When Did Angels Become Demons?

DALE BASIL MARTIN
dale.martin@yale.edu
Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520

According to familiar Christian mythology, demons are or were fallen angels. Satan was an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. Other angels rebelled along with him and became his minions. These fallen angels became demons. The mythology also assumes that “demon” refers to the same being as “evil (or unclean or polluted) spirit.”1 Contrary to what may be common assumptions, this mythology was not shared by most ancient Jews, including those who wrote and translated the Hebrew Bible, most writers of ancient noncanonical Jewish texts, and Jews in general before the rise of Christianity. Moreover, that myth, in its complete form, is not found in the NT, though separate aspects of it may be discerned there. The Christian myth that equated fallen angels with demons arose in the second and third centuries C.E. It was an invention of late ancient Christian writers. From a historical point of view, therefore, we should not retroject the equation of demons with fallen angels back into the minds of NT writers. Angels became demons only beginning in the second century and only then at the hands of Christians.

The term “demon” is often used to refer to any and all malevolent superhuman (or supernatural) beings.2 Thus, all sorts of beings from the Hebrew Bible, ancient

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2 Karel van der Toorn, “The Theology of Demons in Mesopotamia and Israel,” in Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer
Judaism, and the ancient Near East—evil angels, various “disease demons,” Lilith, impure “spirits,” and many more—are lumped together as “demonic beings.” For this article, I do not include every nonhuman, intelligent evil being from any culture or any language in my category “demon.” I ask rather, When did what the ancient Jews called “angels” (מלאכים) become identified with what the ancient Greeks called δαιμόνες or δαιμόνια? When later Christians asserted that the evil or fallen angels they inherited from Judaism were to be identified with δαιμόνες, they were not choosing merely a generic word for evil beings. They were equating the fallen angels of contemporary Judaism with those beings the Greeks worshiped as gods or demi-gods. They were making a new identification between two species derived from two separate cultures. That identification should not be retrojected into the minds of the NT writers.

I. Greek Translations of the Hebrew Bible

To establish that ancient Jews tended not to equate the species of angels with the species of demons, the best place to begin is with Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible. Jewish translators of Hebrew Scripture used Greek “daimonic” terms sparingly, but they did use them.3 Six different Hebrew words seem to be translated as δαιμόνιον or δαιμόνιον, in almost all cases the latter.4

In Deut 32:17, שדים (ṣēdim) is rendered as δαιμόνια: “They sacrifice to demons and not to God; to gods [θεοί] they did not know.” In Ps 105:37 (Eng. 106), there is a similar statement: “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons [δαιμόνιοι]” (NRSV). Later, שדים will come to be the most common word used by the rabbis for those beings they seem to have thought of as the same sorts of beings Christians called “demons.” But we should note that in the ancient Near Eastern context, the word שדים is related to the Assyrian šidu, which referred to the great bull statues found in front of Assyrian palaces, sometimes depicted with wings. According to some modern commentators, the word שדים originally meant simply “lord” and served as a divine title like “Baal” or “Adonai.” It could,

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3 Occasionally I use an “anglicized” version of the Greek term δαιμόνιον to avoid misleading use of the English “demon.”

4 Why did Jews and Christians overwhelmingly prefer the term δαιμόνιον to δαιμόνιον? Perhaps using the word that could also be an adjective for “divine” may have been felt to de-emphasize the personal divinity of the beings. Or, perhaps since the ending -τον could function as a “diminutive” (Herbert Weir Smyth, Greek Grammar [rev. Gordon M. Messing; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956], §852.1), that word was felt to “degrade” the divinities a bit.
therefore, be taken to refer to ancient gods of Canaan and other surrounding peoples, who could have viewed them as good powers or gods.\(^5\) The Jewish translators, therefore, use the word δαίμονα to refer to the gods of other peoples.

We see this tendency in Isa 65:11, which the NRSV translates, “But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune [ראה] and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny [דֵי].” The ancient Jews translated יְהֹוָה with תוע, and דא with δαίμων or δαίμόνιον.\(^6\) The translators take Hebrew words that could be abstract nouns referring to fortune or fate and recognize that those refer also to the names of gods in surrounding cultures.\(^7\) They therefore choose two Greek words that also refer both to abstract qualities and the gods of those qualities. Tyche is easily recognized as a goddess, and “daimon,” though not often occurring as a name, may indeed do so, as in the common use of Agathos Daimon to refer to the deity that protects the household.\(^8\) Thus, Jewish translators use δαίμων or δαίμόνιον to translate, again, a word taken to represent a god of other peoples.

Less obvious is the reason for the translation of the Hebrew word יְהֹוָה (יְהֹוָה) as δαίμονιον in Isa 13:21 (and 34:14? see below). The word is translated in modern English as “goat,” “goat-god,” or “goat demon.” It refers to some kind of goatlike being who dwells in deserted places along with “Lilith” (Isa 34:14) and wild animals or superhuman evil beings resembling wild animals.\(^9\) As modern commentators point out, the Hebrew word referred to a goat-human hybrid common in Near Eastern mythology and may find a cognate in the Greek Pan and other “satyrs.” These beings, according to Joseph Blenkinsopp, were worshiped “in the kingdom of Samaria and perhaps Judah also.”\(^10\) Thus, what we modern people might take to


\(^6\) Our LXX editions tend to have δαίμων and cite Alexandrinus and Vaticanus as having δαίμόνιον.


\(^9\) Aquila: τριφυλωνες, “hairy beasts”; Theodotion: ὀρθωτριχοιντες, something with “hair standing straight up.” “[W]e must think of demonic animals, howling after the wont of demons and jinn in unfrequented places, of a hairy nature and perhaps goat-like in form” (George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, vol. 1 [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912], 244).

be a reference to merely a demonic, but not “divine,” being refers also to a (minor?)
god who rightly received cult.11

Isaiah 13:21–22 finds a parallel in 34:14, but precisely which Greek words are
intended to translate which Hebrew words is not as clear. The MT and LXX ver-
sions of Isa 34:14 are as follows:

Wildcats shall meet with hyenas,
goat-demons shall call to each other;
there too Lilith shall repose,
and find a place to rest. (RSV)

Daimons will meet with donkey-centaurs, and they will call out to one another
there. Donkey-centaurs will rest, for they find rest. (my translation)

Initially, it seems clear that δαίμονα translates Ζήνις and that άισιος is rendered as
όνοξενταύροι (doubtless here meaning some kind of ass-human hybrid, such as
a “donkey-centaur”), but then the latter recurs where we would expect some other
word as a translation for ήπευρος or ήπευρος.12 I think it possible that the translator
intended the term daimôn to cover these different beings, including perhaps gods,
and that the “donkey-centaurs” occur as just another segment of the wild group.

The ancient referents of ζήνις and άισιος are uncertain, and it is impossible at
this time to identify their species.13 Fortunately, for our purposes it is enough to fig-

11 See also Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary (trans. R. A. Wilson; OTL; Philadel-
(1939; repr., New York: University Books, 1959), 100; Langton, Essentials, 40–41; Kuemmerlin-McLean,
“Demons,” 138–40. See also Lev 17:7 and 2 Chr 11:15, where these beings receive sacrificial cult.

12 The word ονοξενταυρος is rare. LSJ cites only the LXX and gives the definition “a kind
of demon”—not very helpful indeed—and cites a feminine form of the word as occurring in
Aelian, Natura animalium 17.9, for which it supplies the definition “a kind of tailless ape.” This is
misleading. It is clear that Aelian knows that the word would refer to an ass-human hybrid; he
explains that a certain animal was mistakenly thought by some people to be part human and part
horse.

13 The commentators are generally unhelpful, agreeing that we do not know what creatures
these were, disagreeing about whether they may have included “supernatural” demonic beings. See
William McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh:
T&T Clark, 1986, 1996), 1292; J. Alec Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Com-
mentary (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993), 271; Blenkinsopp, Isaiah 1–39, 280, 453; B. Janowski,
ure out what the translator thought they meant. Δαμόνια was taken to represent either the רע in particular or to include that word and others in the list, so at least he thought the Hebrew words referred to daimons, and not Δαιμονία to be ass-human hybrids. Since the term רע also occurs in the context (if the translator's Hebrew was like ours), it is tempting to imagine our translator picturing daimons, such as Dionysus, cavorting with satyrs and centaurs. Both satyrs and centaurs were regularly in the entourage of Dionysus, as was portrayed in Greek art. At any rate, δαμόνια here refers to mythological beings, perhaps including gods, who inhabit a deserted place.

For another word translated as δαμόνια, we return to the Psalms. The NRSV translates Ps 91:6 (LXX Ps 90) as, “the pestilence [καταστροφή] that stalks in darkness, or the destruction [ἔρρησ] that wastes at noonday.” In the LXX, the phrase here translated as “the destruction that wastes at noonday” is rendered as δαμόνιον μεσημβρινον. Along with σύμπτωμα here, δαμόνιον clearly refers to a disease, probably a disease that came on suddenly, seemingly without cause, and therefore was especially terrifying. But also in this case, commentators point out that both deber and qeteb could be taken to be divine beings in Near Eastern contexts. The words referred both to the diseases and to the divine beings who either were or caused the diseases. The Jewish translators reveal their knowledge that Greeks would have taken daimones to be both deities that could cause disease and also the disease itself.

The last Hebrew word rendered by the LXX with δαμόνια occurs in Ps 96:5 (LXX Ps 95): “All the gods of the nations are demons.” The English “demons” translates the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים לְגַלְי. The meaning of this term in its original contexts is difficult to nail down. Some modern translators render it as “nothings.” The NRSV here has, “All the gods of the peoples are idols.” Some point out that the Hebrew word literally meant “rags.” Mitchell Dahood explains that the word “is still lacking an

Both words may be combined in Jer 50:39 (LXX 27:39) in the word ϯδάλματα, probably meaning “idols” or “apparitions.”

14 Dionysus is called “the good daimon” in Diodorus Siculus 4.3.4. See also Maxime Collignon, Manual of Mythology in Relation to Greek Art (trans. and enlarged by Jane E. Harrison; London: H. Grevil, 1890), 244–63; John Cuthbert Lawson, Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals (Cambridge: University Press, 1910), 237–38, 598.

15 This is the published LXX reading; Aquila: δαμόνιζεν; Symmachus: δαμόνιώδης.

16 N. Wyatt (“Qeteb,” DDD, 2nd rev. ed [1999], 673), explains that, in Deut 32:24, “[p]estilence’ is personified as Resheph, the plague-god, who in Ugaritic is represented as an archer . . . ; Qeteb appears to be a divine name.” He takes the Hebrew words in Ps 91:5–6 also to represent different disease-gods. As he concludes, “Qeteb is more than a literary figure, living as a spiritual, and highly dangerous, reality in the minds of poets and readers.” See also W. O. E. Oesterley, The Psalms (2 vols.; London: SPCK, 1939), 2:409–10; Langton, Essentials, 49; Artur Weiser, The Psalms (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 608; Hans-Joachim Kraus, Psalms 60–150: A Commentary (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989); Kuemmerlin-McLean, “Demons,” 139.
etymology, [though it] may find one in Ugaritic all, a type of garment whose sense comes through from its pairing with ḫbs, 'clothes, garment.' But Dahood proceeds to note that there is some evidence still that these words were early linked in Israelite language to types of idols and objects of worship.

The link of δαιμόνιον to the gods of Israel’s neighbors can be seen by noting how the word is translated elsewhere in the Greek Bible. Several texts render it with εἰδωλον, “idol” or “image” (e.g., Lev 19:4; 1 Chr 16:26; Ps 96[97]:7). It is translated as θεός, “god,” in Isa 19:3, and as κακός, an “evil,” in Job 13:4. In Jer 14:14 it is οἰόνισμα, possibly a reference to oracles (in Greek culture, daimons were often associated with oracles). And in several places, the word is rendered as χειροποίητος, “made with hands” (e.g., Lev 26:1; Isa 2:18; 10:11). Here in Ps 96:5, Aquila used the Greek ἐπίπλαστος, meaning “plastered over” and thus, by extension, “false.” Symmachus used ἄνυπαρκτος, “nonexistent” or “unreal.” In other words, even if the Hebrew word did not originally refer to a god, the translators regularly took it to refer to idols, things made with hands but that received worship.

Ancient Jews thus used δαιμόνιον to translate five or six different Hebrew words. In the original Near Eastern context, those words referred to different kinds of beings: goat-man gods; superhuman beings that either are or cause diseases; abstract qualities or goods that may also be seen as gods, such as Fortune or Fate. What they have in common, nonetheless, is that they all were thought of as gods—in fact, as the gods other people falsely worship: the gods of the nations.

It is understandable why the translators took all these different words to refer to daimons. In Greek culture, “daimon” could refer simply to a god or a goddess. Even the high gods were called daimons at times, as in Homer and Hesiod but also later. Greeks could use the adjective δαιμόνιον in a less “personal” sense to refer to “the divine power” or the “divinity” of a place, person, or thing. “Destiny” and “Fate” were called “daimonic.” I have already mentioned the “Agathos Daimon” of the home. Daimons were also thought to be intermediate beings between the gods, or at least the high gods, and mortals, although sometimes I suspect this was a distinction important to philosophers and less detected by other people. According to Plato, Eros was neither a god nor a mortal, but a daimon (Symposium 202E).

Greeks also thought of daimons as the spirits or souls of the dead. They could be defenders or personal guides. The daimon of Socrates is famous for providing

18 Langton, Essentials, 94–99.
19 E.g., Iliad 1.222; 6.115; 23.595. In Iliad 3.420, Aphrodite is an angry, threatening, but eventually helpful, daimon. See also Isocrates, To Demonicus 13; Dio Cassius, Roman History 53.8.1.
20 Homer, Iliad 8.166; Hesiod, Works and Days 314; Aeschylus, Seven against Thebes 812.
21 Plutarch, On the Obsolescence of Oracles (Mor.) 415A–416; Isis and Osiris 25 (Mor. 360E).
timely guidance. But daimons could be harmful rather than helpful. Even the Olympic gods, especially Apollo and Artemis, famously cause disease or death. The term daimon sometimes refers to the disease itself. People knew of “evil daimons” (κακοδαιμόνες). They feared possession by a god or a daimon, causing madness.

Philosophers, for the most part, insisted that daimons are exclusively moral and good beings. But that surely was true only for philosophers or those under their sway. Throughout Greek antiquity, from Homer and Hesiod to late antiquity, popular opinion seems simply to have assumed that daimons, like just about all gods, were unpredictable persons, sometimes blessing, sometimes harming. They were capricious and moody. In fact, the assumptions were generally, philosophers again excepted, that the very reason for sacrifices was to feed, mollify, and influence daimons to be beneficial. Throughout antiquity, well into late antiquity, we see daimons especially linked to images and sanctuaries, to sacrifices and the smoke of sacrifices.

23 E.g., Plato, Apology 40A; see also Epictetus, 1.14.11–17; 3.22.53.
24 Plutarch, Dinner of Seven Wise Men 8 (Mor. 153A).
25 Homer, Iliad 1.46–52; 6.205, 428; 9.553; 19.59; 24.606; Hesiod, Works and Days 238, 245; Zeus causes diseases through Pandora (Works and Days 100–104); Celsius, On Medicine proem. 4.
26 Sophocles, Women of Trachis 1023–30; Hippocrates, Sacred Disease 15.
27 Isocrates, Areopagiticus 73. Dinarchus compares Demonsthenes to a harmful daimon: Against Demonsthenes 30.
28 One sometimes comes across an assertion that Greek daimons were not thought to “possess” people, that is, actually enter their bodies—at least not until late antiquity (second century or later). See Wesley D. Smith, “So-called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece,” TAPA 96 (1965): 403–26; Roy Kotansky, “Greek Exorcistic Amulets,” in Ancient Magic and Ritual Power (ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki; Religions in the Graeco–Roman World 129; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 243–77. Though it is true that classical Greek sources tend to speak of a god or daimon as “attacking” or “arriving on” a person rather than “possessing” the person, the notion of possession is not absent from the culture. Scholars seem not to remember that, for most of Greek culture, the gods themselves are daimons. Apollo, for example, possessed the body of the Delphic pythia and other persons. See also Eric Sorensen, Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity (WUNT 2/157; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), esp. 78–80. For madness, see Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus 1300–1306; Aeschylus, Persians 725, cf. 739–53; Euripides, Hippolytus 141–50.
30 See, for different kinds of “harm,” Homer, Odyssey 10.64; 11.61; Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus 828; Aeschylus, Persians 354; Libation-Bearers 566; see also Langton, Essentials, 85. We must remember to include reference to curses, binding spells, and “magic,” which sometimes called upon gods to do their dirty work: see, e.g., Sophocles, Ajax 839–42; Plato, Republic 364C; John G. Gager, ed., Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), esp. 12–14.
31 The connection of daimons with the smoke and blood of sacrifices becomes quite common in late antiquity, but the notion can be found earlier. Remember, again, that gods were dai-
The translators of the Hebrew Bible, therefore, know these popular assumptions about daimons. They take different Hebrew words or concepts that originally referred to several different kinds of beings and interpret them in terms of common Greek ways of imagining daimons.32 They lump several Near Eastern words and beings into a “one-size-fits-all” category of Greek daimons—along the way casting both the words and the beings in a more consistently negative light than may have been assumed by most Greeks.

Significantly, there is one being or role portrayed by a particular category of character in the Hebrew Bible that is never translated as δαίμων (angel), one of whose main roles was that of intervention, serving as an intermediary between the highest god and human beings. Thus, the most natural translation of the Hebrew word דָּאָם, “messenger” or “angel,” should have been δαίμων, yet the translators seem conscientiously to avoid it.33 Instead, the translators usually render דָּאָם as ἀγγελος, which is a literal translation into Greek of the role signified by the Hebrew. In the Hebrew Bible, malʾāk can mean any “messenger” at all. But the word gradually becomes, one might say, a technical term rather than a common noun.34 That is, the word refers no longer to an activity but to a certain species of heavenly being that serves God and communicates God’s messages to human beings. Angels also may rule nations and execute judgment or punishment. In Isa

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32 This translation activity would fit under the category of “transformation” labeled by Theo A. W. van der Louw as “cultural counterpart” (Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies [CBET 47; Leuven: Peeters, 2007], 69).

33 Sorensen, Possession, 82, 117. For daimons as intermediaries and “leading” people, see Homer, Iliad 3.420; Odyssey 14.386; Langton, Essentials, 86; Anders Klostergaard Petersen, “The Notion of Demon: Open Questions to a Diffuse Concept,” in Lange et al., Die Dämonen, 35–37.

34 By the use of “technical term” rather than “common noun,” I simply mean the difference between a noun that refers to a recognized class of beings rather than to an activity or role. “Golden Retriever” does not refer merely to a yellow dog that retrieves.
37:36–37, an angel of the Lord strikes down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. In 2 Sam 24:16, angels serve as destroyers of Israelites. In Genesis 19, angels visit Abraham, Lot, and Sodom. In 2 Sam 14:16, angels are spoken of as beings who may “discern between good and evil.” In most of the Hebrew Bible, angels come across as either good or evil or morally ambiguous. Generally, they serve under the pleasure and at the will of the high god, though they may be quite scary things.

Every one of these activities—serving as messengers, ruling over nations, punishing or killing, guiding in moral issues—if performed in a Greek context, could have been performed by daimons, but the Jewish translators never use δαίμωνες or δαιμόνια for these beings or this intermediary role. Instead, the translators seem to recognize that the term mal'āk had become what we might call a “term of art” in the Hebrew Bible. It no longer referred only generically to a messenger, ambassador, or intermediary. Rather, it had come to be recognized as referring to a particular kind of inhabitant of the cosmos.

We can only speculate as to the reasons Jewish translators avoided the obvious translation of mal'āk by “daimon,” why they avoided the equation “angel = daimon.” First, they saw angels as God’s servants (as were even the “evil spirits” of 1 Sam 16:14–23), whereas the daimons were the gods of other nations. The Greek word δαίμων was so closely tied to the sacrificial cults of “the nations” that the Jewish translators rejected that term for the servants of their own God. Second, the emphasis on mediation as a prime role for daimons may have been more “philosophical” than “popular” (see the citations of Plato and Plutarch above, for example). Most people may have taken a daimon to be any divine being, including the “high” gods. The Jewish translators, therefore, may have been wise to avoid referring to “angels” as “daimons” given the dominant popular assumption that daimons were gods themselves and beings who received sacrifices. At any rate, the Jewish scholars translated the term לַאֲגָדָה into ὁ ἀγγελός and thus introduced a new technical term, one referring to a particular species, into Greek.


36 The “cultural counterpart” to angel would in many ways be daimôn. The Greek translators, however, are here acting as “cultural brokers” in ways we might not immediately expect, but concerning the motives for which we may speculate. For this terminology (though not a discussion of angels and demons), see van der Louw, Transformations, 15.

37 Guignebert, Jewish World, 100.
The Jewish translators in essence created two new technical terms for Greek-speaking Jews. The Greek word ἄγγελος had not been a noun for a particular class of beings in Greek; it referred simply to any messenger.38 By using the translation ἄγγελοι for beings who to a Greek may have looked much like their own δαιμόνια, the Jews introduced a new term into Greek, and a new class of inhabitants into cosmic demography. The malāk of God became not just a “messenger,” but an “angel.”

Likewise, the Jewish translators, by using the term δαιμόνιον for several different kinds of beings in the Near East and the Hebrew Bible, thereby introduced the Greek noun for a particular class of beings into Near Eastern mythologies. They took the Greek term δαιμόνιον and created a new species of being that included what were previously different species. The Jewish translators (if we may speak simplistically in characterizing what was really a long and complex translation history) created two new technical terms for Greek-speaking Jews: the Greek word ἄγγελος for beings they had previously known by another term, and the Greek term δαιμόνιον for beings they had previously known by several different words. But they did not confuse the two classes of beings into one. Angels became one species of cosmic workers, and daimons another.

II. DEVELOPMENTS IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

With nonbiblical Jewish literature we begin seeing developments approaching the equation of angels with demons, though not arriving yet at the later mythological package. One will occasionally come across a claim that it is in 1 Enoch, in particular the Book of the Watchers, that we first encounter the myth of “fallen angels” who become “demons.”39 But this is misleading, a problem arising perhaps partly from reading later Christian myths back into the Enochic materials and partly from assuming that “demons” and “evil spirits” always refer to the same kind of being.

According to Enoch, following the narrative about the “sons of God” in Genesis 6, the “Watchers,” identified in the tradition with angels, mate with women.

38 This is certainly true for classical Greek. Maybe in late antiquity the word ἄγγελος could have come to acquire a more “technical” sense for a certain class of superhuman beings. For some rather rare inscriptions from Asia Minor mentioning “angels,” see A. R. R. Sheppard, “Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor,” Talanta 12–13 (1980–81): 77–101; and the discussion in Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John (WUNT 2/70; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 181–91. Most of these inscriptions are later than would be relevant for my purposes and also seem to be Jewish or Christian, or influenced by them.

The products of their intercourse are giants. The giants are killed, but their souls come out from their dead bodies. It is these “souls” that become “evil spirits.”

Nowhere in the Enochic material are the fallen angels (or those “Watchers” who sin) themselves said to be demons or even evil spirits. It is the souls of the dead giants—their offspring—that become evil spirits. And, contrary to some modern readings, it is a mistake to identify these evil spirits with “demons.” Where later Greek or Ethiopic translations have “evil spirits” they are probably translating πνεῦμα, “spirit.” The Greek translators seem to have been careful to use πνεῦμα in these contexts. The beings they have in mind, I would argue, are those windlike spirits recalled from biblical passages such as 1 Sam 16:14–23 and 18:10, where Yahweh sends evil spirits (LXX: πνεῦμα πνεῦματα) to afflict Saul.40 The Greek translators of the Bible refrained from using δαμασκίνα for those beings, consistently portraying them as “spirits” instead.

That the “evil spirits” that come from the dead giants’ bodies are different from demons is clear from 1 En. 19:1–2, where we are told that the spirits that resulted from the mingling of the angels and women lead people astray “to sacrifice to demons as to gods.” Demons are here those beings who receive the sacrifices of the nations.41 Evil spirits, the offspring of fallen angels and women, are other beings who convince people to do the sacrificing.42 The “demons” of 1 Enoch, therefore, are neither yet fallen angels nor even evil spirits.

The story of the Watchers, their mating with women, and their offspring recurs in Jubilees 5; 7; and 10.43 In 10:1–2, we are introduced to “the polluted demons” who led astray Noah’s descendants. These same beings are called “evil spirits” (10:3) and “evil ones” (10:11). They are identified as the offspring of “the

42 The references in 1 Enoch to δαμασκίνα as those beings who receive the sacrifices of the nations, I would argue, betray influences from Deut 32:17 and Ps 105(106):37, and I would expect that the translators of 1 Enoch, like those of the Greek Bibles, were using δαμασκίνα to translate some Semitic form of šādim. See also Archie T. Wright, The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6.1–4 in Early Jewish Literature (WUNT 2/198; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 156, 162; George W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36, 81–108 (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 287. The other place in 1 Enoch where we encounter δαμασκίνα is at 99:7, in a similar reference to people sacrificing to “phantoms and abominations and daimonia and evil spirits.” It may be tempting to take all four of these terms to refer to one kind of being: demons. But it is at least possible that four different kinds of sacrifice-receiving beings are in mind. We can see, however, that evil spirits and demons are becoming more closely related as existing in a category of evil superhuman beings.
43 They are called “angels of the Lord,” not “Watchers,” in 5:1, and “angels” in 5:6. Their offspring are called “giants” and their “children,” but are not linked in ch. 5 either to “evil spirits” or to “demons.” The story is repeated, with some differences and also some confusing details, in 7:21–25 (“Watchers”).
Watchers” and the human women. Mastema is “the chief of the spirits.” Nine-tenths of them are bound “in the place of judgment,” and one-tenth left “subject to Satan” (apparently identified with Mastema) for his use in attacks on human beings. So at least in the version of Jubilees (the Ethiopic) on which our modern translations are based, “demons” are the same things as “evil spirits.”

But does the Ethiopic correctly reflect the original Hebrew here? Jubilees was translated from Hebrew to Greek, and from Greek to Ethiopic (and Latin, but that is not my concern). Unlike the situation with the Enochic literature, for which we have some Greek and Aramaic fragments by which to check the Ethiopic translation, for Jubilees we are dependent mainly on the Ethiopic. I believe that it is at least possible that the original Hebrew, like the Hebrew Bible and 1 Enoch, may have called these beings in Jubilees 10 “spirits,” and that Greek-speaking or, later, Ethiopic-speaking Christians introduced their term for “demon” (δαιμόνιον or the Ethiopic gānēn), influenced by later Christian demonology. We cannot be certain, in my view, that the original Hebrew of Jubilees identified the “evil spirits” as “demons.”

If Jubilees equated “evil spirits” and “demons” (that is, took מָרָה to refer to the same species as מִשְׁפָּט), that would represent a significant departure from the Hebrew Bible, the Greek translations of the Bible, and the Enochic literature, none of which identifies “evil spirits” and “demons” as the same species. In that case, we would

44 In Jub. 17:16, two Greek fragments label Mastema “the ruler of the demons” (ὁ ἀρχων τῶν δαιμόνιων), but that seems to be a late addition to the text. The Ethiopic has only “Mastema.” The Hebrew in Jub. 1:11 and 22:17 was surely šēdīm, reflecting Deut 26:14 and Ps 106:28 (see, e.g., J. VanderKam and J. T. Milik, “Jubilees,” in H. Attridge et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam, Qumran Cave 4. VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1 [DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994], 8 [restored]). My own suggestion about the original Hebrew of Jubilees 10 may find support in the medieval Hebrew manuscripts of The Prayer of Asaph the Physician. In a parallel version of this story, that document uses the word “spirit” (נפש; and, twice, “spirits of the bastards”). See Martha Himmel-farb, “Some Echoes of Jubilees in Medieval Hebrew Literature,” in Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha (ed. John C. Reeves; SBEJLI 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 115–41, here 129–30; Adolf Jellinek, Bet ha-Midrāsch (in Hebrew; 6 vols. in 2; Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1967), 3:155–56; Michael Segal argues that the Asaph version is dependent on the Jubilees account and, though ancient, secondary to it. It may, therefore, indicate that the original Hebrew here called these beings “spirits” rather than “demons” (שְׁדִים): The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology (JSJSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 170–74. Scholars have noted the reliability of the Ethiopic Jubilees (see James C. VanderKam, Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees [HSM 14; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977], esp. 94–95; Todd Hanneken, “The Book of Jubilees among the Apocalypses” [Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008], 112–21), but it would not be a stretch for a Christian scribe to translate “evil spirit” with “demon.” See Segal, Rewritten Bible, 16, 203 nn. 2 and 3, 238–39 n. 25, 286, 307, for other apparent translation irregularities or problems in the Ethiopic Jubilees.

45 As was the case with 1 Enoch, evil spirits, demons, and fallen angels (called “spirits” in Jub. 15:31–32?), all occupy a common category as evil superhuman beings who may threaten people, and they are increasingly linked together regarding sacrifice to idols. That does not mean they should be identified as the same species.
have an etiology for evil spirits = demons as the offspring of fallen angels. We would still not have the identification, as we would later in Christianity, of demons as fallen angels.

The creators and keepers of the Qumran documents were familiar with this literature. Their own writings also show developments in demonology beyond the Hebrew Bible. There are, of course, many references to Belial, Mastema, Satan, and other evil beings named and unnamed, including "evil spirits" in many guises.46 In the famous "two spirits" section of the Community Rule, we encounter a "spirit of truth" who is opposed by the "spirit of injustice." The latter is either identified with or led by the "Angel of Darkness," and this evil angel/spirit seems responsible for leading even righteous people astray, perhaps into idolatry (1QS 3.12–4.2, 6).47 Though not here explicitly a "demon" (I would look for a form of šēd), this figure seems linked to sins, including idolatry, and thus serves functionally much the way later "demons" will. But we are still not at the point of having daimons or even סדרפפד equated with "fallen angels." Elsewhere in documents from Qumran, especially in what have been called "incantation" or "magical" texts, we find סדרפפד in lists along with "spirits of bastards," Lilith, owls, jackals, and other scary creatures, including angels.48 But I would argue that this does not permit us to assume that the writers or users of these texts equated "demons" with all these other beings, or with angels. In Qumran documents, we find developments and an increase in Jewish "demonology," but we do not yet see the (ontological) equation "angels = demons." Nor do we find the etiology that teaches that daimons either are or come from fallen angels.

We thus may delineate some stages of development along the way from the Hebrew Bible's presentation of angels and demons toward later Christian mythology. In the Greek translations of the Bible, we encountered angels, evil spirits, and demons, but we seem to have been thought of as three distinct species. With 1 Enoch, we encounter fallen angels ("Watcher"); an etiology of "where evil spir-


47 Note that the two spirits have been established in this parallel dualism all along by God: "For God has established these spirits in equal measure until the final day, and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions" (trans. Vermes). There is no "fall" here, nor any other etiology for the evil spirit than its creation by God. Furthermore, as Maxwell J. Davidson points out, Belial at Qumran was created by God in order to be an evil angel. He did not rebel or fall, but was just always evil (Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran [JSPPSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 291–93).

48 E.g., 4Q510 frg. 1. See Esther Eshel, "Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Lange et al., Die Dämonen, 395–415. Eshel also points out "disease demons," but in most of the cases, the Hebrew or Aramaic words are only the names of the disease ("shudder," "headache," "crush," "fever") to which the English translator has added the word "demon" to make it clear that we are here seeing a "disease-demon" (see, e.g., her p. 397).
its came from”; a connection of “evil spirits” to fallen angels (as the souls of their dead offspring, the giants); and some connection of evil spirits to demons, since both are somehow implicated in idolatry. With Jubilees, we may have “evil spirits” identified with “demons” if our current Ethiopic texts correctly reflect such an identification in the original Hebrew source. In Qumran documents, we find the “angel of darkness” as an “evil spirit.” We find evil angels in company with Lilith, šēdīm, and other “demonic” beings. But in none of these materials do we find the equation šēdīm = angels. And, of course, we find no identification of fallen angels with Greek daimons.

One might expect to find an identification of demons with angels in a few other sources from “postbiblical” Judaism, but that seems not to be the case. In Tobit, the angel Raphael helps Tobias defeat the demon Asmodeus, but they are not presented as the same species. In 6:8, demons are mentioned alongside “evil spirits,” but again the two kinds of beings are not identified; they may be just two similarly troubling species. According to the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, both beautiful angels and “ugly” angels exist, but they are never said to be “demons.” There is a “satan” figure here also, but he is, like these “angels,” a servant of God, like the “satan” of Job. The Life of Adam and Eve has a rebellious Satan who does behave like a demon—causing diseases, for instance. Other angels join Satan, refuse to worship Adam, and are expelled from heaven. But there is no identification of them with demons. Moreover, the document is probably late and Christianized, so using it as a source for pre-Christian Jewish notions is precarious. A similar problem exists with the Apocalypse of Abraham, which could have been written from the end of the first century C.E. to the second century. Here Azazel is depicted as a heavenly being who became an “unclean bird” associated with “the all-evil spirit.” He is not, though, identified as a “demon.”

Perhaps one of the fullest ancient demonologies is provided by the Testament of Solomon, written sometime from the first to the third century C.E. In this Testament, Beelzeboul is the “Prince of demons.” He was an angel in heaven (6:1–2), and he causes demons to be worshiped as gods. He is not himself a demon, however. Asmodeus is a demon, and he explains that he was the son of an angel and a human mother (5:3). Another spirit/demon (he is called both in the text) says that he was a spirit of one of the giants who died “in a massacre in the age of giants” (17:1). There are many different kinds of demons in this text, in different forms and with


51 Dale C. Allison, Jr., Testament of Abraham (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 31.
different tasks. So the Testament of Solomon reflects influence from Enochic materials and Jubilees and goes a bit further: angels and demons are not the same species; there do exist “fallen” angels; “evil spirit” and “demon” refer to the same kind of being; and at least some of these beings resulted from the mating of the fallen angels and women. But, although this is certainly a “Christianized” document, and may have been originally composed by a Christian, it no more equates “demons” with “angels” than does 1 Enoch or Jubilees.52

III. PHILO AND JOSEPHUS

I have been looking for the origins or precursors of the Christian myth that equates demons with fallen angels. If we ask the simpler question concerning when we first see angels and daimons identified as the same beings, the answer is easy: with Philo. But Philo ends up being not very helpful for understanding the later Christian developments because of the rather idiosyncratic way (when compared to Christians and other Jews) he talks about angels and daimons.

Philo’s demonology is very much in tune with Greek philosophy, especially Platonism.53 Philo says simply that Moses uses the term “angels” for what “other philosophers” call daimons. Philo can even admit theoretically that, as there are “better” and “worse” souls, or even “good” and “bad” souls, there could also be better or worse angels or demons, but he never himself actually portrays an evil, harmful daimon or angel.54 He repeats the typical philosophical point that if people

52 The Testament of Solomon certainly has been influenced by Christianity (see esp. 22:20), and, according to D. C. Duling (“Testament of Solomon,” in OTP 1:943), it may have been composed by a Christian. On the relationship between “evil spirits” and “demons,” see the survey by Armin Lange, “Considerations Concerning the Spirit of Impurity” in Zech 13:2,” in Lange et al., Die Dämonen, 254–68. Though Lange tends to decide that certain “evil spirits” in Jewish literature were “demons” or “demonic beings” even though they are not given those terms explicitly (i.e., some form of τῶν or δαίμων), his survey demonstrates (though this is not noted by Lange) that many such texts seem not to equate “evil spirits” with “demons” but to allow for two different kinds of beings.

53 Gods as daimons: Philo, Good Person 130 (“some daimon or god”); Embassy 112; Virtues 172; Moses 1.276; Eternity 47, 64, 76. Personal guide, fate, or “genius”: Flaccus 168; 179; Providence 2.8. Avenging the dead or causing madness: Embassy 65; Worst 46. All typical notions of daimons, though “philosophized” somewhat.

54 John Dillon believes that, though Philo seems to mention evil angels or daimons, he is actually speaking of the evil souls of human beings (“Philo's Doctrine of Angels,” in David Winston and John Dillon, Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria: A Commentary on De gigantibus and Quod Deus sit immutabilis [BJS 25]; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983], 197–205; see also Valentin Nikiprowskets, "Sur une lecture démonologique de Philon d'Alexandrie, De Gigantibus 6–18," in Hommage à Georges Vajda: études d’histoire et de pensée juives [ed. Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati; Collection de la Revue des études juives 1; Louvain: Peeters, 1980], 43–71). I am not per-
understand the true nature of daimons, they should not be afraid of them, for that would be “superstition,” δεισιδαμώνια.\footnote{55}

Thus, although Philo is the earliest writer I have found who equates demons with angels, he does so in a way very different from later Christian mythology. For him, “angel” and “demon” are just two different words for the same cosmic being. And for him, as for most ancient philosophers, these beings are understood mainly as benign, and fear of them should be rejected as “superstition,” δεισιδαμώνια, the needless fear of beings of superior intellect and ontology. This is unsurprising, given Philo’s own embrace of Greek philosophy, but it renders him useless for explaining how fallen angels later became demons for Christians.

If Philo’s daimons look like those of Greek philosophers, daimons in Josephus look like those in Greek historians, and I am thinking of Diodorus Siculus especially. Angels occur occasionally in Josephus, but daimons occur often. Josephus never connects angels with daimons. His angels resemble biblical ones. Mostly, they are good angels—there is no mention of angels of Satan, for instance. When they bring harm (by means of a plague or slaying an army, for instance), it is in accordance with divine will. Daimons occur in all sorts of situations and look just like Greek notions of daimons and divine forces, both helpful and harmful.

In Josephus, we see daimons of dead persons haunting places or peoples or avenging their deaths (\textit{Ant.} 13.416). They are the souls of good men killed in battle that live among the ether and stars (\textit{J.W.} 6.47). They can bring victory in battle and are therefore deserving of sacrifices (\textit{J.W.} 4.41). They are good powers that thwart evil plans (\textit{Ant.} 14.291). They may, though, manifest themselves as harmful agents that one must guard against (\textit{Ant.} 13.415). Further, there are disease daimons: Josephus credits Solomon with technical knowledge to heal people afflicted with daimons (\textit{Ant.} 8.45).\footnote{56} Josephus goes beyond the Greek Bible in equating “evil spirits,” such as the one that afflicted Saul, with daimons (see \textit{Ant.} 6.166, 168, 211, 214; see also 8.46–49).

None of this is particularly “Jewish,” and all of it is typical of popular (not philosophical) notions of daimons among Greeks.\footnote{57} I do find it interesting that angels and daimons tend to occupy different discursive realms in Josephus. Angels

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{55} Philo, \textit{Giants} 6–16; see also \textit{Planting} 14; \textit{DREAMS} 138–41. For the reference to “superstition,” see \textit{Giants} 16.

\footnote{56} Roland Deines, “Josephus, Salomo, und die von Gott verleihe\textsuperscript{r}e τέχνη gegen die Dämonen,” in Lange et al., \textit{Die Dämonen}, 365–94.

\end{footnotesize}
occur mostly in contexts of biblical stories, or in a speech by Agrippa, where they are witnesses of God and linked to the Jerusalem temple. Daimons, on the other hand, occur in many places and look just like popular Greek notions. In those contexts, they do the same sort of work that they accomplish in Greek historians: moving the plot along or explaining strange events or motivations. So Josephus, like Philo, does not help us much in tracing the development of angels and demons leading to Christianity. His demonology is too “Greek,” and he never links daimons to angels.

IV. The New Testament

Nowhere in the NT are demons equated with angels, fallen or otherwise. And no etiology of demons is supplied. With the NT, especially with the Synoptic Gospels, however, we find key steps toward what will later be Christian demonology. All three Synoptic Gospels clearly identify demons with unclean or evil spirits. It is not certain that Mark and Luke equate Satan and the devil with Beelzebul. Matthew certainly does so (Matt 12:26–27).

Though he can refer to these beings as either “spirits” or “demons,” Mark’s preferred term seems to be the latter. If Matthew used Mark, it is notable that he tends to change language he gets from Mark that refers to unclean “spirits” and to substitute language about “demons.” Moreover, Luke prefers “demons” to “spirits” even more than do Matthew and Mark. We may, therefore, see a movement toward preferring talk about “demons” over talk about “evil spirits.” At any rate, it is clear that the Synoptics equate these “spirits” with “demons.”

Though we do not yet in the Synoptics find the Christian myth of demons as fallen angels, one can understand how later Christian readers saw it there. All three Synoptic Gospels imply that Satan is the devil and also Beelzebul. They all tell us that Beelzebul or Satan is the ruler of demons (Mark 3:22; Matt 12:24; Luke 11:15). Only Luke has a reference to Satan “falling from heaven” (10:18). Only Matthew says that “the devil and his angels” will be thrown into the fire “prepared for them” (25:41). By combining these different references—the fall of Satan from Luke, with the reference to the devil and his angels from Matthew, with the Beelzebul story making Satan the ruler of demons—we come up with the different elements of the later belief that Satan is the prince of fallen angels who are identical with demons.

58 Kevin Sullivan also notes that Josephus’s use of “angel” in Jewish War and Vita (which resemble Greek genres) mostly refers to human messengers, but in Antiquities (which is more like a “retelling of Scripture” genre) his use of “angel” resembles the Hebrew Bible’s (Wrestling, 41 n. 6).
60 Ibid., 89.
and who will all eventually be punished or destroyed. The Gospels do not say that demons are fallen angels, but we can see how later readers, combining the different accounts into one, could have made that identification.

Angels populated Paul’s world in a lively way. Contrary to modern popular assumptions, angels for Paul were not always good. They could be evil and malicious or simply morally ambiguous. There certainly are “good” angels in Paul’s world (2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8; 4:14), and certainly also “bad” angels. 1 Corinthians 6:3 mentions that “we” (presumably Paul and other followers of Jesus) will “judge” angels, implying that there are angels who are criminal. If Paul’s reference to the “thorn in the flesh” that tortures him is to an “angel of Satan” (2 Cor 12:7), which I take to be the case, and not just a metaphorical “messenger of Satan,” we would have here a satanic angel as Paul’s tormentor.

Some scholars believe that the phrase “because of the angels” in 1 Cor 11:10 is a reference to angels who may threaten women, perhaps sexually.61 Some scholars take Gal 3:19 to teach that angels were those who gave the law to Moses, rather than God himself.62 That text, if interpreted in light of Acts 7:53, may imply a less than benevolent, if not downright negative, view of their activity, given what Paul says about the intervention of the law elsewhere in Galatians. Finally, if one takes “the rulers of this age” in 1 Cor 2:6 and 8, who did not understand God’s mystery and therefore “crucified the lord of glory,” to be a reference to angels (note that διακρατεῖα are coupled with “angels” in Rom 8:38), this would certainly represent a reference to evil angels.

Paul’s only explicit reference to demons, however, is in 1 Cor 10:19–22, where he says, echoing the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible, “what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to δαιμόνια and not to God.” But Paul’s solution to the situation is rather simple: the Corinthians should avoid idolatry and the cult of Gentile sacrifices. Note here the connection of demons to idolatry and sacrifices, precisely as we have seen to be the case in the Greek Bible, 1 Enoch, and Jubilees. Demons are connected to Gentiles and their religion and culture. We may also imagine that Paul would have considered demons especially associated with pollution and tied, as other Jews and Greeks would assume, to the earth and lower parts of the atmosphere. But Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians imply that demons are not really much of a problem: avoid their cults and their places and you have little to fear from them. And a striking omission, if we come at Paul from later Christian demonology, is any etiology for demons or any equation of demons with fallen angels.

Likewise, we look in vain for any such equation elsewhere in the NT. In Revelation, for example, we find both angels and demons. Angels are mentioned many times, and they are almost always in the service of God or Christ (Jesus speaks of “my angel” in 22:16). Of course, angels of God bring plagues, disease, and torment (15:1, 6, 7, 8), but always by the will of God. There are, though, fallen angels as well. Michael “and his angels” do battle against the dragon “and his angels,” the latter being thrown down “to the earth” (12:7–9).

Demons are mentioned far fewer times in Revelation, and the references look much like those we have seen in the Jewish Bible and at Qumran. People worship demons as if they were gods (9:20). “Evil spirits” that proceed from the mouths of the dragon and the beast are also called “demonic spirits” (16:14), and demons are mentioned along with “foul spirits,” unclean birds, and beasts as occupying Babylon (18:2). These look like combinations of the activities we have seen performed in the Hebrew Bible by the šēdim worshiped by idolaters, the deceiving spirits of prophets (Zech 13:2), and the “demonic” beasts listed as living in deserted places. There is no etiology given for demons, and they seem to constitute a different species from that of angels—including the angels of the dragon.

In the NT, we see the general equation of “demons” with “evil spirits,” an identification we did not see in the Jewish Bible or 1 Enoch and some other pre-Christian Jewish texts. But we have not seen in the NT the equation of demons with fallen angels. We will have to move to Christian texts of the second and third centuries to find that development.

V. Postcanonical Christian Authors

Justin Martyr and Athenagoras (mid to late second century) follow the story of the Watchers. For them, demons are the offspring of fallen angels and women but are not themselves angels. Both fallen angels and demons exist, and they can both be called “evil spirits.” Satan is the leader of demons, which are identified with the gods of the nations. In their identification of evil spirits with demons, but not equating demons with fallen angels, Justin and Athenagoras look much like the Ethiopic version of Jubilees.63

With Tatian—writing in the second half of the second century—we get the full identification. An arch-rebel, surely an angel and no doubt Satan though Tatian does not here use the name, was banished by God. He was “appointed” to be a demon (δαίμων ἀποδεικνύωμεν). “Demonic apparitions,” those other angels who followed him, “formed his army” (Orat. ad Graec. 7–8). Tertullian, for his part, explicitly mentions Enoch as his source for information about “demons and spirits,” which he glosses as “the apostate angels” (daemonas et spiritus desertorum angelorum [Idol. 4.2; see also 9.1–2]). He equates demons and impure spirits (1.2). He mentions the baptismal formula renouncing “the devil and his angels” (6.2). These are the evil angels Paul is referring to when he tells women to veil themselves when they pray and prophesy (Cult. fem. 1.2; Virg. 7; Or. 22). With Tertullian, therefore, we get the full Christian mythology of Satan, fallen angels, and demons (see also Apol. 22).

Origen, as we might expect, is complex and sophisticated in his demonology, as he is in most of his theology. In De principiis he lists several terms for evil beings—Satan, the Devil, the Wicked One, other principalities and powers, the devil’s angels, princes of this world, evil spirits, impure daemons, among others—and claims that we cannot be sure whether these are all different from one another or refer to basically the same beings (Princ. 1.5.2). In any case, the devil revolted against God, and along with him other “powers” rebelled. God drove them all away. Some of them sinned more grievously than others. According to one rather confusing text, those who sinned the worst became demons; others who were not quite as bad became angels; those still less bad became “archangels.” Their current state, whether as demon, “soul,” angel, or archangel, represents the just degree of punishment for the crime of each (Princ. 1.8.1).64

We should note that what I have been calling “the Christian mythology” of demons and fallen angels was still not universally acknowledged. Lactantius, writing around the year 300, does not equate demons with the fallen angels themselves, but rather (like 1 Enoch, Justin, and Athenagoras) he takes demons to be only the offspring of the fallen angels. They are a “derived” species, one might say, having a relationship to angels as a mule might to a horse. But they are not exactly the same species (see Inst. 2.14).65

64 But note that Princ. 1.8.1 seems to be a compilation of quotations of Origen taken from various authors. See Origen, On First Principles: Being Koetschau’s Text of the De Principiis (trans. G. W. Butterworth; 1936; repr., Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 67 n. 1. See also Origen, Cels. 8.25; 7.69; 4.92. For a discussion of Origen’s demonology in relation to the rest of his theology, see Martin, Inventing Superstition, 171–80.

65 I do not deal with demons in the Nag Hammadi library, which would merit a study in itself. The dating of those texts, from the second century or later, renders them relatively irrelevant for my purposes of discerning the precursors of Christian developments of the same period. But see Emmanouela Grypeou, “Die Dämonologie der koptisch-gnostischen Literatur im Kontext jüdischer Apokalyptik,” in Lange et al., Die Dämonen, 600–609.
In summary, we see in these postcanonical Christian authors the common identification of evil spirits and demons, which we had not seen in most of earlier Judaism but which we would expect on the basis of the NT. Second, we see only a gradual identifying of evil spirits and demons with the fallen angels themselves. Finally, we can state that what will become recognized as the Christian mythology of demons as fallen angels is a result of postcanonical Christian developments.

VI. Conclusion

Space limitations prohibit me from offering speculations on what further research may be inspired by keeping in mind that before the Christianity of late antiquity, angels and demons were generally taken to be two separate species. Might we imagine also that they lived in different places? Had they different sorts of bodies, including differences in gender? May this lead to a different way of reading Paul and imagining “his cosmos”? At any rate, keeping in mind that, for most ancient Jews and for Christians before the second and third centuries, angels and demons were two distinct species may spark our imaginations to think anew about the cosmos and cosmic demography, including angelology and demonology, of our ancient subjects.