Did God Create A DEVIL?

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Did God Create A DEVIL?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

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The Bible pictures the whole world under the sway of an invisible devil. Where did he come from? Did God create a devil to tempt us and to try to lead us astray? Here are the answers from God's Word!

IS THERE a devil? Many people talk about the devil and Satan. Others scoff and say it's just superstition and imagination.

But *is there a devil?* According to some Christians the Bible is supposed to teach that the devil is "the god of this world."

Did God create a devil? What does the Bible actually teach?

To find out let's look back to the very beginning. Open your Bible to Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God . . . ." God was before all.

The next word in the King James version is "created." "God created." He created the heaven and the earth.

But the very next verse says this: "The earth was without form and void." The Hebrew words for "without form and void" are *tohu* and *bohu.* Translated into English they mean *chaotic, in confusion, waste,* and *empty.*

When God created the heaven and the earth, did He create this earth originally in a state of confusion? Did He create it all topsy-turvy and chaotic?

World NOT Created in Chaos

We read in I Corinthians 14:33 that *"God is* NOT *the author of confusion."* God is the author of peace. God is the author of order and of law.

Why would He create the earth in disorder and then have to straighten it out? That doesn't make sense! One scholar points out that the Hebrew word for "created,"

bara, used in Genesis 1:1, "implies that the creation was a perfect work." That very word "created" implies a perfect and a beautiful order and system, not chaos or confusion!

The book of Job shows God talking with Job about the creation. God is saying to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" There is the implication here that Job had directed the building of some very great edifice — such as the great pyramid of Giza in Egypt. Job was righteous and somewhat proud of his accomplishments. God was whittling him down to humility by a comparison of accomplishments.

God continues, "Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened [margin, "sunk"]? or who laid the corner stone thereof when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7.)

It is significant that the great pyramid is a building where the corner stone is not laid in the foundation, but the final stone to be laid — at the pinnacle. The "morning stars" are light- (truth-) bringing angels and archangels, according to Biblical interpretation of symbols. As creations of God, they also are referred to as "all the sons of God." So this, too, implies a perfect and glorious creation of the earth.

Then how did it *become* chaotic?

In Genesis 19:26, the same Hebrew word *hayah* is used which is translated "was" in Genesis 1:2. (See also Genesis 2:7 and 9:15.) And there it is translated into the English word "became." In the first three chapters of the Bible, and many other places where you find the Hebrew word *hayah,* in almost every case it denotes a condition that was *different* from a former condition. In other words, the earth "BECAME" chaotic. It had not always been that way.

The Earth BECAME Chaotic

Plainly the word "was" (*hayah*) here has the meaning of "became." The Rotherham translation of Genesis 1:2, out of the original Hebrew language, is this: "Now the

earth HAD BECOME waste and empty." It hadn't always been that way.

In Jeremiah 4:23, Isaiah 34:11, and in other places in the Bible, you find the same words, *tohu* and *bohu,* meaning "chaotic" and "in confusion." In every case that condition is *a result of sin.*

No Chaos Originally

Notice Isaiah 45:18. "Thus saith the Eternal that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it *not* in vain." "In vain" is an inappropriate translation. In your Bible, if you have the marginal references, you will find in the margin a preferable translation, "waste."

The original Hebrew word there is TOHU. This Hebrew word is the identical word used in Genesis 1:2, meaning "confusion," or "emptiness," or "waste" — a result of disorder, a result of violation of law. In Isaiah 45:18 we have the plain statement that God created the earth NOT *tohu,* that is, *not* in confusion, *not* in disorder. But in Genesis 1:2, the earth was (because it had become) *chaotic and in confusion!*

Then it became that way after it was created. Now, what could have caused that confusion — that disorder? What sin could have wrecked the earth and brought it into the condition in which it was found in Genesis 1:2?

Life Before Adam?

Now, what was the sin then that caused this physical destruction to the earth? It was *not* a sin caused by humanity, because there had been no man on the earth until the sixth day of that re-creation or that remaking. So it was not a sin of man. Adam was the *first* man. We find over in I Corinthians 15:45 that Adam is called the *first* man on this earth. In Genesis, Eve is called the mother of all living human beings. There was no other race prior to Adam and Eve.

So the sin which brought chaos was not caused by man. And yet life must have populated the earth because a sin had occurred on the earth that brought it into a

condition of chaos and confusion by breaking the laws of God.

What kind of life could it have been? It wasn't human life. Then what kind of life had populated the earth prior to Adam, prior to the week called "creation week"?

Let's turn to II Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned...." Here the sin of angels is mentioned.

Sin of Angels!

Now read the next verse, "And spared not the old world," between Adam and Noah, "but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." There it mentions the sins from Adam to Noah, and it mentions the *physical destruction* to the earth as a result of the flood, a chaotic, physical condition brought about on the earth by the sins of those men.

Was there a chaotic condition brought about on the earth *as a result of the sins of angels?* The sin of the angels is mentioned first, and *it occurred first!* There was a devil already there in existence by the time Adam was created. So the sin of the angels happened *before* the creation of man.

Now read II Peter 2:6. "Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes [God] condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

Universal sin was in those two Canaanite cities. Physical destruction came to the entire part of the surface of the earth which those people occupied as a result of that sin. Then didn't such a destruction come to the earth *as a result of the sins of the angels* which occurred before Adam?

Now quickly turn over to Jude. In the sixth verse, you read this: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [they had a place where they lived, a habitation, an estate, and they left it], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Notice! It is the *sinning*

angels who are reserved in those chains under darkness, restrained from light, restrained from truth until the judgment of the great day.

Angels Possess the Earth!

How plain! They had an estate which they didn't keep. In Hebrews 2:5 we read this: "For unto the angels hath God not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." In other words, the World Tomorrow, the Kingdom of God, will not be in subjection to angels. *The present one is under subjection of fallen angels.* The demons, and the devil who is their head, rule this present earth and sway its inhabitants. The Bible everywhere indicates and affirms that very fact.

How did they obtain their dominion? How did they acquire their power? How do they maintain their control? Where did the devil get the power to control and to lead and to rule this world?

The devil is the leader of fallen angels, as you will find in a number of places (John 12:31; Matt. 12:26; 25:41; Rev. 12:9). In II Corinthians 4:4 the devil is called "the god of this world." He is the king or the prince of the evil world that we live in today. Let's see something about the origin of the devil.

Turn to Isaiah 14, beginning with verse 4, "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!"

Here is a king of Babylon.

This account continues to tell how he had disrupted the earth. He was an invader, a conqueror. He was a warmonger, trying to take away from others and trying to acquire all he could. He had just the opposite philosophy from that of God. In other words, he had the philosophy of the devil.

He represented the devil. The king of Babylon was the devil's instrument and tool.

Rebellion of Lucifer

This "king of Babylon" is the future ruler over the prophesied "United States of Europe" — the coming resur-

rected "Holy Roman Empire," described in prophecies of Revelation 17 and 18. It is a system described in Revelation 13 which was given its power and seat by Satan.

Then in verse 12, the type — this human king of Babylon — lifts to the arch-antitype, Satan. Satan is to be removed and bound after the Messiah's coming. Ezekiel's prophecy, to be described later, reveals that he is the former archangel cherub, Lucifer.

So continue, verse 12.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14). The 15th verse returns to the human king.

Notice, this former archangel had been placed as ruler over the angels that sinned. He had a throne. He said he would exalt his throne above the stars (angels) of God. It already was exalted above the angels on earth — the angels that sinned with him. Now he was going to exalt it over GOD'S ANGELS in heaven. He was going to invade God's heaven, knock God off the throne of the universe, and rule the whole universe!

We learn much more about this cherub who became Satan in Ezekiel 28. Here, beginning verse 1, the human prince of Tyre is referred to, wealthy (chapter 27), surrounded by perfect beauty, saying in his vain heart, "I am a God," — "I sit in the seat of God" (verse 2) — compare with II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Compare also Ezek. 27:7 with Rev. 18:16. All these refer to the same system. However, Ezekiel 26 refers to the *ancient* Tyre, as a forerunner or type of the present and yet future system. Then, as in Isaiah 14, the human type lifts to the satanic antitype in Ezek. 28:12:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation [dirge] upon the king of Tyrus [Tyre]...." The whole prophecy of chapters 27 and 28 refers, *not* to the ruler of the ancient city of Tyre

(as does chapter 26), but to an important personage, in Satan's hand, *of our time* — and immediate future — just before the coming of the Messiah to remove Satan and bring in world peace. Therefore the prophecy points to the END of this great personage ruling spiritually over nations — as well as to Satan's removal from swaying mankind on earth. Now, beginning with verse 12, and on to the middle of verse 17, it speaks of Satan himself.

So, continue: "... And say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Eternal; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes [music] was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."

A Created Being

Notice, this is not speaking of a human, but a CREATED being. God would never say of a human that he seals up the sum total of wisdom, perfection and beauty. Then who was this great created being, originally?

"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so," answers God. In Exodus 25:17-20, you will find the description of the very throne of God in heaven, from which He rules the entire vast limitless universe. On this throne are two cherubim — super archangels — whose wings spread out and *cover* the throne. This personage, then, is the former Lucifer, who was at the very throne of the universe, thoroughly experienced in the Government of God over the universe. Now he is pictured as being on earth. But he had been, formerly, at the very throne of God, as the next words plainly say:

"... Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity [lawlessness] wast found in thee."

Then God attributes to him violence, sin, corruption of wisdom, perversion, saying he became proud — his heart lifted up because of his beauty. Then, in verse 17, the immortal spirit antitype descends again to the human type,

who will be a chief instrument in Satan's hands in the tremendous world events just prior to, and leading to the coming of the Messiah to establish the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all earth's nations.

This human personage, claiming to be God, sitting in his sanctuary (verse 18) showing that he is God (II Thes. 2:3-4), is to be destroyed by FIRE, brought to ashes (verse 18). Compare with Revelation 19:20. In the latter, two human personages, instruments of Satan, are pictured — one a civil ruler over ten kings and their nations, the other called a great "False Prophet" (Rev. 19:20). The prophecy of Isaiah 14 pictures the king of Babylon as the civil ruler.

Lucifer Becomes the Devil

So now, let's recapitulate thus far. The earth was a perfect creation. The angels shouted for joy. From creation, it was populated by angels.

There was a throne, on which sat Lucifer, a super archangel, a cherub. He had been thoroughly experienced in the administration of the Government of God, having been at the very throne of God in heaven. God had placed Lucifer on the throne on earth to administer THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD over earth's angels.

There was happiness, peace, joy on earth. Of Lucifer, the Moffatt translation reads: "From the day you were created, you lived a perfect life, till you were discovered doing wrong" (Ezek. 28:15). GOD DID NOT CREATE A DEVIL, but a beautiful, perfect superangel. But God did give to His angels free moral agency — minds that were free to think and reason — the right of free choice.

Lucifer had allowed his beauty and perfection to fill him with vanity — with SELF-glory, SELF-desire. He became envious of God's power, resented authority over him. He plotted with his angels to marshal them into an invading army, to invade the heaven of God, to knock God off the throne of the Universe. Lucifer was going to BE God. It is his deceptive sway over the "Prince of Tyre" that will yet cause this personage to claim that HE, a man, is God.

So Lucifer was no longer "LIGHT-Bringer" but now an

ADVERSARY — an Aggressor, a Competitor, an Enemy. The name Satan *means* "Adversary." His angels now became DEMONS.

How the Earth Became Chaotic

A third of the angels united with Satan in the rebellion. *That is what caused the chaos of this earth.* The sin of angels reached into the heavens and brought chaos on earth.

The earth was created perfect and complete. Then it BECAME chaotic as a result of rebellion. And in six days, God *remade* the earth, *reshaped, refashioned* it, and created human beings upon it.

He gave Adam a chance to take the place of Satan the devil. Remember, Lucifer had been placed *in rulership.*

God placed the great cherub, Lucifer, to carry out His government on the earth, but Lucifer refused to carry out God's will, God's commands, God's government. He wanted to substitute his own. *So he disqualified himself.*

Adam had the chance to supplant him. In the contest to see if Adam would conquer, if he would obey God, he failed. He obeyed the devil instead, and man *became the property of the devil,* and the whole human race has been sold down the river to the devil ever since.

Jesus Christ came 4000 years later and He entered the great contest — the contest of the temptation on the Mount. *He* REFUSED *to obey the devil.* He quoted scripture correctly. *He obeyed God.*

Finally, He turned to the devil, and *He gave Satan a command.* He said, "Get away from me," and the devil obeyed!

From that time on, the successor of Satan has been qualified to take over the rule of the earth. But Jesus went to heaven for 1900 years. He is soon coming again, and when He does, *the devil will be* DISPLACED. Christ will rule the earth, God's Laws will be restored.

So God did NOT create a devil. He created a cherub, Lucifer — perfect in his ways, but with the power of free choice — and Lucifer transformed himself into a devil by rebellion against the Government of God!

What is SATAN'S FATE?

The Bible warns of a very real devil and many Satanic cohorts. What is their ultimate fate? Here is the truth about Satan, and the startling proof about his final judgment!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

THIS WORLD is totally deceived. In His very first words to His disciples in the Olivet Prophecy, Jesus sternly warned, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For MANY shall come *in my name,* saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive many"!* (Matt. 24:4-5.)

Many of you are well aware of the false doctrines circulated in modern "Churchianity" about Satan the devil. The familiar tunes of the "preachy-toned" tent-camp evangelist shouting, "We're sure gonna twist ole Satan's tail tonight!" is just one of many examples.

Some believe he is merely the embodiment of all that is evil, and therefore not a real *being,* but just a BAD "idea" in the minds of men. Others believe Satan appears as a red, dancing monster with wings like a bat, horns, a tail and a pitchfork.

But What Is the Truth?

The Bible reveals that *Satan is the god of this present world.*

Paul expressly calls him that! "In whom the god of

this world [Greek *aion,* or "age"] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, LEST the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4).

In trying to overthrow Christ, Satan boasted, "All this power will I give thee [all the kingdoms of the world], and the glory of them: for that is *delivered unto me;* and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke 4:6).

Had Satan made this statement falsely, Christ would certainly have refuted it! And yet, Christ said not one word to contradict Satan's remarks about the kingdoms of this world. Jesus *did,* however, rebuke the devil for *tempting* Him *by means of* the kingdoms of this world.

Jesus warned His disciples that the *majority* would be deceived, and going in the broad, wide, *easy* way — the way of following that which seems *right* to a man — to destruction! (Matt. 7:13.)

The deceiver is called the "prince of the power of the air" in Eph. 2:2. John's vision plainly showed Satan as the deceiver of the WHOLE WORLD, who was cast down with his angels, who are now called demons (Rev. 12:9).

How It Happened

God reveals *how* Satan became the god of this world — and why! Perhaps many have falsely assumed the devil is the god of this world *against* the will of God! Many, perhaps, have unknowingly followed another *deception* of Satan by believing the *false* idea of this world of some kind of GREAT CONTROVERSY between God and Satan! This doctrine represents the devil as being much more powerful than God! After all — the world is totally wrapped up in sin, isn't it? Such religious teachings represent just one more example of the thoroughness with which Satan has done his work of deception.

Your Bible reveals Satan as a CREATED being — created of God — as was pointed out in Part I.

Counterfeit Doctrines

Satan began his deception by introducing the doctrine of the "immortality of the soul" to Eve in the Garden of

Eden. He told her, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Since that time, the devil has succeeded in palming off *his own aspirations* and *his ultimate destination* on gullible human beings as their chief religious doctrines — which are NOT found in the Bible!

Listen!

Satan (Lucifer) wanted to go to heaven! The churches teach a doctrine of going someday to heaven! Lucifer is a *spirit,* and is therefore *immortal!* The churches believe *man* has an immortal spirit! Christ said an everlasting *fire* awaits Satan and his angels. The churches teach an everlasting fire awaits all "sinners." Satan FELL from his attempt to overthrow God. The common misconception is that man FELL!

These are only a *few* of the more prevalent doctrines that Satan has palmed off as truth to this gullible world.

Satan's Work

God shows that fully one third of all the multiplied millions of the angels *followed* Lucifer in his rebellion, and were cast down to the earth with him! (Compare Rev. 12:4 with Rev. 1:20.) These fallen angels, remember, are SPIRITS, not human beings! To accomplish his *work* of deception, with the ultimate goal of *destroying* human beings, Satan utilizes these millions of disobedient spirits! He is called the PRINCE of demons (Matt. 12:24).

Satan himself is always concerned with the *top-level* jobs in his attempt to destroy God's plan. Notice how he began — by trying to destroy Adam and Eve — the very FIRST (and therefore a primary aim) humans on the earth. Again, when God sent His own Son, Satan tried by many clever subtleties to cause Christ to SIN against the Law of God. All through Christ's ministry, Satan tried to have Him killed — to thwart His every purpose! Finally, when it was time according to *God's* purpose to ALLOW Christ to be killed, Satan the devil was a DIRECT instrument in executing Christ. He entered *personally* into Judas! (John 13:27.)

It is not at all inconceivable that Satan could personally, individually tempt one of God's people! However,

many people attribute many insignificant things to the devil — not realizing that he is concerned with the top-level jobs in his evil plan! Many of these things are nothing more than the pulls of their own human nature!

Since the devil is concerned directly with the *primary targets* in trying to upset God's plan, it also follows that the MOST IMPORTANT TARGET ON EARTH IS GOD'S CHURCH!

God thunders a warning at every one of us that the devil *is yet* to come down to this earth in GREAT WRATH — knowing he has but a short time left — to PERSECUTE God's Church. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make *war* with the remnant of her seed, which *keep the commandments of God,* and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"! (Rev. 12:17.)

Paul said he was not IGNORANT of Satan's devices (II Cor. 2:11).

Are you?

What About the Everlasting Fire?

The time is rapidly drawing nearer when Satan the devil will no longer be *permitted to* deceive the nations! At this present time, God is directly ALLOWING Satan to be used as His instrument in blinding the world, so the lesson of mankind will be so firmly and completely etched in its own blood that there will never again be a society existing in total rebellion against God's government! *God* is the One who has "concluded [shut up] them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). He says He is *not willing* that ANY should perish, but that ALL should finally come to repentance! (II Peter 3:9.)

At the beginning of Christ's millennial rule over the nations, Satan is to be BOUND, and cast into an abyss (Rev. 20:1-3). This condition of restraint will last during the thousand years, and then the devil will be momentarily allowed freedom to deceive the nations again (verse 3)!

But consider what occurs next!

Jesus said He is going to cast unrepentant, carnal-minded HUMANS into "everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt. 25:41).

Notice, however, that these wicked HUMAN BEINGS are

cast into an everlasting *fire* prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fire is a physical, chemical thing! Fire is the combustion of physical objects with oxygen which *changes* the physical objects into ashes and gaseous vapor!

Notice that the wicked (the *same* ones Christ referred to) are to be ASHES under the feet of the righteous! (Mal. 4:3.) Therefore, this fire Christ spoke of in Matthew 25 is a fire that CONSUMES human beings! But Satan is a SPIRIT being! And *spirit beings are not affected by fire!* They are not material.

Yes — it may be *possible* that Almighty God could create a fire that would perhaps consume a spirit — since ALL THINGS are possible with God! (Matt. 19:26.) But it is not a question of what God CAN do. It is a question of what God WILLED to do!

Let's continue!

The word "everlasting" in Matthew 25:41 is *aionion* in the Greek language. *Aionion* comes from the root *aion* which often means "age"! In this case, the correct translation into the English language should be "AGE-LASTING fire."

Does the Bible bear this up?

Yes, it does!

The "Age-Lasting" Fire

Next, let's notice carefully some significant facts about the fire Christ will use to destroy His enemies!

When Jesus returns to this earth as KING, His first act will be to destroy, NOT *ALL* the wicked, but that "wicked ONE" who is going to be working miracles and deceiving the world! (II Thes. 2:8.) Together with this great False Prophet, Christ will lay hold of the Beast who is yet to arise, and throw them *both* into a *lake of fire,* burning with brimstone! (Rev. 19:20.)

These two are human beings — physical, breathing *men,* who are alive and drawing breath at this instant! The fire will CONSUME them. *This lake of fire is going to be burning all during the millennium!* (Isaiah 66:23-24.)

During Christ's time, the Valley of Hinnom, just out-

side of Jerusalem, was the place where refuse and the bodies of criminals were thrown — into fires that were kept constantly burning. God uses this as a *type* of the coming *lake of fire!* My father, mother, brother and I *saw* this valley, called "Gehenna" in the Bible — and thus were actually looking into HELL, believe it or not!

During the millennial reign of Christ and His saints, this valley will once more be kept perpetually burning — and the incorrigibly wicked ones who WILL to continue in rebellion against God's laws will be THROWN INTO this "lake of fire" as a stern witness to all the rest of the world! (Isa. 66:24.)

Next, turn to Revelation 20:10. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into *the* lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [WERE CAST]." There is *no* verb "are" in the original Greek, as the King James revisers have added in italics! See an interlinear or any concordance!

Notice that the devil WILL BE CAST into THE (not just "a," but the definite article "the" is in the Greek) lake of fire where the Beast and the False Prophet WERE CAST!

THIS IS THE SAME FIRE!

It was burning at the precise *beginning* of the millennium when the Beast and False Prophet were thrown into its flames; it will be burning at the END of the millennium, when Satan is thrown into the same fire!

That's WHY it is called an AGE-LASTING fire in Matthew 25:41 — because it does, literally, LAST for an age — the millennial age!

What About the Demons?

Christ said the fire was being prepared for the devil AND his angels! So they, *too,* are to be thrown into the lake of fire!

A commonly misunderstood explanation of this is found in I Peter 3:19-20. People have assumed, because they base their religious philosophies on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that Christ was busy PREACHING to some supposed "souls" of *men* in hell! What folly! Let's understand what really happened!

Your Bible plainly states the TIME element in these verses. Christ did the preaching, NOT during the three days and nights when He was DEAD in the tomb (I Cor. 15:3 and 20) but "WHEN once the longsuffering of God waited *in the days of Noah,* while the ark was a preparing . . ." (I Peter 3:20).

But notice to *whom* Christ witnessed about the flood. "By which also he went and preached unto the SPIRITS IN PRISON"! (Verse 19.)

Who were these "spirits"? Certainly not MEN — nor the "souls" of men, since *men do not have* immortal souls!

Turn to II Peter 2:4 for the answer! "For if God spared not the angels [spirits] that *sinned,* but cast them down to hell [PRISON — "hell" is a mistranslation from the Greek *tartaroo* which means a "condition or position of *restraint,*" as an "imprisonment"], and delivered them into CHAINS of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

The "spirits in prison" are the sinning angels, or the DEMONS that have perverted their ways and followed Satan, and are BOUND to the earth — imprisoned here by the power of God until their day of JUDGMENT.

The final enemy of Christians is death itself. When the plan of God is finally completed, even death is to be completely destroyed! (I Cor. 15:26.) Just before the establishment of the new heavens and new earth, all that is corrupt, all that is physically combustible, will be consumed in a vast, WORLDWIDE lake of fire!

The Lake of Fire

This tremendous conflagration will be so intense, so white-hot, that the surface of the whole earth will literally melt with the fervor of the flames! Peter describes this awesome time as a melting of the very elements, a time when all the works on the earth are burned up — dissolved! (II Peter 3:10-11.)

Christ shows this time occurs *after* the final Great White Throne Judgment when God's plan is complete — and all who have been added to His family are already born of Him. After this final judgment, even death and the grave are destroyed (Rev. 20:13-15).

The surface of the earth will become for a time just as if it were the blazing surface of the sun! This is the great Gehenna fire that Christ talked of, that will destroy the wicked.

It is into this vast, seething lake of fire that Satan and his angels will have been cast.

But remember! This fire is PHYSICAL! It *consumes* the bodies of the wicked, and is so intense it even melts the rocks and elements of the earth until they are liquefied.

But Satan and his angels are spirit beings! Fire is PHYSICAL, and cannot BURN spiritual beings! Spirit is NOT COMBUSTIBLE!

Now notice an important verse!

The New Heavens and New Earth

In the glorious picture of the new heavens and new earth, John wrote a description of the temple, and the beauty of God's new creation. A key scripture is Revelation 21:27! God expressly shows Satan and his angels will not BE in the new heavens and the new earth! "And there shall IN NO WISE ENTER INTO IT any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Satan will not be there! And the fire will BURN UP the wicked, and the works of the earth (Rev. 20:14; 21:8).

Peter tells us we can look forward to the new heavens and new earth wherein dwells *righteousness!* (II Peter 3:13.) It is evident from God's Word that Satan and his angels will not be anywhere in the new heaven and new earth!

Then where are they to be?

Let's go on — and see what your Bible actually reveals!

Since fire cannot consume spirits — then how can they be punished? Many people fail to realize that *mental* torment is *far worse* than physical torment!

How a Spirit Can Suffer

God created our bodies with a type of "safety device" against too much pain! When the physical human body is

subjected to extreme pain, it will reach a certain point and then lapse into unconsciousness! The mind does not continue to register the pain — even though the body continues to suffer! Mothers recognize the truth of this immediately. The thought of seeing their children suffer — having to stand the *mental* agonies of seeing their own children being tortured — would be far worse than having to suffer physical pain themselves.

A *disembodied* spirit — one that cannot any longer physically manifest itself — is an *uncomfortable, miserable* spirit! Jesus described this condition of mental torment when He said, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking *rest;* and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out" (Luke 11:24).

This is further illustrated by the account of Christ's experience with the many demons who had entered the man in the country of the Gadarenes. Jesus commanded the spirits to come out of the man, and they "besought him *much* that he would not send them away out of the country" (Mark 5:10). "And all the devils [demons] besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may *enter into* them" (verse 12).

When Philip was performing miracles at Samaria, he cast out many demons, who came out of people "crying with *loud voice"* (Acts 8:7) showing their frustration and anger at being deprived of their dwelling place! (Luke 8:28.)

God says the demons *know* of His power — they are aware of the great AUTHORITY of God! We are told that willful sinners are going to be left with a certain FEARFUL looking for of *judgment* (Heb. 10:26-27) and that it is a FEARFUL thing to fall into the hands of the living God! (Verse 31.)

James said, "Thou believest that there is one God? Thou doest well: the devils [demons] also believe, and TREMBLE"! (James 2:19.) They FEAR the awesome judgment awaiting them, and are therefore in TORMENT! "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because FEAR HATH TORMENT" (I John 4:18).

When Satan comes down to the earth in great wrath, it is because he knows he has but a SHORT TIME left! (Rev. 12:12.)

His punishment will plainly be *mental, spiritual,* NOT PHYSICAL!

Many have misunderstood verse 16 of Ezekiel 28. Notice that God is speaking of the beginning of the creation in this account of Satan's original rebellion. But, just as the Bible so often uses DUAL meanings, so THIS is history and prophecy at the same time! God refers to the "stones of fire" in verse 13. Notice how these same stones are used in the description of the Holy City! Compare with Revelation 21:18-21. Remember, the "mountain" (nation, or government) of God is ultimately going to be ON THIS EARTH! God CAST LUCIFER OUT of that mountain, throwing him DOWN from his attempt to be above God's throne! God's throne is then to be ON THIS EARTH! God will *again* cast Satan out of His presence!

"... Therefore I WILL [both past and *future*] cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, FROM the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezek. 28:16). The word *destroy* is explained by the word FROM! God does NOT say Satan is to be DESTROYED! He DOES say Satan is to be DESTROYED FROM a certain place — the midst of the stones of fire, or the location of God's seat of authority.

Hebrews 2:14 is one misunderstood scripture in regard to this subject. The last half of the verse reads: "that through death he" (meaning Christ) "might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." The Greek word here translated "destroyed" has more the meaning of "to annul, bring to naught, make of no effect" rather than a physical and total destruction. God is going to annul and make void Satan's works and power.

Satan Will Not Be Destroyed!

Now, let's notice further proof that Satan is NOT to be destroyed. Turn again to Revelation 20, and verse 10.

Notice that the devil is cast into the lake of fire where the Beast and False Prophet *were cast,* AND Satan and his

demons shall be tormented day and night forever and ever!

This expressly states Satan will be tormented for the AGES OF THE AGES! (See *International Critical Commentary,* an interlinear or other such Bible helps.) This expression in the Greek means for all eternity — for time everlasting!

BUT!

Notice carefully the verse states Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire AND tormented forever! It does not say that he will *remain in the fire* forever! The fire is on this earth! The fire is an AGE-LASTING fire, which will *not* be burning after God's new heaven and new earth are established! Since Satan is to be tormented FOREVER, and the fire is to finally *consume* the physical objects it is burning until it burns *out,* Satan does *not* remain in this lake of fire forever!

Satan is a spirit! Fire cannot consume spirit — and A SPIRIT CANNOT DIE!

Jesus Christ said so!

For a clinching proof, turn to Luke the twentieth chapter. In verse 34, Christ begins to explain to the hypocritical Sadducees about the resurrection. "... The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, for they are equal unto the angels ..." (verses 34-36).

Jesus tells us the angels *cannot die!* Satan is a fallen angel! Therefore Satan *cannot die!*

"Reserved Unto Judgment!"

Remember, Peter and Jude both attest to the fact that the sinning demons are reserved unto a time of JUDGMENT! Without realizing it, many people have assumed the "judgment" is a final SENTENCING that is passed in one instant at Christ's coming!

Such is not the case!

A judge must investigate the merits of each case and

ARRIVE at a decision based on the facts! God is calling out His children to become kings and PRIESTS with Christ — and to RULE THIS EARTH! (Rev. 5:10.)

A vital part of the job of each of God's children will be JUDGMENT! Believe it or not, the Creator of all that exists is actually permitting us to have an opportunity to become judges of this world! Many have not understood the scriptures already mentioned in I Peter 3:19-20 and II Peter 2:4, simply because they have not understood an important phase of that judgment!

The Apostle Paul gives us the amazing answer in I Corinthians 6:2-3! "Do ye not know that the saints shall *judge the world?* And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? KNOW YE NOT THAT WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS?"

There it is!

We shall judge angels! Remember, the wicked spirits, including Satan, are presently being reserved, being kept in restraint, *unto judgment!* That judging is yet to be done!

Now do you see?

The Bible plainly reveals Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, but the lake of fire will *end* when the new heavens and new earth are established, and Satan is to be tormented unto the *ages of the ages!* It also shows his torment *while* in that fire is going to be MENTAL, at seeing all he has strived toward, worked for, plotted for, *burned up.* Christ preached to the spirits on this earth *during the time of the flood* as a WITNESS to them! The flood was a type of the yet future destruction of the earth — this time by FIRE! Christ was warning them of the impending destruction of all their works — and their everlasting banishment from this earth! The *exact nature* of their ETERNAL punishment is YET TO BE DECIDED!

YOUR BIBLE REVEALS *YOU* MAY BE INSTRUMENTAL IN DECIDING THAT PUNISHMENT!

Jude gave a slight indication of the possibility of the *nature* of that punishment when he used the demons as a *type* in warning Christians about false teachers who had crept in unawares. In reading through the book of Jude,

you come to verse 6, where the demons are mentioned, to the next few verses, where these "filthy dreamers" are described. Notice how their error is EXACTLY that of the sinning angels in that they too tried to *usurp* authority! "They . . . ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core . . ." (verse 11). See Numbers 16, where Korah tried to *usurp* the position of God's chosen servants.

Jude continues to describe, "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; *wandering stars* [see Rev. 1:20, where stars are symbols of *angels*], TO WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER"! (Verse 13.)

Notice, in Enoch's prophecy, he spoke of coming *judgment,* ". . . Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute *judgment* upon all . . ." (verses 14-15).

As has already been proved — the *angels* (demons) are definitely included among those to be judged by the saints! Could this be an indication of their final fate? They are *miserable* when disembodied — wandering through "dry places, seeking rest"! Could this statement in Jude give us a picture of their punishment? ". . . Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever"! (Jude 13.)

Your Responsibility

Part of our awesome responsibility is going to be the judging of angels! Satan's ultimate destination apparently is yet to be decided — *by the saints!*

Are you preparing yourself for such a job?

Such an overwhelming responsibility demands a tremendous amount of wisdom and knowledge! God Almighty has called you and me to much more than just some inactive, "fluff-fluff" eternity of laziness and ease! We are going to have the responsibility to rule the universe with Christ — to do what the fallen angels were unwilling to accomplish. So great is that responsibility that God says it has not entered into the *heart* of man the things He has prepared for us! (I Cor. 2:9.) □

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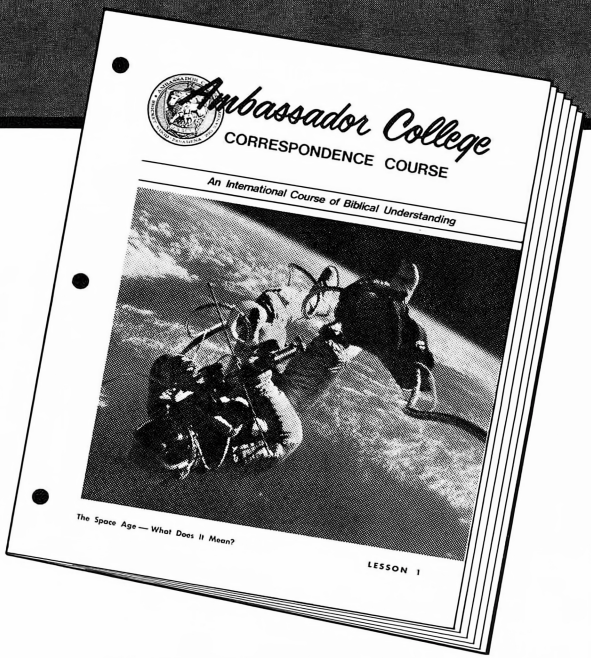

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