“Christ Was Around Before Satan?”

In your essay on angels it states that Christ created the angels, wouldn’t that mean that Christ would have to have been around before Satan? It states somewhere in the bible (can’t remember at the moment where exactly) that he is a “fallen angel.” Your statement confuses me at this point—please, if you can, explain. And I apologize if this shows naivete on my part, but like I said, it’s just a question.

Yes, that’s exactly right. Jesus Christ has existed eternally, in loving fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit; He was not created, He has always existed. He didn’t come to earth until 2000 years ago when He took on human flesh and became fully human as well as remaining fully God, but He DID exist before there was anything else. He created the universe, the earth, and the angels (John 1:3, Col. 1:16). He watched Satan choose to rebel and become a fallen angel, and He agreed to come to earth to redeem us and pay the penalty for our sin by dying on a cross for us, and then coming back to life three days later. Then, forty days after that, He went back to heaven, which is where He came from in the first place.

Does this help?

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Your Comments About

Mormonism Are Nonsense”

I have read your statements in your article A Short Look at Six World Religions. I happen to be Mormon and have heard this nonsense before:

“Mormonism is not Christian because it denies some of the essential doctrines of Christianity, including the deity of Christ, salvation by grace, and the bodily resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, Mormon doctrine contradicts the Christian teaching that there is only one God, and it undermines the authority and reliability of the Bible”

1. We never have denied the deity of Christ. Christ is Jehovah, the great I am. This is within our doctrine.

2. We are saved by grace. No doubt about it. It’s part of our doctrine.

3. We have always taught that Jesus took his body the third day the same as it is recorded in the Bible. I don’t know where you received your info on that, but we never have denied the resurrection of Christ. In fact when serving my mission it was common for other Christian groups to say that Christ is only a spirit. We had to teach them that Christ in reality took his body the third day.

4. We believe that there is one Godhead. We believe in one Elohim.

5. “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly, we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.” Joseph Smith.

Christ taught that we should not judge. It seems to me that many so called “Christians” judge other Christians who don’t believe as they do. Let the Lord do the judging.

Thank you for responding to my article. I don’t know if you

will be able to receive what I have to say, since the Mormon use of Biblical terms seems to differ from what the rest of us mean by it, but I will attempt to respond to your argument.

> *1. We never have denied the deity of Christ. Christ is Jehovah, the great I am. This is within our doctrine.*

When orthodox Christians say "deity of Christ," we mean that He is one with the Father. There is one God of the Bible, although He exists as three persons, and Jesus is—and has always been—as fully God as the Father. As I understand it, Mormon doctrine is that Jesus was a created being, which would put Him on a different—inferior—level to the eternally-existing Father. So the Father existed before Jesus did, which would make Him (Jesus) less than the eternally-existing Creator of the Universe. Which the Bible proclaims that He is:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8)

"In Him [Jesus] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9).

Of Jesus it was announced: "These are the words of Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again" (Revelation 2:8); the same claim made by God Almighty: "This is what the LORD says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6). Also, compare Revelation 22:13 with Isaiah 48:12.

Also as I understand it, Mormon doctrine is that Jesus is Jehovah, and the Father is Elohim, and they are different Gods. But in the Old Testament, these are two names for the same, one, God.

James Talmage, one of the Mormon authorities, states: "This [the Trinity] cannot rationally be construed to mean that the

Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one in substance and person" (*A Study of the Articles of Faith*, p.40).

James Talmage states: "Jesus Christ was Jehovah…Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In all of scripture, where God is mentioned and where he has appeared, it was Jehovah…The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol.1, p.11,27).

Joseph F. Smith stated, "Among the spirit children of Elohim, the first-born was and is Jehovah, or Jesus Christ, to whom all others are juniors" (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.70).

In contrast, the Bible uses the names Elohim and Jehovah interchangeably for the one true God. The English form "Jehovah" was developed from four consonants (YHWH) from which we get the word "Yahweh," translated "LORD." The words "Yahweh" and "Elohim" are used together hundreds of times, as in: 'LORD our God', 'LORD my God', 'LORD his God', 'LORD your God'. For example: "The Lord [Jehovah] our God [Elohim] is one Lord [Jehovah]" (Deuteronomy 6:4). See also Genesis 2:4-22; Deuteronomy 4:1; Judges 5:3; 1 Samuel 2:30; Isaiah 44:6.

> *2. We are saved by grace. No doubt about it. It's part of our doctrine.*

The Bible's definition of grace is undeserved, unearned favor. It's a gift from God with no strings attached and no way to earn it. Apparently the Mormon definition of grace is very different, including man's efforts:

The LDS Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, *by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel*" (*Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith*). (emphasis mine)

Joseph Fielding Smith explains what that last phrase means: "that which man merits through his own acts through life and

by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p.134).

James Talmage explains: "…redemption from personal sins can only be obtained through obedience to the requirement of the Gospel, and a life of good works" (James Talmage, in *A Study of the Articles of Faith*).

In the Bible 'salvation' means deliverance from the consequence (eternal separation from God) of our sin. As I understand it, Mormon leaders have redefined the word "salvation" to have a two-fold meaning: a) forgiveness of sins and b) universal resurrection:

"There will be a General Salvation for all in the sense in which that term is generally used, but salvation, meaning resurrection, is not exaltation" (Stephen L. Richards, *Contributions of Joseph Smith*, LDS tract, p.5).

"All men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part, meaning they are resurrected" (Bruce McConkie, *What Mormons Think of Christ*", LDS tract, p.28).

> *3. We have always taught that Jesus took his body the third day the same as it is recorded in the Bible. I don't know where you received your info on that, but we never have denied the resurrection of Christ. In fact when serving my mission it was common for other Christian groups to say that Christ is only a spirit. We had to teach them that Christ in reality took his body the third day.*

Upon doing further research, I was able to ascertain that I was wrong in saying that Mormon doctrine denies the bodily resurrection of Christ. I apologize and I have removed that part of my article.

> *4. We believe that there is one Godhead. We believe in one Elohim.*

Orthodox Christianity teaches that there is one God. Period. The Godhead consists of one God in three persons, not three Gods. Not a plurality of Gods.

Bruce McConkie states: “Three separate personages—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—comprise the Godhead. As each of these persons is a God, it is evident from this standpoint alone, that a plurality of Gods exists. To us, *these three are the only Gods we worship*” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p.576-7). (emphasis mine)

> *5. “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly, we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.” Joseph Smith.*

How do you know when the Bible has been translated correctly? There are thousands of manuscripts in existence that allow us to check the reliability of the Biblical documents. The Bible was written in human language, which we can easily check because of the existence of so much collateral literature in the same language, unlike the Book of Mormon, supposedly written on golden plates in angelic language. Where is the fallibility test for that book?

> *Christ taught that we should not judge. It seems to me that many so called “Christians” judge other Christians who don’t believe as they do. Let the Lord do the judging.*

In the very same chapter as the “Judge not” verse, the Lord also says, “Beware of false prophets.” How else will we distinguish between true and false except by judging the words and behavior of what men say? Of course, we cannot judge another’s heart, which explains His command not to judge; but in order to be discerning about truth and deception, we MUST judge their fruit by comparing it to the only absolute we have, the Bible.

The Bible’s standard for a prophet is 100% accuracy. By that standard, Joseph Smith is a false prophet. If he were a true prophet,

- Jesus would have returned in 1891 (*Documentary History of the Church* (DHC) 2:182)

- The Civil War would have poured out upon all nations (D&C 87:1-3), the wicked of Smith's generation would have been "swept from off the face of the land" (DHC 1:315)

- A temple would have been built in Independence Missouri by the generation living in 1832 (D&C 84:4,5)

I'm sorry, but the differences between Mormonism and orthodox Christianity are not "nonsense." They are significant, and need to be explored.

Respectfully,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Do You Have Anything on Scientology?"

Would you have anything on Scientology?

To put it bluntly, Scientology is a cult, and one designed to fleece the flock at that.

Watchman Fellowship (www.watchman.org) has a lot of excellent information on Scientology, but let me give you an overview of the problems with this self-proclaimed "church" from Watchman Fellowship's profile on Scientology (http://www.watchman.org/profile/sientpro.htm):

Problems with the Founder

Scientology was founded by L. Ron Hubbard after a career as a science fiction writer in the 1930s. His book *Dianetics* came out in 1950 and the religion of Scientology was established by 1953. Scientology publications have made grandiose claims about Hubbard such as earning a degree in nuclear physics and a doctorate, becoming a WWII hero who miraculously cured himself of nearly fatal combat wounds, and discovering the secret to curing various diseases—all of which have been shown to be false.

From the Watchman web page cited above:

> Biographers have also uncovered Hubbard's involvement with the occult, which probably influenced his writings. Hubbard claimed to have had a near-death experience where he learned everything that ever puzzled the mind of man. The notorious Satanist, Aleister Crowley, was Hubbard's mentor and he lived with Crowley protege John Parsons, engaging in sex magic at their black magic mansion hospice (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 June 1990, p. A1). Despite the inconsistencies in his history, Hubbard would become one of the wealthiest and most well known leaders of a religious movement in only a few years. As of 1986 over eight million copies of his book *Dianetics* had been sold (Ibid., p. 299). Scientology's methodology and beliefs have led them into a long history of criminal and civil actions and convictions. Both the U.S. Federal and Canadian courts have found top Scientology officials, and the church, guilty of charges such as burglarizing, wiretapping, and conspiracy against government agencies (*Time*, 6 May 1991, p. 50).

Problems with Doctrine

Note the science-fiction terms that Hubbard coined to explain his new "religion." Mankind, at his core, is a *Thetan*. The Thetan is that part of each individual which is immortal and which has become contaminated or debased by the influences of *MEST* (matter, energy, space, time). These contaminating

influences have created *engrams*. Engrams are mental recordings of past moments of pain and unconsciousness that need to be cleared out so people can return to their original immortal, god-like, powerful state.

Scientology provides expensive "spiritual counseling" in the form of *Auditing*, where the engrams are cleared out of peoples minds through the use of an *E-meter* (like a lie detector). How many auditing sessions it takes to reach the goal of *Clear* depends, frankly, on how much money one has, up to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Of course, no one successfully reaches this higher state of being because that would put an end to the flow of money.

Scientology claims to be compatible with all other religions. It doesn't have to be practiced in place of any other faith system. It attempts to combine eastern religions and biblical wisdom with western philosophies. Scientology claims not to contradict other religions, but this is not true. Hubbard attacked Christianity as an 'implant' and said Christ was fiction. (*A Piece of Blue Sky*, p. 383).

Scientology has had a rocky history with the U.S. government's financial institutions. Tax difficulties, fraud, and embezzlement have been constant sources for friction between the government and the leadership of the "church."

In addition to some of the obvious problems with Scientology, there are many apparent dangers. Despite calling itself a church (obviously for the tax benefits), it seems to be disinterested in the concept of God while preoccupied with the doctrine of Man. Since men are inherently good in this worldview, the Christian view of sin is treated with contempt. Men do not need salvation through Jesus Christ; they only need to be cleared of their painful memories through the expensive Auditing process.

Watchman Fellowship recommends these resources (most of which

are now available on the Web; links are provided):

1) *Scientology: Cult of the Stars*. Various articles on Scientology written by Watchman Fellowship staff and previously published in the Expositor. Includes information on lawsuits filed against Watchman by Scientology, various doctrinal papers and Scientology President's claim to be a practicing Mormon. 23 pages.

2) *A Piece of Blue Sky*, Jon Atack. This book was written by a former Scientologist who is one of the premiere experts on the subject. It traces the history and sordid details of the organization. Interesting quote from the book: "It was 1950, in the early, heady days of Dianetics, soon after L. Ron Hubbard opened the doors of his first organization to the clamoring crowd. Up until then, Hubbard was known only to readers of pulp fiction, but now he had an instant best-seller with a book that promised to solve every problem of the human mind, and the cash was pouring in. Hubbard found it easy to create schemes to part his new following from their money. One of the first tasks was to arrange "grades" of membership, offering supposedly greater rewards, at increasingly higher prices. Over thirty years later. an associate wryly remembered Hubbard turning to him and confiding, no doubt with a smile, "Let's sell these people a piece of blue sky." 428 pages, Hardback.

3) *L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?* Brent Corydon. Written by a former high ranking member with the help of L. Ron Hubbard, Jr. (the founder's son), this book exposes the "corruption and mind-control" of Scientology. 402 pages.

4) *Understanding Scientology*, Margery Wakefield and Bob Penny. Ex-Scientologists, now Christian, give detailed understanding of the inner workings, beliefs and front organizations of Scientology. 167 pages.

5) *The Road to Xenu* and *Social Control in Scientology*. An

autobiographical account revealing the methodology and unethical induction techniques in novel form. 169 pages.

Hope this helps.

Kris Samons and Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"I Struggle with Doubts"

Hello there – I have a question that I hope you can help me with. I am 38 years old and I have recently lost my second parent to cancer – and I am going through a time where I guess you could say I am re-evaluating my belief system. I was raised in the Presbyterian Church and currently attend _____ here in Houston. What I struggle with is occasional doubts lately and I find it really scary. I believe in God without question but I have trouble sometimes comprehending the resurrection and life after death……I want to believe and have a stronger faith that's for sure!! The thing that bothers me is someone told me that doubts were blasphemy and that by having doubts you are calling God a liar and that I might not have ever truly been saved. Needless to say that has petrified me, however others have mentioned that doubts are normal…… I went through confirmation with the Presbyterian Church when I was 12 and hope that I am saved. I would really appreciate your thoughts on this!!!! You honor me by sharing your heart with me. Thank you.

Let me cast my vote with those who have assured you that doubts are normal. God understands that as puny-minded humans who are trying to relate to a God we cannot see, touch, or hear, we're going to face areas we don't understand! Often, what we experience is confusion, but some people label it

doubt.

I think doubt is more in-your-face unbelief. “I know You’re there, God, but I question Your goodness to me so I’m going to do things my own way and pretend like You’re not there.” The way that Satan encouraged Eve to doubt God’s goodness in the garden of Eden.

There is a difference between being overcome by doubts and struggling with comprehending really huge mysteries like the resurrection. God understands, especially at a time like this when you’re grieving. (I am so very, very sorry, to hear about your parents’ deaths. This is my first Mother’s Day without my mother, who died a few months ago. It’s hard, isn’t it?)

Since you have internet access, you can get some very interesting information about the resurrection and life after death that will help strengthen and establish your faith in those areas. You can start reading at the Probe Ministries site (www.probe.org) and look in the “Apologetics: Reasons to Believe” section. Leadership University (Leaderu.com) also has some dynamite articles.

Concerning the statement that doubts are blasphemy. Well, no, they’re not the same thing. People like you who are concerned that it is, are never guilty of it! Blasphemy is hard-hearted insult against God. I’m sorry that someone has burdened you with the false guilt of “calling God a liar.” Now that would be pretty blasphemous, but simply experiencing some questions is usually an issue of not being sure of something. And that’s a far cry from saying “God, You’re a blankety-blank liar.”

Truly saved people have doubts all the time. That’s the first step to wrestling with individual issues of faith, and studying them to come out with a stronger faith on the other end. God isn’t threatened by our doubts and questions. When we go to Him in simple faith, asking Him to help us understand truth and help us see things as they really are, He truly does

answer. It may take a while, but He takes those requests seriously.

You said you were confirmed when you were 12 and you hope that you are saved. I am so glad you put it so bluntly, because I am delighted to be able to give you some very clear direction on this!

Quick question: what were you confirmed IN? Were you confirmed that yes, indeed, you were a Presbyterian, the way we confirm flight reservations? Or were you confirmed in your faith because at some point before that, as you were growing up, you made a deliberate choice to put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

He told Nicodemus that we must be born again. Just like when we were born the first time, that's a specific event at a specific point in time. In order to pass over from death to life, there must be a specific point at which we choose God over our own way, where we realize that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and we receive His gift of forgiveness and eternal life by saying "thank You!"

So my question to you is, was there a specific point at which you were born again? Being baptized as an infant doesn't do it, because that's not a decision that a disciple makes; it's more of a statement of our parents' intent to raise us in the ways of God. It's possible to go along, learning the catechism questions and having a lot of religious head knowledge ABOUT God, without ever embracing Him as our personal Lord and Savior. Have you done that?

If you have, YOU ARE SAVED FOREVER. If you haven't, then you aren't saved but you can be as soon as you choose to. I know several people who just weren't sure of a specific time and place when they chose to put their trust in Christ, so they chose right then and there and said to God, "God, I am a sinner and I need you. Thank You for sending Jesus to die on

the cross in my place, and then raising Him from the dead three days later. I believe Jesus is Your Son, and I trust Him to save me from my sins and take me to heaven when I die." Then they KNEW they had trusted Christ and had passed over from death to life.

1 John 5:11-13 says,

11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.
13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I love the part in verse 13 that says, "you may KNOW that you have eternal life." When someone showed that to me not long after I trusted Christ as a college sophomore, that was the point at which I knew for sure that I was saved—because the Bible said I could know! That was very cool for me, since I was raised just hoping that everything would be okay when I died but I couldn't ever know. Now I KNOW!!!

Let me know what you think about all this, OK?

The Lord bless you and keep you.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"I Can't Forgive God for

Taking All Those People in the WTC!”

I saw a distraught woman on the news asking, “Pray? Who do we pray to? God took all those people in the buildings !” It’s obvious there is so much hurt and a sense of betrayal toward God for allowing such a horrific thing to happen. I’m having a rough time forgiving God for allowing such terrible evil in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

I’m so glad you wrote.

A lot of people struggle with anger toward God when we experience pain or when bad things happen. (I completely understand, and carried anger toward Him for many years myself for allowing me to get polio, and not healing me when I begged Him to. That story is here.)

In his excellent book *I Should Forgive, But . . .* [1998, Nashville: Word Publishing, p. 143-157], Dr. Chuck Lynch addresses this issue. There are three problems with a perceived need to forgive God.

> *1. It implies **an offense**. But God does not and can not sin against us. He does not morally offend us and does not need to be forgiven.*
>
> *The number one complaint against God is that He failed to protect. We can be angry that He did not protect us, or He did not protect other innocent people. We believe a good God does not let bad things happen to good people. Bad things only happen to bad people. Therefore, if bad things happen to good people, God “did us dirty.” But we live in a fallen world; bad things happen to people, period. Our longing for a perfect world where nothing bad happens is a perfectly legitimate longing for the Eden we were created for, and God will re-create that perfect world in the future. . . but we*

don't live there yet.

If God doesn't "perform" as we think He should, we think He has offended us. The real failure is not with God's performance, it's with our misperception of His character.

We are upset when we realize that God knew the bad thing was going to happen and He didn't stop it. Why not? Because He is graciously patient now, but His full wrath will be poured out on sin and unrighteousness at a later time.

Acts of nature such as weather tragedies, birth defects and diseases, as well as the consequences of things like terrorist attacks, are also perceived as offenses by God against man.

Many people believe it's God's job to keep their lives free from pain and loss, especially if they are faithful to Him. They fail to remember two things:

- *God does not suspend the natural laws of nature for believers. He also does not violate the gift of free will to humanity, even when a person's choice means others will be hurt.*

- *While we have the promise that all pain and tears will be wiped away in heaven, this is earth.*

*2. It implies **accountability.** We demand to know the "WHY???" We think God owes it to us to explain why He does what He does, and why He allows the things that He does. And if He doesn't explain it to us [and often, if not usually, He doesn't], then many cut off fellowship with Him. "I'll show You, God, I won't believe in You anymore/I will live in rebellion/I will ignore You!"*

God does not owe us an explanation. He is not accountable to us. He does as He pleases (Ps. 115:3), and He has the right to be the sovereign Lord without explaining to His creatures

how his actions today, in time, fit into the big plan of eternity.

*3. It implies **payment**. Somebody has to pay for sin. Jesus paid for our sins—but who's going to pay for God's "sins" against us?*

Our anger against God is like a red light on a car's dashboard. It alerts us that something is wrong and we need to deal with what we're thinking and thus, what we're feeling. The red light tells us we need to grow into acceptance of our losses and adjust to them over time. When God allows bad things to happen, we get mad because of our loss and hurt. We don't need to forgive Him; we need to ask for grace to accept what He has allowed to happen.

God doesn't sin against us; He does things we don't like. He understands our anger the same way a parent understands a child's anger when the parent allows the doctor to give the child a shot. Just as a parent acts in the child's best interest, God is always acting in our best interests even in the midst of horrific evil and pain. He can do that because He is much bigger and more powerful than we can even begin to imagine.

God allows us to experience pain because His goal is our growth and maturity. He is in the process of developing a mature and solid Bride for His Son Jesus, and He knows that the best way for us to grow is often through pain. Even the Lord Jesus, although the Son of God, "learned obedience from what He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). God has a bigger plan than keeping us comfortable.

The real issue is to put aside the misconception that God needs to be forgiven, and move through to trust and acceptance.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

"'Gender-Neutral' Bibles?"

There's a controversy brewing over the "gender-neutral" TNIV Bible. What is your position?

You know how gospel means "good news"? Well, the gender-neutral language of newer Bible translations is "bad news"!!! The editors, bowing to pressure of modern philosophies and values, have cast aside what God said in His word in search of something more palatable to today's politically correct mindset.

One of the problems comes from the desire to elevate women by diminishing the masculine characteristics of God and the importance of male leadership. We're always going to get in trouble when we diminish God. He chose to identify Himself as masculine, even though we know spirit transcends gender, I believe because of the deep and ineffable necessity of relationship to Father—both our heavenly Father and our earthly fathers.

I am also bothered by the unspoken assumption that women are too self-centered and hyper-sensitive not to be able to figure out that when the Bible—the very words of God Himself—uses the word "man" or "mankind" to refer to all humans, we can't figure that out without getting upset. Just about every language on the face of the planet uses the generic male pronoun to represent all people, but apparently our sensibilities are too finely-tuned to allow for readers of these newer translations to make the mental jump. . .!

This is a great example of the fulfillment of 2 Tim. 4:3: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. . .”

So our position is, thumbs down to ear-tickling translations! <smile>

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin

Update: August 2022

We were asked, “You gave gender-neutral Bibles a thumbs down, but what versions DO you recommend?” Here’s our answer:

After talking with some especially knowledgeable and wise people, here’s our list, in this order:

1. New English Translation (NET Bible – Available free at http://netbible.org) – Unbelievably rich resource with translators’ notes and study notes, plus access to Bible study tools such as the meanings of words in their original languages. Click on Menu –> Tour the App)

2. New Living Translation (NLT)

3. New International Version (NIV), 2011

4. New American Standard (NASB)

I would say that gender-neutral is bad, but what we need is “gender-accurate.” For example, the Greek word *adelphoi* is often translated “brothers,” but it actually means “brothers and sisters.” So why not use the more inclusive language in English when it’s there in the Greek?

Glad you asked!

Cheerily,

Sue Bohlin

“Where Do Demons Come From?”

My friends and I are doing a Bible project on demons. I read your website and it had a lot of helpful information. But we are having trouble finding information on the origin of demons. We can’t find very many references to when Satan rebelled against God, or where demons came from. Can you help us?

The problem is that the Bible doesn’t give much information about the origin of demons, and that is the ONLY reliable source of truth.

In fact, we’re only given the faintest hint of what happened, in Revelation 12. The writer, the apostle John, uses poetic, symbolic language, and the events are not in chronological order. Here’s what it says:

> “. . . a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.” (Revelation 12:3-4)

Shortly after these verses, the same event is described again:

> “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was

> thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." (Revelation 12:7-9)

We are not told exactly when this happened. Sometime between the time God created the earth, and Satan's temptation of Eve, he and his demons (apparently, a third of the angels) rebelled and were thrown out of heaven. But we don't know when that was. In Job, when God is doing His wonderful work of creation, we are told that "the morning stars sang together, and ALL the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). That would indicate to me that the angels (also called "the sons of God") were all still holy at that point.

This is where we run out of information, so I have given you all I have. I hope it helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"You Should Ask God to Show You How Demonic Harry Potter Is"

Why is it so vital that America's children be entertained by the likes of Harry Potter? There's plenty of adventure in the Bible. I am a devout Christian and my gut feeling is that Harry Potter is yet another device to enable Satan to get his filthy foot in the door. Is it any wonder that this nation is under such ruthless attack? What are we feeding our children's mind and souls with? I tell you: Alternate lifestyles,

evolution and now sorcery and witchcraft. I'd advise you to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit if you are indeed a real Christian and ask God to reveal the truth about Harry Potter. He has to me and I say that this literature is of a demonic nature and should not be assimilated by any child.

I respect your opinion and the right (and responsibility) you have to make choices for your family.

However, one of the things we do at Probe Ministries is to "engage the culture." That means interacting with issues and topics in our culture and examining them from a Christian world view. Some parents—MANY parents—do not have children who accept their "no" the way yours might, and will need to confront the Harry Potter phenomenon head-on. For example, dads of kids with a custodial mom who buys the books for them regardless of what the dad wants. If we can help people to find a way to use this major cultural icon to teach Christian truth, to find what is good in a major literary and now film genre and help them understand spiritual truth through it, then that's what we're called to do. Even if other Christians don't understand or agree.

I assure you that I have sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit; we would be foolish to do what we do here at Probe without His wisdom and guidance! I believe this falls under the category of "disputable matters." That means the Lord can lead you to avoid Harry Potter books and He can allow others to read them without sinning, and He still remains Lord and God.

By the way, the last time I checked, the test of a "real Christian" was the presence of the indwelling Christ as a result of trusting Him for life and salvation, not one's position on Harry Potter.

Respectfully,

Sue Bohlin

“What About Us Women Not From Venus?”

This question is sent in response to the article “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.” Are all women relationally oriented? What about the introverts out there? What about the goal-oriented women?

Being an introvert myself, I have had to work at caring for other people and reaching out, as God commands. I naturally want to do things by myself and for myself. When I get stressed out or upset, I withdraw from people into my “cave.”

I am also goal-oriented. I cannot multi-task. I can only focus on one thing at a time. My motivation is achieving the goal. I strongly dislike group projects.

My fiancé is the opposite of me. He is very relational, loves to be around people, talks a lot, and is not as goal-oriented.

In my experience, there are many people like us. How can this be explained? If God designed woman to be relational, then why am I (and many others) not wired that way?

Great questions.

I do think that at our core, women are relationally-oriented, which you will probably see once you have children and the concept of “family” becomes much more important to you. Particularly in American culture which has been so steeped in feminism, women’s mindsets have been shaped to be more male-like, and there are more and more women saying the same thing

as you.

When Ray and I give our “Mars/Venus” lecture, we run into couples like you and your fiancé from time to time, where it looks like somebody switched the labels. <smile> But the interesting thing is, you guys still find each other! There is still a beautiful complementarity to the male-female relationship where each person’s strengths and weaknesses are balanced by the other person’s strengths and weaknesses.

Sometimes people become independent and self-reliant not because of their gender but because of their family dynamics. That doesn’t change what it means to be a woman at the core of your being, though. Your experience of being independent and self-reliant is going to be different from a man’s experience. And honestly, they are both a challenge to living as God wants us to—depending fully on HIM instead of on ourselves. Being fiercely independent can be a curse; it’s a way of digging our own cisterns (Jer. 2:13) instead of going to the source of Living Water in complete dependence and neediness. But you didn’t ask that question, so I’ll get off my soapbox now! <grin>

I’d be interested in having this discussion with you a few years down the road after you’re married and hopefully have children. I wonder if you would still see yourself as not being relational anymore. If you think of it, pop back in and let me know, OK?

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Will Jesus Bear His Nailprints Forever?”

Sometime back I was told that Jesus will bear the marks of the nails on his hands and feet forever (eternity). Is there a scripture reference to back this up?

There is no scripture that explicitly says Christ will bear His scars for all eternity. However, they are part of His resurrected body. After Thomas insisted that he would not believe unless he saw the imprint of the nails, and put his finger into the place of the nails, and put his hand into His side, John 20:27 records the Lord Jesus telling Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

I believe that the scars on Jesus’ body are the most beautiful things in all of heaven, and we will want to fall down and worship Him and touch (and even kiss!) His scars with awe; they are excruciating proof of His love for us.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries