



God, Evil, & Suffering

WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

Today



- ▶ Review - Evil in the Bible
- ▶ The Demonic and the Devil
 - ▶ Bible
 - ▶ Pre-Biblical sources
 - ▶ Post-enlightenment

Old Testament vs. New Testament

■ Old Testament

- God is supremely Sovereign
- Everything Cosmic happens by the knowledge and will of God.
- Isaiah 45:7 - I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the LORD do all these things.
- Satan = part of heavenly court
 - legal role of accuser.

■ Evil

- Something Bad
- Something opposed to God's will or creation.
 - God responds - Judgment

▶ New Testament

- ▶ Limited Cosmic Dualism
- ▶ Cosmic powers rebelling against God.
 - ▶ Esp. the Kingdom of God
- ▶ Satan = Chief demon
- ▶ Chief demon = God's primary adversary.
- ▶ Evil
 - ▶ Cosmic Force that has or seeks to temporarily thwart God's will.

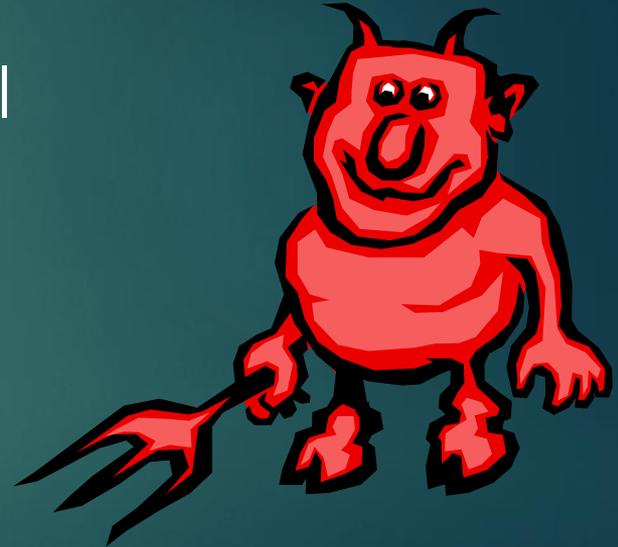


The Devil, Satan, and Demons... oh my!

The Demonic

Do you believe in the devil?

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God, the powers of this world that rebel against God, and the ways of sin that draw you from God?



Images of the Devil and Demons

- ▶ Physical characteristics never described in Scripture
- ▶ Medieval period (400-1400)
 - ▶ Horns
 - ▶ Goat's hindquarters
 - ▶ Tail
 - ▶ Pitch-fork (or Trident)
 - ▶ Wings



The Devil



- ▶ **Greek – diabolos = Devil** - the slanderer, tempter, or accuser
 - ▶ **Matthew 4:1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
 - ▶ Occurs 32 times in the New Testament
- ▶ **Satan**
 - ▶ ^{NRS} **Mark 1:13** He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

The Devil



The Devil depicted in
*The Temptation of
Christ*, by [Ary Scheffer](#),
1854.

Satan



Satan, from
[Gustave Doré's](#)
illustrations for
Paradise Lost.

Other names

▶ **Beelzebub (Beelzeboul)**

- ▶ Matt. 10:25, Matt. 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:18-19 (Beelzebub)
- ▶ Canaanite Deity - Baal → Baal-zebul (Lord of Princes)
- ▶ Beelzebub – literally “Lord of the Flies”

▶ **The Wicked One**

- ▶ Matthew 13:19

▶ **Prince of this World**

- ▶ John 12:31 & John 14:30

▶ **The Tempter**

- ▶ Matthew 4:3 & 1 Thessalonians 3:5

▶ **Belial**

- ▶ 2 Cor. 6:15

▶ **The Dragon**

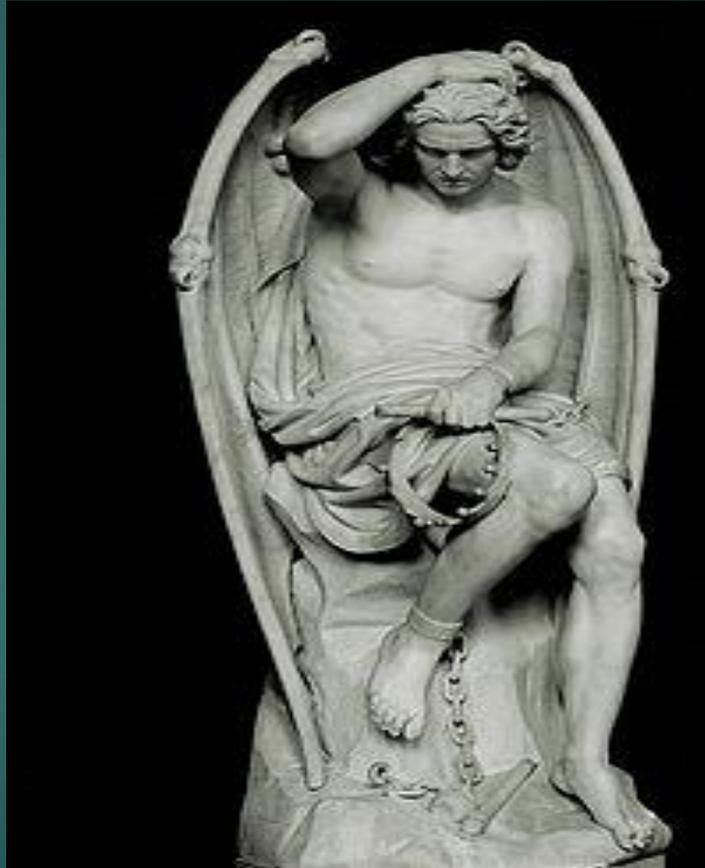
- ▶ Revelation 12:9 & 20:2

Powers & role of the Devil

- ▶ Prince of the world, space, and time
- ▶ Lord of matter & flesh (Ephesians 2:3)
- ▶ Principal adversary of Christ (Matt. 4:11)
- ▶ Satan seeks to pervert humanity as:
 - ▶ Tempter (1 Thess 3:5)
 - ▶ Liar & Murderer (John 8:44)
 - ▶ Cause of illness and death (Lk 13:16, Hebrews 2:14)
 - ▶ A power behind the storm (Mark 4:39)
- ▶ Devil attacks by possession (Mark 5:7-8)
- ▶ He can enter a person's heart (Luke 22:3)
- ▶ He is the master of sorcery and idolatry (Acts 13:8)
- ▶ Above all he works to obstruct the Mission of Christ (2 Cor 4:4)

Lucifer

- ▶ *Lucifer (Le génie du mal)* by [Guillaume Geefs](#) (Cathedral of St. Paul, [Liège](#), Belgium)



Lucifer



▶ Lucifer – Isaiah 14

- ▶ Isaiah 14:12-15 ¹² How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ¹³ You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon; ¹⁴ I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High." ¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.
- ▶ **Lucifer = Latin for Light Bringer (Day Star) KJV makes lucifer a proper name.**
- ▶ **Part of tradition from Late 100's – Origen.**

Summary

- ▶ Evil in the New Testament
 - ▶ Limited Cosmic Dualism
 - ▶ Cosmic power that seeks to thwart God's will
 - ▶ Human rebellion against God
- ▶ Demon = Anonymous negative deity
 - ▶ NT Dualism includes chief demon
 - ▶ Satan, the Devil, the Dragon, Belial, Beelzubub, Beelzubul
 - ▶ Chief demon is "lord" over other demons

The Demonic - Tradition



▶ Origins of demons

▶ Tradition: Apostate angels who rebelled against the will of God

- ▶ 2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment;
- ▶ Jude 1:6 ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great Day.
- ▶ Revelation 12:7-9 And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world-- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

The Demonic

- ▶ How did we get here?
- ▶ Cultural implications:
 - ▶ Zoroastrianism
 - ▶ 600-700 b.c Persia
 - ▶ Dualism - Good & Evil have different sources.
 - ▶ Platonism → Neo-Platonism
 - ▶ 428 – 348 BC Greece (Macedonia)
 - ▶ Incorporeal immortal soul

Alexander's Campaigns of Conquest

336-323 B.C.



Alexander's Routes

- Conquering the Mediterranean Area
- From Egypt to Babylon
- Conquering the East
- His Return to Babylon
- Decisive Battles

N
300 Miles

The Demonic



- ▶ **Mark 5:1-9 - Gerasene Demoniac**

- ▶ "My name is Legion; for we are many."

- ▶ **Mark 9:17-27 - Boy with an evil spirit**

- ▶ **Matthew 17:14-18** ¹⁴ When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, ¹⁵ and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ... ¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly.

The Demonic

- ▶ selhaniazomai: to suffer epileptic seizures (associated in ancient times with the supernatural power of the moon) - as being mentally out of control of oneself- to be moonstruck – to be a lunatic.



The Demonic



- ▶ My Assessment –
 - ▶ Nearly all cases of demon possession can & should be explained by modern psychology as mental disorders.
 - ▶ Schizophrenia
 - ▶ Multiple personality disorder
 - ▶ Epilepsy
 - ▶ Psychosomatic illness

Evil in our World today



- ▶ Post- Mythological Culture
 - ▶ Demon experts wanted
- ▶ Demythologization of:
 - ▶ Demons & Satan
 - ▶ Soul
 - ▶ God's intervention in the world
 - ▶ God



- ▶ Demythologization

- ▶ Sigmund Freud – inborn inclination for Evil

- ▶ Id, ego, superego

- ▶ Carl Jung – The integration of Evil

- ▶ Archetypes – collective unconscious -
'eternal' presence whether perceived or not.

- ▶ Goal – self realization

Evil in our world today



- ▶ Friedrich Schleiermacher,
 - ▶ "the church father of the nineteenth century,"
 - ▶ Enlightenment rationality.
- ▶ "The idea of the Devil, as developed among us, is so unstable that we cannot expect anyone to be convinced of its truth. . . ."

To say something about the Devil



- ▶ **In the figure of Satan, we are obviously dealing with myth and imagery; but it is myth and imagery so deeply woven into the fabric of the Bible and theology that it cannot be easily dismissed.**
- ▶ Karl Barth – warning against the “far too interesting mythology of the ancients”
 - ▶ “We ourselves might become just a little demonic.”
- ▶ Emil Brunner – warning against “far too uninteresting ‘demythologization’ of moderns.”
 - ▶ Humanity might think “it can tackle its lesser and greater problems with a little morality and medicine and psychology and aesthetics, with progressive politics or occasionally a philosophy.
 - ▶ **Each generation must learn anew that “the Christian Faith is bound to admit the existence of a sinful supernatural power” and that human sin cannot be reduced to psychology, habit, or vice.**

Evil people



- ▶ “People of the Lie” – M. Scott Peck
- ▶ “It is not their sins per se that characterize evil people, rather it is the subtlety and persistence and consistency of their sins. This is because the central defect of the evil is not the sin but the refusal to acknowledge it.”

Narcissism



- ▶ Evil as a Psychiatric condition?
- ▶ Subcategory of Narcissistic personality disorder.
 - ▶ Consistent destructive scape-goating behavior, which may often be quite subtle
 - ▶ Excessive, albeit usually covert, intolerance to criticism and other forms of narcissistic injury.
 - ▶ Pronounced concern with a public image and self-image but also to pretentiousness and denial of hateful feelings or vengeful motives
 - ▶ Intellectual deviousness, with and increased likelihood of a mild schizophrenic disturbance of thinking, at times of stress.

The Demonic in Modern Thought



- ▶ The demonic is the insight into the predicament of the human. It symbolizes evil precisely in the radical sense of being “the form-destroying eruption from the creative basis of thing.” The demonic is the relentless will to undo which points to the understanding of the tragic character of human history, its uncanny ability to destroy creatively—that is, to destroy in ever-new ways.

▶ Walter Sundberg referencing Tillich : The Demonic in Christian Thought

The Demonic in Modern Thought

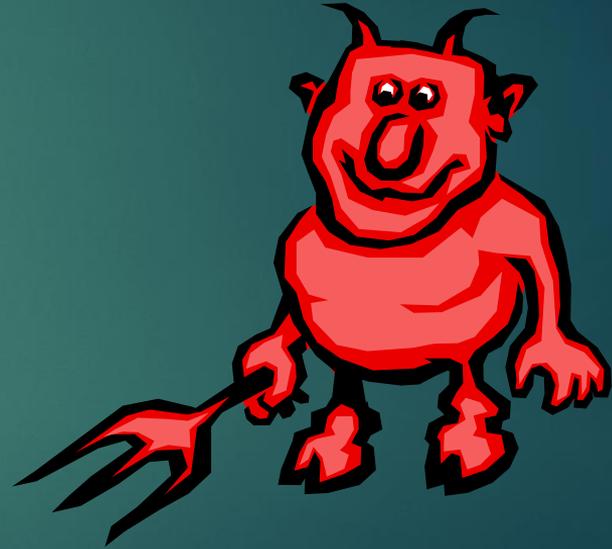


- ▶ The demonic is not simply the ancient articulation of psychic states, but the authoritative witness to the hard, objective reality of individual and corporate life. It is thus essential to the full comprehension of the nature of evil.

- Walter Sundberg referencing Tillich : The Demonic in Christian Thought

The Devil

- ▶ Do you believe in the Devil?
- ▶ I renounce the devil and all his empty promises!



Questions?



Next Week

- ▶ Others response & our Response to Evil and Suffering in this world.