

Beelzebub, Satan, demons and evil spirits in Luke's Gospel

Hebrew words relating to demons, Satan, etc.

shed: translated "shade" or "demon," found at Deut 32:17 and Ps 106:37

sa'iyir: translated "satyr" or goat-devil," used 50+ times for ordinary reference to male goats or hairy men (e.g., Gen 27:11: Esau). Used in Isa 13:21 and 34:14 to refer to foreign goat-idols.

satan: The *satan* originally meant a spy for the Persian king, who went out into the colonized regions watching for people fomenting rebellion, and brought back to the king the names of those accused of such activities. Hence, in the book of Job, "Satan" accuses Job before the king (God). Also used to refer to a military adversary (e.g., 1 Sam 29:4, 1 Kings 11:14), then more generally for any sort of adversary or accuser, but especially a legal adversary, i.e., a prosecutor (e.g., Ps 38:20, 71:13, Zech 3:1-2).

ra' ruach: evil spirit, conceived in Hebrew scripture as a force created and controlled by God alone, e.g., Judges 9:23, 1 Sam 16:14, 18:10, 19:9 (no other uses).

tu'mah ruach: unclean spirit: only use is Zech 13:2.

Beelzebub or beelzebub: derived from *Ba'al* and *zebul*. Ba'al is a common word in numerous Canaanite languages for "husband," "owner," or "master" (note the patriarchal associations!). More specifically, it referred to the primary god of the pre-Israelite Palestinians, known as a storm, fertility and war deity. The cult of Ba'al infiltrated Yahweh worship early on and persisted throughout the monarchy period. Ba'al-zebul in 2 Kings 1:2-16 is a political-theological parody on this worship, meaning "Lord of the flies" or "Lord of the dung-heap."

Greek cultural influence

daimon: demons in popular belief: the spirits of the dead (i.e., "ghosts") who can cause mischief, illness and madness. Also, "lesser" gods under the supervision of a chief god/goddess.

daimonion: as used in the Septuagint, a contemptuous term for pagan gods (e.g., Deut 32:17, translating Hebrew *shed*)

diabolos: in the Septuagint, used for the accuser, adversary or seducer (e.g., 1 Chr 21:1, Zech 3:1-2, in both places translating *satan*).

Jewish intertestamental apocalyptic literature (especially 1 Enoch)

concepts developed during this period include: fallen angels, evil or unclean spirits not under God's direct control (although under God's ultimate control), Satan as head of a demonic army attempting to conquer humanity, and other names, such as "the evil one" (Gk, *poneros*; e.g., John 17:15).

New Testament adaptation of these themes

diabolos: translated "devil", used specifically for the ultimate opponent of Jesus (e.g., "temptation" stories, Mt 4 and Lk 4), the opponent of the Christian community (e.g., Mt 13:39/Lk 8:12, Acts 13:10), of humanity in general (e.g., Acts 10:38, Eph 4:27), and finally, of God (e.g., 1 Jn 3:8, 10). Eventually an apocalyptic expression for the political forces opposing Christianity (e.g., Rev 2:10). The Book of Revelation portrays the eschatological (i.e., "end-times") battle between the angels and the Dragon-serpent-devil at Rev 12 and 20. **In Luke: 4:2, 4:3, 4:6, 4:13, 8:12.**

Satanas: translated as "Satan," but theologically identical to "devil" (e.g., Mk 4:15, using "Satan" where Mt 13:39/Lk 8:12 use "devil"). **In Luke: 10:18, 11:18, 13:16, 22:3, 22:31.**

daimonion: demon(s), used over 50 times for personalized forces of disease (both physical and mental) and opposition, almost exclusively in the gospels. They represent a popular understanding, not part of official Jewish theology. Only in the parallel passages of Mk 3:22, Mt 12:24 (also Mt 9:34) and Lk 11:15 are they reported to be under the authority of the devil (in the name of Beelzebub). **In Luke: 4:33, 4:35, 4:41, 7:33, 8:2, 8:27, 8:29, 8:30, 8:33, 8:35, 8:38, 9:1, 9:42, 9:49, 10:17, 11:14, 11:14, 11:15, 11:15, 11:18, 11:19, 11:20, 13:32.**