bewitching is most likely the cause of demon possession.

Bewitching is the means used by the demonic realm to take full possession. The longer a person listens, is persuaded by or carries out those sins associated with bewitching, the more control the demon is assuming of their person (1Sa 15:22-23 w/16:14 w/18:10; Joh 13:2 w/27).

8. Demonic bewitching is the result of practicing the sin of idolatry, sorcery or apostasy.

When a person practices the sin of idolatry, sorcery or apostasy, they are listening to/being bewitched by demons – which means they are on the path/vulnerable to demon possession. How (then) to avoid being bewitched (and ultimately demon-possessed) is by never being guilty of practicing these sins (Act 26:19 – "turn...from the power of Satan to God" = We can avoid/resist Satan's power. To do this however means being extra vigilant to never practice those sins he uses most to place people in bondage to him - the sins of idolatry, sorcery and apostasy).

8.1. Idolatry (*What is idolatry?*)

8.1.1. Serving, worshipping, possessing or tolerating a false god/religion based on what you believe or do (Exo 32:1-8 w/1Co 10:7) = The Jews were guilty of idolatry either b/c: 1) they were attempting to worship the true God in a false/prohibited way (false religion = Using a carved image to represent God - Exo 20:1-5; Deu 4:15-19, 23-28; Consider also 1Sa 15:3 w/13-23 = Not following God's exact instructions regarding worship) or 2) they were asking for a new/false god to lead them (Many pagan nations viewed cows as divine; Deu 7:25-26) (Exo 32:1 - "make for us [literally] a god" [Elohim] = Intensive plural/plural persons spoken of as one – commonly used to refer to God [Gen 1:1], but also used in Scripture to refer to false gods [Exo 20:3]).

"Since God has prescribed to us how He would be worshipped by us, whenever we turn away in the very smallest degree from this rule, we make to ourselves other gods and degrade Him from His rightful place." – G.K. Beale (*What Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology Of Idolatry*)

Its connection to the demonic realm (Prt 1): (Exo 32:1-8 w/Lev 17:7 and Deu 32:16-17, 21a and Psa 106:36-38; Psa 135:15-18 – "become like them" = demon-possessed).

Ancient Jewish tradition teaches that when Aaron was crafting the people's gold into an image for the people, "Satan entered it, and the likeness of [a] calf came out of it." (*Targum, Ps.-J.*, Exo 32:24). Additionally, Satan is portrayed as "in the middle" of the idol, "leaping and jumping before the people" (*Targum, Ps.-J.*, Exo 32:18-19) as the basis for their (imitative) sporting before it (Exo 32:6, 19 – "the people...rose up to play...they were dancing"). Within this same tradition, there is also evidence pointing to demon possession as the consequence of such idolatrous actions. Two other ancient sources add the words, "they shall be afflicted by evil spirits" (*Targum Onqelos*), and "they will be possessed by evil spirits" (*Targum Neofiti*), to the Deuteronomy 32:17 statement ("they sacrificed to demons").

Commenting on this, G.K. Beale writes,

"The link would appear to be that those who worshipped and committed themselves to demons would be possessed by those demonic spirits, and such possession would change their very beings [Psa 135:18]...This is a paramount example of the *lex talionis* notion of the Old Testament – an eye for an eye. People are punished by means of their own sin [they worship the demonic and so become demonic]...The principle for them and for us is [then]: *we resemble what we revere, either for ruin or for restoration.*" (ibid)

Its connection to the demonic realm (Prt 2): (1Co 10:16-21)

"Paul interprets sacrifices to idols to also be sacrifices to demons, which necessarily entails 'becoming a sharer in demons,' who indwell the idol. This is true not only of Gentile idolatry but also of Israel's idolatry in the wilderness [Exo 32], since he had the latter in mind only a few verses earlier (10:5-11), which, in fact, serves as part of the basis for making the deduction about not falling into the temptation of idolatry and 'fleeing from idolatry'. Paul's discussion here is parallel with [ancient Jewish] traditions that see the activity of Satan working through the golden calf idol to influence [think bewitch] Israel." – G.K. Beale (ibid)

Modern examples: All false religions (Buddhism, Mormonism, Islam, Hinduism, Atheism, Evangelicalism, etc.)

Many Christians believe that humanity's idolatrous attempt with regard to the Tower of Babel and God's dispersing judgment in Genesis 11 is ultimately what led to the various different demonic and false religions of the earth:

"At the Tower of Babel, the concept of the unity and absoluteness of God had begun to be lost. When the people were dispersed at Babel, they would have taken with them a hybrid truth of the living God mixed with the twisted and distorted truth of that revelation about him. The loss of a unified language led to the loss of unified religion; every people and nation now deviated to worship its own national god. At Babel monotheism degenerated into animism, sorcery, magic, and polytheism. The pure revelation of God had been generally lost, corrupted, and perverted by sin, leading to religious idolatry and giving rise to religious pluralism." – Simon Turpin ("Religion: What Is It, Where Did It Come from and How Does the Bible View It?", AIG)

BTW: Ancient Jewish tradition also teaches that Nimrod (the architect and GC of the Tower of Babel) inherited Adam's serpent suit. If this is true, it would lend further support to Babel as an idolatrous event since it strongly implies Nimrod's oversight to be priestly in nature.

8.1.2. Embracing a false gospel (Gal 1:6 = Notice you are "deserting God" [meaning for a different god] when you adhere to a "different gospel" – i.e. you are committing idolatry; See also 1Pe 4:3)

Its connection to the demonic realm: (Gal 1:6 w/Gal 3:1; 1Ti 4:1-2).

Modern examples: The evangelical gospel of obedience as nice but not ultimately necessary (Gen 3:1-4 = Notice, the false gospel used by Satan and the demonic realm to bewitch Adam and Eve was also a gospel promising life without the need for obedience).

8.1.3. Being sexually active/intimate with someone outside the covenant community of God's people (sexual idolatry) (1Co 6:13-20, 10:8 w/14 w/Num 25:1-2, 9).

Its connection to the demonic realm: (2Co 6:14-16)

Modern examples: Christians kissing, having sex w/ or marrying pagans (false Christians [Roman Catholics, evangelicals, etc], atheists, agnostics, Mormons, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.).

CLOSING CONTEMPLATION: Number one reason to flee idolatry (false gods/religion, gospel or sexual activity w/pagans) = demonic possession