

## **“THE ORIGIN OF DEMONS.”**

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**First Christian Reformed Church**

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**Sermon Texts: Isaiah 14:12-15; Jude 1:6**

**Belgic Confession, Article 12**

### **Introduction.**

As I mentioned last week concerning angels, the Belgic Confession devotes more attention to the creation of angels and the fallen angels than to the rest of creation. And concerning angels and demons, more attention is given to demons.

There was a lot of superstition surrounding angels and demons in the Middle Ages, lots of ritualistic practices and lots of fear.

There have always been two extremes or two ditches in the understanding of demons and the supernatural.

In Jesus' day it was the Sadducees and the Manichees (or Manicheans). The Sadducees said there was no supernatural, no resurrection, no angels, no demons. The Manichees taught that evil was eternal, that there were two equal and opposite forces in the universe, good and evil.

In the Middle Ages that same extremes were present and they still are today. Some say it's a closed universe, nothing out there, nothing invisible. In the words of the atheistic scientist Carl Sagan: "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be."

Satan has been caricatured so much it's hard to get people to take him seriously. Satan, demons and devils are mostly the realm of superstition these days, lumped together with ghost and goblins and other things that go bump in the night.

They are more about Halloween than they are about serious discussions of the Bible and doctrine. Good biblical theology must include demonology, a clear doctrine concerning Satan and demons. And we must get our theology about demons from the Bible and not Hollywood movies or the Left Behind books or other popular sources.

Remember when Guido de Buis wrote the Confession he was seeking to show the religious authorities of the day that the Reformers were biblical, that they upheld the true doctrines of the faith and that they were not proposing something that was new or novel. The Belgic Confession strikes the Biblical balance and rejects both errors. So what does the Bible teach us about demons, devils, evil spirits and Satan?

### **Demons, devils, evil spirits.**

All angels were created good by God. Some of them out of sin became fallen angels or demons or devils or evil spirits.

They are fallen angels, spiritual beings created by God who rebelled against God and are now in permanent opposition to God.

## **Satan.**

The demons and devils are led by Satan who is the originator of sin. He has several revealing, descriptive titles in Scripture.

Lucifer is the King James translation of the Hebrew word in Isaiah 14:12, meaning Day Star or Morning Star, shining one or light bearer. This is the only occurrence of this word in the Bible.

Modern translations use Satan which means adversary; or devil which means accuser. Revelation uses Apollyon which means destroyer (Revelation 9:11). He is also the Tempter, the evil one, a roaring, devouring lion, the Prince or god of this world, the Prince of darkness, and in Matthew he is referred to as Beelzebul, the prince of demons (Matthew 12:24) implying he is the chief among the fallen angels, perhaps like an archangel.

He is not a horned creature with a red suit and a tail. Scripture says he comes deceiving as an angel of light. He makes evil look good.

He is the father of lies, meaning he is the original liar and the source of all falsehood and deception; a thief who “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). He is the personification of everything that is evil.

***What was the original sin?*** Scripture suggests it was pride or the attempt to exalt himself over God and usurp what belongs to God. They did not want to stay in their own position (Jude 6).

**Jude 6** And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling.

**I Timothy 3:6** He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

**I John 3:8** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for ***the devil has been sinning from the beginning.***

### ***When did Satan and the angels fall?***

They apparently went through a time of testing or probation like Adam and Eve and some of them fell away sometime before the tempting of Adam and Eve. It would seem that it was after the events of Genesis 1:31 and before Genesis 3:1.

**Genesis 1:31** And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

### ***How many of the angels fell?***

Some scholars think the reference in Revelation 12 is to the number of angels who fell and were cast out of heaven. Satan may be the dragon who took a third of the angels with him.

**Revelation 12:3-4a** And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.

Sometimes angels are mentioned in the context of the stars, but this is speculation at best. We can say that it was legions and perhaps myriads, meaning a lot.

### ***How much power and knowledge do Satan and demons have?***

Satan is a fallen angel. All demons are fallen angels. They are finite created creatures which means that they have great but limited power, knowledge and movement. They can only be in one place at one time. Satan cannot be in more than one place at a time.

#### ***Limited power.***

Satan is nowhere near God's equal. He is not divine and has infinitely less power than God. The story of Job makes this clear, Satan can only do what he is allowed to do by God. Satan and the demons are not independent of God or outside of God's controlling purposes.

As Luther said the devil is God's devil and the demons are God's demons, meaning they are under God's authority and control.

The angels have greater power than the demons because of Christ and the defeat on the cross (II Peter 2:11).

They are in eternal chains (Jude 6) and can be resisted by Christians through the authority of Christ and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (James 4:7).

#### ***Limited knowledge.***

Only God knows all things and knows the future. They don't know when Jesus will return.

**Isaiah 46:9-10** for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done,

Demons don't know the future and can't read our minds or know our thoughts. Only God and only Jesus are shown in Scripture as able to know our thoughts.

Demons can observe and draw conclusions from what they see and are exceedingly crafty and cunning and devious.

### **Satan's Strategies and Tactics.**

After the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit Satan's activity has been more restricted, though Paul and John warn that there will be a great increase of activity at the end of time.

But while restricted, that isn't to say Satan and demons don't try to influence God's people. Their strategy and goal is to destroy all that is good, true and beautiful.

Satan and his demons hate God, hate Jesus, hate the Church of Jesus Christ, hate the Bible, hate the Gospel, hate any preaching of the Gospel, hate all truth, hate grace, hate faith, hope and love.

They hate Christians and oppose everything we believe and stand for and come here to worship. They are out to destroy the church of Jesus Christ and every leader of it and every member in it. They will try anything and everything to oppose and disrupt. Division, strife, gossip, bitterness, malice, offenses, temptation and sin.

Satan is called the father of lies, meaning he is the original liar and the source of all falsehood and deception and he uses deception, false accusations, slander and lies. He is called the accuser of the brethren and will use defeat, doubt, discouragement, depression, condemnation, guilt, shame, fear, and confusion.

He promotes false teaching in churches and denominations and colleges and seminaries. He blinds the eyes of unbelievers.

### **Why does God allow Satan to continue to do evil?**

Why doesn't God put an end to Satan now?

God has a plan to put to end to Satan at a time and in a way that will most glorify God and magnify His power and authority and truth and beauty and in a way that also magnifies His Son. God could just snuff Satan out and show His great power. But He is defeating Satan in stages in a way that glorifies His Son.

God announced His plan in Genesis 3:

**Genesis 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

*The first stage* came on the cross:

**I John 3:8** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

**Colossians 2:15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

**I Corinthians 15:55-57** "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"  
56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus conquered Satan's biggest weapon, death. Satan's power was broken on the cross. Jesus has the keys of Death and Hades (Revelation 1:18).

*The next stage* is in the conversion of countless believers from every tribe, tongue, language and people through the preaching of the Gospel.

"...so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

Every conversion is another defeat of darkness and the power Satan.

*The final stage* will be when Jesus returns and makes a complete triumph over Satan and all his dominion.

“One little word will fell him.”

Satan and the demons know they are defeated and they daily expect their final destruction.

**Matthew 8:29** And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

### **Application and conclusion.**

All doctrine is for our comfort and encouragement. The doctrine of demons reminds us of God’s divine power and authority. Even Satan and all his dominion must submit to God and do His will and everything in all creation works to serve God’s glory and our good.

“This is my Father’s world, O let me ne’er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.”

Whatever evil we hear on the news or read in the paper is completely under God’s control and authority and is for His purposes. Christ has already triumphed over evil and He will return one day to make a final end of them all.

**I John 4:4** Little children, ... he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

### *Spiritual Warfare.*

We do not live in a peacetime. We live in a war and we should adopt a warfare mentality.

**II Corinthians 10:3-4** For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

There is a battle waging all around us and we must be willing and ready and able to fight. We are not powerless. We have the Holy Spirit, Scripture and prayer.

Jesus gives to believer’s authority to resist and rebuke and command them to leave.

**Luke 10:17** The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”

Jesus gave us a clear model for resisting Satan’s temptation with Scripture. Hit him with the truth.

Jesus has given us the full armor of God so that we may withstand the evil one and stand firm (Ephesians 6:10-20).

**Ephesians 6:10-18** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Resist him with the resources Christ supplies. All the armor is God's armor. They can harass us, tempt us, accuse us, cause us to fear, but they cannot control us or possess a Christian who has the Holy Spirit.

Satan should be taken seriously but not to the point of paralyzing fear, after all he is defeated. We are adopted children of God and secure in His arms. One of Satan's tactics is fear, but we need not fear. The opposite of fear is faith, trust in God.

**II Timothy 1:7** for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

A simple tactic of resistance is a simple prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

When we sense we are being tempted or accused or troubled or harassed, simply resist the thoughts by praying, "Father in heaven by the power of your Holy Spirit in me, lead me not into temptation and deliver me from evil and the evil one, in Jesus name, Amen."