

Hell's Angels – Part II

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²The reasons why God did not provide a Savior for the fallen angels, as He did for fallen man, lie hidden in the “unsearchable judgements” of God. Quenstedt (*Systema I*, 829) suggest probable reasons, among which perhaps the most familiar is that the devil fell without seduction, while man fell by seduction. But here we must be on our guard lest we impugn the free compassion that induced God to provide salvation for mankind. – Another question which has been much ventilated is what we are to make of the devil’s intelligence, since Scripture, on the one hand, credits him with great cunning (Gen. 3.1ff; 2 Cor. 11.3: “As the serpent beguiled Even through his subtilty”; Eph. 6.11: “the wiles of the devil”), and, on the other hand, tells of his great stupidity in promoting the death of Christ, by which he was cast out of his kingdom. Christ expressly stated that His death would have that effect: “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12.31). It is also undeniable that the devil was not unfamiliar with the prophecies of the Old Testament from Gen. 3.15 on to Isaiah 53 and beyond; he must have known how the death of the Messiah would affect his rule. A probable explanation of the folly of the devil is that his hatred of everything that is of God or divine is so great that it blinded his reason. His will was so taken up with evil that his intellect failed to function. We have an analogy for such folly in the hatred of men for the Gospel, which has its seat principally in the love of evil (John 3.19-20: “Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”) and directs the mind, that is, deprives it of its capacity to act. All opposition to the divine truth, including the opposition to the vicarious atonement and the inspiration of Scripture (verbal inspiration), can be clearly be shown to be unreasonable.

The activities of the evil angels are, as we have just said, evil throughout. Scripture describes them, for our information and warning, very clearly and in full detail. All endeavors of the wicked angels are aimed at harming man in his body (Luke 13.11, 16: the woman bound by Satan 18 years), in his temporal possessions (Job 1.12ff; Matt. 8.32-32: the herd of swine), and particularly in his soul (1 Peter 5.8: You adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”). The entire state of unbelief – among heathen nations as well as in external Christendom – is a work of the devil (Eph. 2.1-2: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”). All who do not believe the Gospel are thinking and doing what the devil wills; they are completely in his power (Acts 26.18; Col. 1:13: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son”). And the fact that men do not know this, yes, even deny the existence of the devil, is likewise due to the operation of the devil. It is Scriptural to describe the status of all those who do not believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins as ‘spiritual possession.’ We may reserve this term for particular cases and persons, using it to describe an intensified operation of the devil in individuals. But while doing this, we must never forget that every unbeliever is completely in the power of Satan, until God’s grace and power delivers him from the power of Satan and translates him into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1.13). This spiritual possession does not relieve man of personal responsibility (Matt. 25.41), nor does it destroy the free will of man (taken as freedom from coercion), since the unbeliever of his own will rejects the Gospel and gladly does what is evil.

Bodily possession presents an entirely different case. Also children of God may suffer this affliction (Mark 5.6, 18, 19; Luke 8.28,38,39); by it the devil, under God’s sufferance, takes possession of a man by personally dwelling in him, so that the demoniac, bereft of the use of his reason and will, becomes the involuntary instrument of Satan. The human personality no longer functions; the devil in person becomes the acting subject. The demoniac is no longer responsible for his actions.

The activity of the evil angels against the Church is portrayed fully in Scripture. According to Matt. 16.18: “the gates of hell” are continually waging war against the Church, and it is Christ alone who preserves the Church against the onslaughts of the powers of hell. Behind everything that harms the Church are the evil spirits. They bring about the inattention of the hearers of the Word (Luke 8.12; “Then cometh the devil and taketh away the Word out of their hearts”) and the falsification of the divine doctrine, which Christ would have His Church maintain in purity (Matt. 13.25: “But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat”; 1 Tim. 4.1ff: “the doctrines of devils”). Especially

²Copied verbatim from Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 1. pp. 508f

the Papacy is described in Scripture as the devil's masterpiece in the Church, 2 Thess.2. We have lost the Biblical judgment on false doctrine if we do not regard it as the work of the devil. Also, persecution and oppression of the Church by the State and organizations within the State is a result of the activity of the evil spirits.

As Satan unceasingly wages war on the Church, so he is also in arms against the divine order of the State and family. He persuades David to take a census of the nation (1 Chron. 21.1) and Ahab to wage war against the Syrians (1 Kings 22.21-22). It is the devil who forbids to marry (1 Tim. 4.1-2) and who tempts married people to infidelity (1 Cor. 7.5). Scripture also tells us that God uses the evil angels not only to punish the godless (2 Thess. 2.11-12), but also to try the believers, as was the case with Job (Job 1.7ff) and the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12.7).

The punishment of the evil angels is eternal torment in the fire of hell (Matt. 25.41: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"). The question as to the nature of this fire (whether material or immaterial) need not be answered. So also the question of those who are ultimately seduced by them will have to deny, if he would be consistent, also eternal life (Matt. 25.46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal") and thus the entire Christian religion (1 Cor. 15.19: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"). To conceive of the eternal fire as purifying or annihilating the wicked and the evil angels contradicts Scripture.

Finally, we should bear in mind that all that the Bible says of the evil angels and their punishment serves the ends of divine compassion. Its purpose is to impress on men the necessity of repentance and of faith in Him who by His blood ransomed mankind not for hell, but for heaven.

Scriptures Cited:

Gen. 3.1f: Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"

Gen. 3.15: And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Luke 13.11,16: And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way [d]raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God....¹⁶ So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

Job 1.12ff: And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Acts 26.18: ...to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' (Jesus to Paul at his conversion)

Matt. 25.41: "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:'"

Mark 5.6,18,19: ⁶When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. . . .¹⁸ And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. ¹⁹However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Luke 8.28, 38,39: Parallel to Mark 5 above.

2 Thess. 2: ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

1 Chron. 21.1: Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.

1 Kings 22.21-22: Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, 'I will persuade him.' ²²The Lord said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the Lord said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.'

1 Tim 4.1-3: Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ²speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

1 Cor. 7.5: Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

2 Thess. 2.11-12: And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Job 1.7ffL ⁸Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

2 Cor. 12.7: And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.