

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** The question of how this evil being came into existence is complicated. Zoroastrianism in the course of 400 years was not consistent on this question.

Eventually, however, the evil one was believed to have been from all eternity like the good god and on par with the good god. One was the principle of evil; the other was the principle of good.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** That's dualism.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Yes. I've oversimplified Zoroastrianism. Basically what I want to say is that Zoroastrianism developed the concept of the Evil One to explain why the world is marred with so many faults in the presence of a god who is supposed to be all-powerful and all-good.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** If Zoroaster's god was all-powerful and all-good, then why did he not destroy the Evil One?

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** According to Zoroastrianism, the principle of evil cannot be destroyed because he is eternal. But his powers can be curtailed. For this, the principle of good needs mankind's cooperation. With the coming of a Savior from heaven, the faithful will overcome the Evil One. Then there will be the resurrection from the dead, and a new world will come into existence over which the Evil One will have no power. This is the good news according to Zoroastrianism.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** So, Zoroastrianism developed the concept of the devil and Zoroastrianism influenced the development of demonology in Hebrew tradition.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** So it seems. Zoroastrianism is important in the history of religion because of other concepts it developed. It developed not only the concept of the Evil One, but also the concept of the final resurrection of the body, belief in individual judgment after one's death, and also the belief in a Savior who will come down from heaven to help mankind overcome the Evil One.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** Could we summarize?

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** What I've tried to do is to give the general context against which the Hebrews borrowed and developed their own—and I stress, their own—belief in the devil.

The belief in the devil is a relatively late phenomenon. It is not found in mythology.

It is a product of philosophical thought. Zoroaster was the first one to develop the concept of the Evil One. Zoroastrian dualism was postulated to explain the origin of evil in the universe vis-a-vis a god who is supposed to be all-good and all-powerful.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** One final question: Does Satan or the devil exist?

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** This question must be answered by each individual. A sophisticated believer in the existence of the devil will concede that the existence of the devil cannot be proved empirically; he will also maintain, however, that it cannot be refuted. On the other hand, one who does not believe in the devil can explain evil in the universe in terms of natural laws and human nature. He, in other words, believes that science and psychology can explain natural catastrophes, sickness, death, and crime without the devil.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** Thank you, Dr. Bolchazy.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** My pleasure.

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# The Fall(s) from Grace

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**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** I'm Nancy Boyle and Dr. Lou Bolchazy is with me again today to discuss the fall from grace. Dr. Bolchazy, the original sin of Adam and Eve is one of the central doctrines of Christianity. For one thing, the entire doctrine of redemption of the human race by Jesus is based on the belief of original sin. The Fall also explains our propensity to sin and evil, and the fact that we suffer hardship in life, sickness, and, ultimately, death. Let me list some of the salient points in the biblical account of the Fall: first of all, the serpent is the tempter. Then, the serpent is instrumental in the loss of immortality on the part of Adam and Eve. Thirdly, a woman is directly responsible for man's fall. There is the loss of paradise. Finally, there is God's curse of Adam, Eve, and the serpent.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** There's also, Nancy, the expression of hope at the end of the biblical account.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** Correct. Let's start with the serpent as seducer.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** For the prebiblical Mesopotamians and Greeks, the serpent was a deity who brought health, wealth, wisdom, and immortality to mankind and also was instrumental in creating the universe. We have depictions of the serpent guarding the tree of life—these depictions are Mesopotamian and go back to the third millennium B.C. In Greek mythology, the serpent with human speech is the guardian of the apples of immortality in the garden of Hesperides.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** In the biblical story of the Fall, the serpent is evil. He is the opposite of all those blessings like health, wealth, and immortality.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Genesis was written by a Hebrew who believed in one God. He was concerned with a tradition of serpent worship in neighboring nations. His concern influenced his choice of serpent as a symbol of evil.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** What you're saying is that the Hebrew monotheistic editor, concerned with the serpent worship of the neighboring nations, inverted the symbolism of the serpent.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Yes. So that in Genesis the serpent becomes responsible for man's loss of immortality.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** Just as in the epic Gilgamesh where the serpent steals the herb of immortality from the hero Gilgamesh.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** True.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** The second point in Genesis is that the serpent was instrumental in the fall of mankind.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Yes. We notice that in Genesis the serpent tells Eve a lie. If she eats of this tree, she shall be like a god, or, according to another version, like the gods. Sir James Frazer in his three-volume work, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, refers to this kind of a lie as "The Story of the Perverted Message" and gives a number of stories similar to the one in Genesis.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** Could you explain that, please?

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Basically it's this. According to these stories, a god or gods would send a message to an individual or mankind through an animal—a hare, a crab, or a serpent. The purpose of the message was to tell how to become immortal. The animal, however, would pervert the message. The animal would lie. The result: Mankind did not become immortal. The animal instead became immortal. Many people still believe that the serpent will live forever unless deliberately killed. This belief exists in many parts of the world.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** But what about the ancient peoples of the Near East?

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** We know that the ancient Phoenicians believed that the serpent was the longest lived of all animals. Secondly, there is the myth of the demi-god Adapa, an Akkadian myth written down in the fourteenth century B.C. in Mesopotamia. Adapa also lost immortality because of a perverted message.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** The third salient point in the biblical account of the Fall is that a woman, Eve, was instrumental.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** This point seems to have several parallels. In Genesis 3:20, Adam calls Eve "the mother of all living." This is the title of the love goddess Aruru in the Gilgamesh epic. It is Aruru who sends her priestess to lure the innocent Enkidu and to teach him wisdom. Once Enkidu gains knowledge, he becomes mortal. In Greek mythology, the man-hating Zeus creates Pandora. Pandora, because of her curiosity, opens the lid of a jar and all evils come out of it to plague men. Hope alone remains.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** Are both Aruru and Pandora divine?

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Yes. Pandora is also the prototype of women just as Eve is.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** The fourth salient point is the expulsion from paradise.

**DR. BOLCHAZY:** Again, loss of original paradise is universal—the Greek Golden Age, the Sumerian Dilmum, the original paradisiacal state of bliss enjoyed by Enkidu in the Gilgamesh.

**PROFESSOR BOYLE:** The fifth salient point is the curse.