

**Do Demons Really Believe? James 2:19**

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*“You believe that there is **one** God. You do well. Even the demons believe---and tremble!”<sup>1</sup>*

The Bible teaches the view that faith is faith and that “saving faith” is not a special **kind** of faith. What makes “saving faith” saving is the object<sup>2</sup>, not some supposed “special” kind of faith. In the Bible there is not even one passage which speaks of a faith which is spurious----that is, a faith which is less than genuine. Furthermore, everlasting life is given as a gift to those who believe in Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

Well, then, people ask, what about the faith of demons as reported in James 2:19?” Surely that isn’t **genuine faith!** After all, demons clearly aren’t saved.

**The Answer:** A syllogism.<sup>4</sup> This question reflects a common **misconception**. The reasoning goes like this:

**Point 1:** Anyone who believes in God is saved.

**Point 2:** Demons are not saved.

**Conclusion:** Demons do not really believe God.

The logic is inescapable. Indeed, it is, if the **first two points are correct**.

The **second point** in this syllogism is clearly correct. In the Atonement Jesus died for **human beings not for demons**.<sup>5</sup> Demons are lost and can never be saved because God never provided a way to remove their sin. They know that (that’s why they tremble; they are doomed to the lake of

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<sup>1</sup> James 2:19.

<sup>2</sup> Object: Jesus Christ; agent: Holy Spirit; Instrument: the Word of God.

<sup>3</sup> John 3:16, 36, 5:24, 6:47; Rom. 6:23b.

<sup>4</sup> An argument the conclusion of which is supported by two premises. Deductive reasoning.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 2:9.

fire). On one occasion they asked Jesus, “What have we to do with you, Jesus, You Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”<sup>6</sup>

The problem is with the first part of the syllogism. It is clearly incorrect. Eternal life is given to those who believe that Jesus Christ was speaking the truth when He said, “He who believes in Me has everlasting life.”<sup>7</sup>

However, James 2:19 is not talking about believing in Jesus Christ and Him alone for the gift of everlasting life. Rather, it is talking about **belief in monotheism** (i.e., belief that there is only one God).<sup>8</sup>

The faith of demons is **valid** (yet not saving) if two questions can be answered affirmatively: 1). Is its object truly trustworthy? and 2). Is it honestly held? For example one can believe things that are utterly false; but such faith (belief) is not valid in that its object is not trustworthy. Similarly, if a person professes to believe something he really does not believe, his claim that he believes is dishonest.

This, then leads to the application of these two questions to the faith of demons as reported in James 2:19.

**Is monotheism true?** If monotheism is not true, then the faith of demons is misplaced.

Monotheism, however, is **true!** James picks monotheism since it is an indisputable fact.

Note that in our passage the demons “tremble” as a result of their belief in monotheism. In fact, demons also believe in the deity of Christ.<sup>9</sup> **Demons “truly” believe in monotheism.** The Bible tells us that they do.

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<sup>6</sup> Matt. 8:29.

<sup>7</sup> John 6:47.

<sup>8</sup> Deut. 6:4.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 8:29.

However, **belief in monotheism is not saving.** There will be many people (as well as demons) in hell who during this life who **believed in monotheism** (Islam, Judaism, Unitarians) but never believed in Jesus for the gift of everlasting life. Ask any devout Roman Catholic or Protestant if Jesus died on the Cross for their sins and they will respond with a heartfelt and genuine “**YES!**”

Yet many of those same people have not nor will not believe in Jesus Christ and Him alone for the gift of everlasting life. They are trusting in what Jesus did on the Cross **plus their own good works for the gift of everlasting life.**

**Do demons really believe in God? Absolutely.** They make all of their plans and base all of their actions on that belief.

Faith that saves someone eternally is not some sort of unique faith. Placing one’s faith in Christ is what saves. The object of our faith must be in Jesus Christ and Him alone and He guarantees eternal life to anyone who does this. “He who believes in Me has everlasting life.”<sup>10</sup> I believe this and have absolute assurance and security in this statement. How about you?

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<sup>10</sup> John 6:47.