

Fort Bend Christian Academy- Department of Apologetics

Chris Henderson

**Satan: An Analysis of the Historical Origins and Modern Interpretation of the Popular
Christian Belief of the Devil and a Proposal for a Better Understanding.**

A Thesis Submitted

To the Teacher and Students of Honors Apologetics

By

Paige Estes

December 2019

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Introduction

Before you read this paper, it should be noted that I went into the research for this topic with every intention of proving the existence of the theological Satan. For the sake of a sound research paper, I went into all research as unbiased as possible, but was quickly discouraged upon finding the truth and context behind many of the Biblical mentions that I had previously blindly accepted as sound proof for Satan. Upon this discovery that what I believed may have actually been wrong, I began diving deeper into the text, interpretations surrounding the text, various commentaries, cultural influence and even broke down the verses to the original language it was written in. The conclusions I have reached were not reached with a light heart, however it would be going against all my research to do otherwise.

The idea of an entity responsible for all evil being in charge of a fiery pit wherein the damned are subject to eternal torture has been a common belief held by Christians worldwide. . It seems to be every good Christian's duty to pass on to their children the nightmarish warning of sin, hell, and Satan. But where did this Satan come from? This question is the source of many disputes as scholars dissect the few obscure references of Satan in the Bible and from other cultures. Don't you want to know if this tempter who is apparently responsible for your depression, anxiety, fear and doubts that your pastor always warns you about is even real?

Satan is such a big factor in modern day church that it almost seems like sermons are more about avoiding or fighting the devil than learning about God. I have held these questions for a long time, as I have always been warned about him, but never questioned why God would allow his existence in the first place. That is why I have decided to delve into the origins of the

Devil to determine whether or not he is real and, if so, what his purpose is. The purpose of this thesis is to prove that Satan is not a personal being, but instead a conceptual embodiment of evil inclinations inside each person's mind.

Names of Satan

The historical Satan has undergone many name changes since its origination in the Hebrew language. Satan came from the term *ha Satan* in Hebrew, which later became a derivative for *Satanan*, the Greek word for Satan.¹ *Ha Satan* is biblical in origin and meant *the adversary*, and was used to describe a role that people would fill in biblical accounts.² Due to misinterpretation of the texts, what originally was a general term used to describe anyone became the name of the most hated figure in Christianity. People began to merge texts together, taking verses out of context causing Satan to become one of many names for the Christian Devil.

The Serpent

Biblical references

The book of Genesis never mentions Satan, but Christians have generally interpreted the serpent from the Garden of Eden to be him due to Revelation 12:7, which called Satan “that ancient Serpent”.³ However, it seems more reasonable that Revelation 12:7 was referring to the

¹ Juan Eduardo Campo. (2009), "Satan", Encyclopedia of Islam, New York City, New York: Infobase Publishing, pp. 603–604

² Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

³ Revelation 12:7 NIV

Leviathan, a creature of chaos that dwelled in the sea, prophesied to be destroyed by Yahweh in Isaiah 27:1.⁴

Outside influences

Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho* was the first recorded philosopher to identify Satan with the serpent from Genesis in the second century AD.⁵ This claim received opposition from others such as Celsus who, in his *The True Word*, wrote that “it is blasphemy. . . to say that the greatest God. . . has an adversary who constrains his capacity to do good” and added that Christians “impiously divide the kingdom of God, creating a rebellion in it, as if there were opposing factions within the divine, including one that is hostile to God.”⁶ It should be noted that Celsus was a pagan and a bias may be present in his statements. Another scholar by the name of Von Rad argues that :

The serpent which now enters the narrative is marked as one of God's created animals (ch. 2. 19). In the narrator's mind, therefore, it is not the symbol of a "demonic" power and certainly not of Satan. What distinguishes it a little from the rest of the animals is exclusively his greater cleverness. [. . .] The mention of the snake here is almost incidental; at any rate, in the "temptation" by it the concern is with a completely un-mythical process, presented in such a way because the narrator is obviously anxious to shift the responsibility as little as possible from man. It is a question only of man and his guilt; therefore the narrator has carefully guarded against objectifying evil in any way, and therefore he has personified it as little as possible as a power coming from without. That he transferred the impulse to temptation outside man was almost more a necessity for the story than an attempt at making evil something existing outside man. [. . .] In the history of religions the snake indeed is the sinister, strange animal par

⁴ Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁵ W. Scott Poole. (2009), *Satan in America: The Devil We Know*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁶Origen, Michael Fiedrowicz, Claudia Barthold, Marcel Borret, Origen., and Origen. *Contra Celsum* =. 6th ed., n.d.

excellence [. . .], and one can also assume that long before, a myth was once at the basis of our narrative. But as it lies now before us, transparent and lucid, it is anything but a myth.⁷

In order to have made it seem man was responsible for their own downfall and not some Satan character, the Author seemed to have objectified and personified evil in the most minimal way possible. The purpose of the narrative was not to place blame for the fall of man, but rather illustrate that man fell and was held responsible for the consequences.

Ha Satan

Old Testament

The translation of *ha satan* from Hebrew into English means "the adversary." The Hebrew "*ha*" is simply the definite article, or "the" in English.⁸ The first biblical mention of Satan in the Biblical context is seen with the use of this word, *ha satan*, in the Old Testament's book of Numbers. In this account, the word *ha satan* was used to describe an angel of the Lord who approached Balaam, opposing him in order to stop his voyage to the Moabite officials.⁹ Other mentions of *ha satan* in the Old Testament include in 1 Samuel 29:4. In this instance the philistines concluded that if David were to fight with them in battle, he would become a *ha satan*, or adversary, unto them. The use of this word is to convey that David would become an enemy in battle against the Philistines, whom he was originally fighting with. David would have sided with the enemy they were fighting instead of maintaining loyalty. The next instance is an interesting occurrence in two similar passages. In 2 Samuel 24, Yahweh's anger was kindled and he incited David to take a census. However in the parallel account in 1 Chronicles,

⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (1973, Revised Edition), p. 87-88, *The Old Testament Library*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, [ISBN 0-664-20957-2](#).

⁸ Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁹Ibid

it is satan, “adversary,” used without the article in this instance, who incited David to take the census. This is most likely because the common piety of the day was to avoid saying that God was the direct cause of evil.¹⁰ Such a figure only appears once in the Chronicles, but a figure similar to this is represented twice more in the Old Testament: Job 1-2 and Zechariah 3:1. In those cases, however, the definite article is attached so the mention in 1 Chronicles can most probably be attributed to the OT’s development of a figure of Yahweh’s heavenly council that brings charges against people and incites them to do evil.¹¹ There was disputation over whether or not Persian dualism had an influence in the development in Israel.¹² This change of instigator made it seem as though Yahweh was not responsible for evil. This alteration may be seen as the start of evil being associated with Satan and demons or Satan in particular.¹³

The next mention of *ha satan* in the Hebrew scriptures was in the book of Job. The use of *ha satan* in this context was defined as an adversary in a court of law, an accuser of Job. Some people have interpreted this accuser to be one of the sons of God, who were mentioned in the prologue, as the accuser was among them. The story goes that the sons of God came to present themselves to God and the Satan was among them. Due to previous uses of the word “among,” applying the rule of first mention, one can assume the meaning applies, here as well, as membership of a group. Therefore Satan was *among* the sons of god, and was a son of God himself, being singled out purely for narrative purposes.¹⁴ In this case of the use of the word “Satan”, it is only used as “the satan” with the definite article before the name, preventing the

¹⁰ Word Biblical Commentary

¹¹ Word Biblical Commentary

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

reader from identifying this figure with the “Satan” of the later Jewish and Christian theology.¹⁵ The purpose of the use of this word is to denote action, not a subject, and so “the satan” means *to act* as an adversary.¹⁶ Now it must be derived if this “the satan” figure is God’s adversary or Job’s, to which the correct answer would be Job, due to the fact that Satan is Yawehe’s subordinate and is only capable of attempting to allure him.¹⁷ Even being Job’s adversary, it is only because by nature he is the adversary of all humans generally, an embodiment of superhuman hostility. Another theory is that he is the adversary of Job strictly for the purposes of the narrative. From the point of view of the action, “the satan” is Job’s adversary more so than Yawehe, but from the point of view of ethics, less so than Yawehe. The Satan in this story cannot be viewed as bad, evil, malevolent or cynical, nor as the author of misfortune, the legal accuser, or an inciter of evil in this story.¹⁸ The role of Satan in this story raises questions about its origins, as it very closely akin to polytheistic religion of that time period. Another interpretation of the text is that the satan of this story may be an embodiment of divine doubt and the demonic wrath of God, as it was not Satan that God needs to convince of Job’s piety, but God himself.¹⁹ This source goes on to continue the interpretation that satan and the sons of God he was involved with are simply mere personifications of divine characteristics.²⁰

In Zechariah 3:1-2, the prophet saw Joshua the priest in a vision. In the visions, they were in a heavenly courtroom in which Zechariah saw Satan at Joshua’s right hand to oppose him. John Calvin explains why it was Christians felt similar opposition in their daily lives:

¹⁵ Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

¹⁶ Word Biblical Commentary

¹⁷ Word Biblical Commentary

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

We wonder why so many enemies daily rage against us, and why the whole world burn against us with such implacable hatred; and also why so many intrigues arise, and so many assaults are made, which have not been excited through provocation on our part: but the reason why we wonder is this, — because we bear not in mind that we are fighting with the devil, the head and prince of the whole world. For were it a fixed principle in our minds, that all the ungodly are influenced by the devil, there would then be nothing new in fact, that all unitedly rage against us. How so? Because they are moved by the same spirit, and their father is a murderer, even from the beginning. (John 8:44.) We hence see that the faithful were taught what was extremely necessary, — that their troubles arose from many nations, because Satan watched for their ruin.²¹

Calvin stated that the reason Christians were faced with so much opposition in their life was because of the direct cause of Satan, but rather from many nations which Satan watched for when they would destroy themselves.

Calvin argued that this passage referenced the literal Satan, and described him as “ the chief warrior who assails us, and who employs all the rage of the world to destroy us, if possible, on every side. Satan then ever stands at Christ’s right hand, so as not to allow him in peace to exercise his priestly office”.²² This verse in Zechariah was similar to the account in Job where “Satan” was apart of the heavenly court and therefore could have been an angel singled out for the purpose of the narrative.

New Testament

In the New Testament, Satan was used again in the account of Jesus’ forty days and nights in the wilderness.²³ At the beginning of the chapter, the word “devil” was solely in use, as it described how Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil (meaning slanderer). Then the iconic three temptations and refutations take place, which ended

²¹ John Calvin

²² John Calvin

²³ Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13 NIV

when Jesus commanded the devil away from him using the phrase, “get away from me Satan!”²⁴

The fact that none of Jesus’s other narrative accounts have been interpreted in any way but literal creates a strong argument for this referring to the literal Satan, and it appears in multiple books written by their own respective authors, serving to justify the fact that this event did actually happen literally, and that the use of the word Satan in this account must have referred to *the* Satan. Other New Testament accounts include in Luke 10:18, when Jesus says that he saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. This verse creates some unique questions, such as: if Satan had just then fallen, who was the Satan everyone had referred to before? Could that have been a victory speech in which Jesus simply echoed the seventy-two about their triumph over demons? Another possible interpretation for this verse was the primeval view, which suggested that because Jesus was preexisting, he had witnessed the fall of Satan in the beginning.

However,

the bigger problem here with both the primeval views is that while Lk10,18 could in isolation refer to a primeval fall, it would in this case make very little sense in the context of Lk10,17–20. (As noted in the introduction above, we are concerned with the saying’s meaning in Luke’s Gospel.) It is very difficult to see how a vision of the fall of Satan in the terms in which it is described in Life of Adam and Eve and 2 Enoch above would fit in that wider context. Why respond to the success of the disciples with reference to the primeval fall of Satan? The only reason could be that Jesus was simply claiming that he had seen something more impressive than that which they had witnessed, but which was otherwise largely unrelated. To reply simply by oneup-manship would seem to be a strange response on Jesus’ part. Just as difficult is the question of why Jesus would follow a reference to such a fall with them reassurance of future immunity from evil powers in Luke10,19. These problems imply that the reference to a primeval fall of Satan of this kind is unlikely. While one could interpret Jesus’ statement as trumping the disciples’ claim to have seen people freed from demon possession by his own claim

²⁴ Matthew 4:10

to a far more spectacular sight, it is very difficult to see how this would tie in with Lk10,19, and with Jesus' grant to the disciples of authority over the powers of evil.²⁵

The problem with interpreting this verse with the primeval view is that in the context of this verse, the vision of the fall of Satan as described in the Life of Adam and Eve and Enoch 2 would not be appropriate. It would seem as if Jesus was responding to the disciples claim of an impressive feat with an even more impressive feat which was unrelated to what the disciples originally described. It was difficult to tie in this interpretation with Jesus' grant to the disciples of authority over the powers of evil.

Another account of Satan in the New Testament is when Judas took the bread from Jesus and Satan entered him. Again with the way the language was used in this context, it signifies that meaning is literal. This is one of the two cases in the Bible in which Satan possesses a person to cause them to sin. Acts 26:18 talks about turning from the power of Satan to God, which the Greek "Satanan" is used, derived from the Hebrew word "Satan," referring to the adversary. In Romans 16:20, Paul wrote that God will crush Satan under foot, Satan in this context being used as the adversary. In Greek, the term is "Satanan" derived from the Hebrew word "Satan" once again.

²⁵SIMON GATHERCOLE. "Jesus Eschatological Vision Of The Fall Of Satan: Luke 10,18 Reconsidered". *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 94, no. 3-4 (2003): 143-163. doi:10.1515/zntw.2003.008.

Usage in Parables

Satan was also given a role in Jesus' parables. Parables, which Jesus used often, were metaphors that utilized mundane contextual concepts in efforts to help people understand abstract concepts. In "the parable of the sower", Satan was portrayed as one who profoundly influenced those who failed to understand the gospel.²⁶ "The parable of the sheep and the goats" state that the Devil and his angels, along with his followers, will be sentenced to life in eternal fire.²⁷ "The parable of the strong man", Satan being the strong man in this metaphor, explains that Jesus could not cast out demons in a house that belongs to Satan if he did not already beat Satan.²⁸ Satan was also used in the case of Judas betraying Jesus, as it was written that Satan entered him. Satan was also described by Paul as filling the heart of Ananias's heart and causing him to sin.

Middle Ages

The use of Satan in the Middle Ages was for comedic relief in late medieval mystery plays. He was viewed as pathetic and repulsive, not terrifying.²⁹ In 1260, Jacobus da Varagine compiled a collection of encounters between saints and Satan in which the saint was always victorious by the power of God. This compilation, known as *Golden Legend*, was so popular that more manuscripts of it have survived from the high and late middle ages more than any other book in that time period.³⁰ In the eleventh century, the Canon Episcopi, a passage of medieval canonical law, began condemning witchcraft as hysterical. However, many people

²⁶Sharon Beekmann; Peter G. Bolt (2012), *Silencing Satan: Handbook of Biblical Demonology*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Robert A. Peterson (2012), *Salvation Accomplished by the Son: The Work of Christ*, Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway

²⁹ Jeffery Burton Russell

³⁰ Golden legend source

believed in it leading to Pope John XXII in 1326 to condemn folk divination as consultation with Satan.³¹ By the 1430's, witchcraft was led by Satan, as it was regarded as such by the Catholic church.³² Satan goes from comically insufficient against the power of God to a leader of a dangerous and disgusting cult of witches.

Early Modern Period

In the Early Modern Period, Satan became exponentially more powerful and became a dominant aspect of Christianity. Around the time of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther preached that in order to combat Satan you must seek pleasant company and play music, since Satan could not stand happiness.³³ John Calvin preached from Saint Augustine that man is a horse and either God or Satan is the rider.³⁴ After the reformation, the witch hunt period began and intensified in 1620, lasting until the end of the 17th century with Satan at the head of it all until the people found a new thing for Satan to be responsible for in North America.³⁵ The Puritans of New England held the belief that Satan was visible in this new world. John Winthrop taught that the Devil made rebellious Puritan women give birth to stillborn monsters.³⁶ They believed that the Native Americans were Satan worshippers, and that you could see Satan

³¹ W. Scott Poole. (2009), *Satan in America: The Devil We Know*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

³² Thomsett, Michael C. (2011), *Heresy in the Roman Catholic Church: A History*, Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland & Company, Inc.

³³ Bainton, Roland H. (1978) [1950], *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press

³⁴ Thomas Henry Louis Parker (1995), *Calvin: An Introduction to his Thought*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press

³⁵ W. Scott Poole. (2009), *Satan in America: The Devil We Know*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

³⁶ Matthew Paul Turner(2014-02-16). "Why American Christians Love Satan". *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved 2018-01-02.

appear at their native ceremonies.³⁷ During the Second Great Awakening, Satan was viewed as a major opposition because of his efforts to hinder the evangelical movement and its ministries. In the early 17th century, Authors like Reginald Scott and John Bancroft criticized demons ability to possess people.³⁸ This was supported by the belief that miracles only happened during the Apostolic age. Enlightenment thinkers added to this stigma by attacking Satan's existence. Voltaire, an enlightenment thinker, declared that Hell and Satan were propaganda from the Catholic church meant to keep humanity enslaved.³⁹ By the 1700's, the significant decrease in witchcraft trials left traditional Christians as the only people remaining with a strong belief in the power of Satan. .⁴⁰

Modern Era

The modern era views of Satan vary from religion to religion. Mormonism adopted their own view of Satan, making the Devil play a bigger role in the metanarrative and holding responsibility for the sins of many.⁴¹ Satanic and demonic possession still plays a big role. Many believe in a literal Devil, and the modern view of Satan is a mixing pot of theological resources and popular culture. Pope Francis renewed focus on Satan in the 2010's.⁴² Liberal

³⁷ W. Scott Poole. (2009), *Satan in America: The Devil We Know*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

³⁸ Philip C. Almond (2004), *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and their Cultural Context*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

³⁹ W. Scott Poole. (2009), *Satan in America: The Devil We Know*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

⁴⁰ Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁴¹ Douglas J. Davies (2010). *Fallen Joseph Smith, Jesus, and Satanic Opposition: Atonement, Evil and the Mormon Vision*. University of Durham, UK.

⁴² Anthony Faiola (10 May 2014), "A modern pope gets old school on the Devil: A renewed interest in exorcism", *The Washington Post*, The WP Company, LLC

Christianity became defined by the viewpoint of Satan being a figurative mythological construct meant to explain an abstract reality of evil that influences humanity. Western philosophical dualism unintentionally grew a rather large following, becoming the most widely accepted view of Satan there is today.

Abbadon

In Hebrew, Abbadon means angel of death, a name that was first transcribed in Greek revelation 9:11, “whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, the Angel of Death”, which was then translated back into Hebrew to say, “which in Greek means the destroyer”.⁴³ He was said to be the king of an army of locusts and an angel of the bottomless pit. The Interpreter's Bible states: "Abaddon, however, is an angel not of Satan but of God, performing his work of destruction at God's bidding", citing the context at Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 through 3.⁴⁴

Belial

Biblical Usage

In 1 Samuel 2:12, the sons of Eli were called sons of Belial, a term that is a synonym to Satan. The use of this word Belial in the Bible is not unusual, as it was used twenty-seven times in the mosaic texts. In the Bible, when the idiom “sons of” is used, it is often followed by a word such as “lawlessness” or “destruction”. When “sons of Belial” is used, it is often translated to “sons of worthlessness”. Fifteen of the twenty-seven times, the idiom “sons of Belial” was used to describe “worthless” people. This term encompasses idolaters, used Deuteronomy 13:13, the men of Gibeah, used in Judges 19:22 and 20:13, the sons of Eli, as

⁴³ Greek Lexicon

⁴⁴ Interpreter's bible

already mentioned from 1 Samuel 2:12. In summary, during the Iron age, Belial was applied to ideas, words, counsel(Deuteronomy 15:9; Psalm 101:3; Nahum 1:11), calamitous circumstances(Psalm 41:8), and worthless men of the lowest association(Deuteronomy 13:13, Judges 19:22-27; 20:13, 1 Samuel 2:12, 1 Samuel 25:17, 25, 2 Samuel 20:1; 22:5; 23:6; Psalm 18:4, 2 Chronicles 13:7, 1 Kings 21:10, 13, Proverbs 6:12-14; 16:27; 19:28). ⁴⁵

Apocryphal Books

Belial is also a frequent term in the apocryphal dead sea scrolls, appearing first in The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness and later in The Community Rule. In these scrolls, Belial is described to be accursed, the leader of the sons of darkness, the angel of darkness, a rebel, and agent of divine punishment, the king of evil and prince of darkness. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs was written in 2nd century CE, after the Jews exile in the Achaemenid empire in which zoroastrianism heavily influenced them. This explains the appearance of dualistic themes involved in the literature, such as Belial being presented as the opponent of God, instead of a subservient entity. ⁴⁶ Within this particular account, Belial is presented in direct contrast to God, and a myriad of references are made including: Simeon 5:3, fornication separates man from God and brings him near to Belial, Levi 19:1, Levi tells his children to choose between the Law of God and the works of Belial, it also stated that when the soul is constantly disturbed, the Lord departs from it and Belial rules over it, Naphtali 2:6, 3:1 contrasted the Law and the will of God with the purposes of Belial, in 20:2 Joseph prophesied that when Israel left Egypt, they would be in light with God while Belial would remain in

⁴⁵ KJV

⁴⁶ Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

darkness.⁴⁷ Finally, in the Ascension of Isaiah 2:4, Belial is identified as Samael and Satan, as well as “ruler of this world”.⁴⁸

Language

In the Jewish Greek Septuagint, the idiom “sons of Belial” was replaced to mean “lawless men” with less person idioms. It also avoids Belial in the singular, leaving the single preserved use of Belial in the New Testament in both Latin and Syriac. In the New Testament the word Belial was used once in 2 Corinthians 6:15 by the apostle Paul, however in most translations the spelling of belial has changed to beliar, the spelling preferred by most textual scholars and can be accounted for by aramaic pronunciations.

Modern Usage

The name Belial in more modern times was given to *The Satanic Bible*, the meaning derived is “without a master”. This is meant to signify independence, one of the key themes of atheistic satanism. Other than that previously mentioned religious significance it was given, Belial is mostly used in various video games, literature, and films as a character related to Hell.

Lucifer

Biblical Usage

In Isaiah 14:12-15, this passage began with the usual opening: “How art thou fallen from heaven!”, the phrase ‘from heaven’ meant that the one that was addressed was set apart from normal mortals. This is what lead people to believe the character in the story could be a reference to Satan. There was no myth from religions outside of Israel that this story could have

⁴⁷ The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs

⁴⁸ Apocryphal books

been influenced by, so the myth itself cannot be compared to greek or canaanite parallels, too many differences appear.⁴⁹ However, alternative theories imply that this account could simply be referring to Lucifer, or venus. John Calvin's interpretation was that Isaiah conveyed that the king was but a mere man, though he wished to mislead others that he was a god. Isaiah employed an elegant metaphor by comparing the king to Lucifer. This was due to the splendor and brightness with which he, the king, "shone"(metaphorically) above others. "The idea that this passage refers to Satan has arisen from ignorance; 'for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians'".⁵⁰ According to Calvin, It was ignorant to imagine that Lucifer was the king of devils and that the Prophet gave him this name.⁵¹

The Hebrew of this passage reads: "helel, ben shachar" which can be literally translated to "shining one, son of dawn".⁵² This phrase means literally the planet Venus when it appears as a morning star. In the Septuagint it is translated as "heosphoros" which also means Venus as a morning star.⁵³ The reasoning for this word choice is due to the characteristics of Venus as a star. The mesopotamian people observed that it was the brightest star in the sky, the last to disappear when the sun came up, giving the appearance that it was challenging the sun who represented El to the people of that time. Therefore it was only natural for the author to draw this connection in his lamentation to the King of Babylon, a man who was challenging God with his power. This king then died, which can account for the first part of this rhetorical language

⁴⁹ Word Biblical Commentary

⁵⁰ Jean Calvin and John Owen. *A Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1986.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁵³ Ibid.

“How art thou fallen from heaven”. This part of the verse comes from the mesopotamians observing how the morning star seemed to fall out of the sky, of course to the modern person it is common knowledge that this is due to the rotation of the Earth. In Roman astronomy, Lucifer was the name given to the morning star. The reason that Lucifer has been misinterpreted as a name of the devil is because of the scholars who were authorized by King James I to translate the Bible into current English.⁵⁴ These scholars did not use the original Hebrew texts, but instead utilized versions translated largely by St. Jerome in the fourth century.⁵⁵ Jerome was responsible for translating the Hebrew scripture into latin as he was a latin catholic priest during his time.⁵⁶ Some may argue that Jerome had mistranslated the Hebraic metaphor, "Day star, son of the Dawn," as "Lucifer," and over the centuries a metamorphosis took place. However, more accurate is the accusation that Jerome was correct in translating this metaphor to Lucifer, as it did mean morning star in Latin.⁵⁷ It was human error that misinterpreted Lucifer the morning star into a disobedient angel, cast out of heaven to rule eternally in hell. Theologians, writers, and poets had then interwoven the myth with the doctrine of the Fall, leading to the Christian tradition where Lucifer became the same as Satan, the Devil, and the Prince of Darkness.⁵⁸

"Lucifer" was nothing more than an ancient Latin name for the morning star, the bringer of light. In fact if one was to read beyond Isaiah, they would see that Christians identify Christ himself as the morning star, a term used as a central theme in many Christian sermons. Jesus even referred to himself as the morning star in Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto

⁵⁴ Henry Ansgar Kelly (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star".⁵⁹

It should also be noted that Heylel was a name for Attar, a Canaanite god of venus who tried to enter the walls of the heavenly city by climbing them but was thwarted by the god of the sun.⁶⁰ It is due to this passage of Isaiah combined with the passage of Ezekiel, which described a cherub of Eden as a polemic at Ithobaal II the king of Tyre, that most Christians believe that Satan is a fallen angel.⁶¹

The term "Lucifer" in the Bible, found in four passages, was used in a context that did not reference a fallen angel. In Job 38:32, the word meant the signs of the zodiac, while in Psalms 110:3, the word meant "the dawn. " Further, in John 11:17, the word meant "light of the morning," and in 2 Peter 1:19, the word meant "morning star. "

Beelzebub

Beelzebub was used in the synoptic Gospels when the Pharisees accused Jesus of being in league with Beelzebub. Although there is a general assumption that "Beelzebub" is another term for Satan, this is not correct. . According to the cultural context in which the synoptic Gospels were written, they were referring to the god of Ekron, who was previously identified in 2 Kings 1:2.^{62 63} There is discrepancy over the direct translation versus the context of the name

⁵⁹ Revelation 22:16 KJV

⁶⁰ John Day. (2002) [2000], Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press

⁶¹ Hector M. Patmore. (2012), Adam, Satan, and the King of Tyre: The Interpretation of Ezekiel 28:11-19 in Late Antiquity, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill

⁶² "Baal-Zebub was the god of Ekron"

⁶³ Ekron was a city during the Hellenistic period and was one of the five cities of the Philistine pentapolis, located in southwestern Canaan.

Beelzebub, or Baal Zebub. Jewish scholars have interpreted it to mean “Lord of the flies” as an insult to Baal and Baal worshippers in the Hebrew language, comparing Ba’al to dung and his worshippers to flies. Regardless of the exact meaning, Jesus was accused of casting demons out at the power of Beelzebub in the synoptic gospels by the pharisees, a name made synonymous with Satan which was made clear when Jesus said, “If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself.” However, this time period was after the apocryphal scrolls and post-exilic, which means the culture at the time had it ingrained that Beelzebub was the prince of demons, which is what the hebrew’s called the god of Ekron as a mock against Baal.

In 16th century literature, Beelzebub had a place in hell’s hierarchy, as he had led an uprising against the devil and became the leader of The Order of the Fly. In the 17th century, he was portrayed as one of the most prominent fallen angels along with Lucifer and Leviathan.⁶⁴ In John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Beelzebub was identified as the second most powerful being in Hell (the first being Satan), and was held responsible for many demonic possessions throughout the 17th century. Beelzebub was also referenced as being in charge of the witches in the Salem witch trials, sparking inspiration in Rev. Cotton Mather to write his pamphlet titled *Beelzebub and his Plot*.

⁶⁴ Leviathan was a creature of chaos which was mentioned in the book of Job, and dwells in the sea.

Devil

The word “devil” was derived from the Greek word “diabolos” which meant *slanderer*.

⁶⁵ Since “Devil” is Greek in origin, it originated after the Old Testament written which explains why the word is only used in the New Testament. ⁶⁶ The exile in the Achaemenid Empire and the Zoroastrianism influence that Judaism experienced was a contributing factor to the creation of the word ‘Devil’ as well. ⁶⁷ Alternatively, the modern use of the word devil is the “personification of evil found in a variety of cultures.”⁶⁸

The Great Dragon

In Revelation 12:7-9, it is written that,

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. ⁶⁹

This verse seems to clearly identify the Great Dragon with all forms of Satan. However it should be taken into account that the book of Revelation is called the “Apocalypse of St.

⁶⁵Henry Lidell. "Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Preface 1925". Perseus.Tufts.Edu, Last modified 2019.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Afrontmatter%3Dpref>.

⁶⁶ Matthew 4:1, Matthew 4:5, Matthew 4:8, Matthew 4:11, Matthew 13:39, Matthew 25:41, Luke 4:2, Luke 4:3, Luke 4:5, Luke 4:9, Luke 4:13, Luke 8:12, John 6:70, John 8:44, John 13:2, Acts 10:38. Acts 13:10, Ephesians 4:27, Ephesians 6:11, 1 Timothy 3:6, 1 Timothy 3:7, 2 Timothy 2:26, Hebrews 2:14, James 4:7, and 1 Peter 5:8

⁶⁷ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*, Cornell University Press 1987 pages 11 and 34, 102

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Bible Revelation 12:7-9

John,” meaning that it was not intended to be read or interpreted literally. In the verses preceding this passage, the metaphors are all started with the words “a great sign appeared,” words that also proceeded the connection of the Great Dragon and Satan. It seems to be that the initial mention of the ‘sign’ does not designate whether or not it is literal or metaphorical. Since it is mentioned that it was a sign, it would be safe for one to assume that it would be metaphorical meaning that the literal correlation between Satan and the Great Dragon is not appropriate.

Views of Satan

The view of Satan has changed through the years and has evolved into many different perspectives. With very little information to begin with, Satan has become a collection of borrowed concepts and stretches of truth from surrounding cultures, religions and ideas.

Fallen Angel

The fallen angel theory was derived from the combination of Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-15. These passages of scripture were both lamentations to different kings that used rhetorical devices that have been taken literally by some scholars. Though the term fallen angel appears nowhere in the Bible, people took those two passages and combined them in order to create a false theology that has now become a widely preached tradition. By pulling the use of the phrase “how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer” out of its original context, at a glance it seems to back up the idea that Satan fell from Heaven and was once an angel when it is combined with the verse from Ezekiel: “you were the anointed cherub.” ⁷⁰ These two passages

⁷⁰Ezekiel 28:14

were interpreted falsely as if they were describing the same individual, thus creating the fallen angel story and claiming that this fallen angel is synonymous with Satan. As discussed earlier, Lucifer is not a name of an individual but rather another name for Venus, the morning star, and it was used in other passages of the Bible without any connection to Satan. The fall simply referred to the Canaanite myth of Aftar who fell attempting to scale the heavenly walls before being stopped by the sun god of the Canaanites, which again was a reference to the observation of how Venus seemed to fall out of the sky when the earth rotated.⁷¹ The cherub that was mentioned in the Ezekiel passage was again another metaphor taken out of context by Origen of Alexandria in his treatise *On the First Principles* who was not aware of the original myths that went with these passages.⁷² A contradiction that occurs with this theory is that in the Garden of Eden, most people interpret the serpent as Satan, yet Ezekiel's lamentation includes a metaphor between the king of Tyre and a cherub who was also present in the garden, which people also assume to be Lucifer.

Sigmund Freud⁷³

Sigmund Freud in 1923 developed a personality theory that divided the psyche structure into three parts: the Id, Ego and Superego.⁷⁴ The Id is what has the most similarities to the devil, in which those primitive instincts seem to be the complete opposite of what God calls us to do,

⁷¹ John Day. (2002) [2000], *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press

⁷² Justin Martyr

⁷³ Sigmund Freud's theories are not all scholarly acceptable, however for the purpose of this thesis, his definition of the human Id most closely resembles the view of Satan this thesis argues and articulates this abstract idea better than other definitions.

⁷⁴ Mcleod, Saul. "Id, Ego and Superego." *Id Ego Superego | Simply Psychology*. Simply Psychology, February 5, 2017. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html#id>.

and were therefore pushed to the side and labeled evil. Id is responsible for all of the inherited biological components of a human's personality including love, life, and death. ⁷⁵ It is impulsive, unconscious and responds directly to the basic urges and desires. It is selfish and wishful in nature, using only primary process thinking which is extremely primitive and illogical. ⁷⁶

The ancient people in Mesopotamian times obviously had no way of being able to comprehend such an abstract idea -- they had no idea what the conscious even was. They assumed that because God is good and those desires and impulses go against what God says, they were evil and therefore denied. This way of thinking allowed them to project that 'evil' out into another entity and make it responsible for it instead of them. Sigmund Freud explains that in the unconscious there is a capacity for aggression and pleasure, but these people were living in a constant state of denial and contradiction as they neglected and suppressed what was already ingrained in them. ⁷⁷ They thought that the voice of the 'accuser' in their mind wasn't from them, and so they personified it and attempted to use myths to explain it. Hobbes even commented on this way of thinking when he wrote about how people believe that "good thoughts are blown (inspired) into a man by God, and evil thoughts, by the Devil; or that good thoughts are poured (infused) into a man by God, and evil ones by the Devil. "⁷⁸ This led to a butterfly effect, as the people began looking for evil and so they found it.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Saul Mcleod. "Id, Ego and Superego." Id Ego Superego | Simply Psychology. Simply Psychology, February 5, 2017. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html#id>.

⁷⁸ THOMAS HOBBS. *LEVIATHAN*. [S.l.]: ANCIENT WISDOM PUBLICATIO, 2019.

Islamic

In the Quran, Satan is called Ilbis, and Muslims do not regard him as the cause or root of all evil, but, rather, a tempter of man who takes advantage of man's inclination toward self centeredness.⁷⁹ In the seven Suras, God ordered all the angels and Ilbis to bow down to Adam but Ilbis refused, and claimed that he was made from fire and was superior, which caused God to expel him from paradise and condemn him to Jahannam.⁸⁰ From then on, Ilbis became a tempter of man, which God allowed because the truly righteous would be able to resist, and lured Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from the tree.^{81 82} Iblis's main characteristics include his overconfidence, despair, and his ability to tempt. In Ibn Abbas, Satan is described as being an angel made out of fir by God who commands jinn, both earthly and 'fiery angels', however, it is widely disputed among Muslims whether Ilbis is an angel or the leader of the jinn.⁸³ Another controversial topic of Ilbis is the Satanic Verses in the Quran, which were written by Mohammed, who was told by Satan to add words that allowed Muslims to pray for the intercession of pagan goddesses, mistaking the words of Satan for divine inspiration.⁸⁴ Modern Muslims reject this story and call it heretical, but for the first two centuries Muslims accepted it

⁷⁹ Charles Mathewes Understanding Religious Ethics John Wiley & Sons 2010 page 248

Kelly, Henry Ansgar (2006), Satan: A Biography, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁸⁰ Vicchio, Stephen J. (2008), Biblical Figures in the Islamic Faith, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock

⁸¹ Campo, Juan Eduardo (2009), "Satan", Encyclopedia of Islam, New York City, New York: Infobase Publishing, pp. 603–604

⁸² Kelly, Henry Ansgar (2006), Satan: A Biography, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press,

⁸³ Tafsir al-Qur'an al-adhim (Interpretation of the Great Qur'an) – Ibn Kathir - commentary of surat al baqarah

⁸⁴ Ahmed, Shahab (2017), Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press

without question. Another Muslim tradition involving Satan include the belief that babies cry when they are born because Satan touches them, which is where people's aptitude for sin comes from.⁸⁵ Muslims believe that Satan is the cause of deceptions that originate in the mind and the desires for evil that mankind possesses, much like fundamentalist they do not separate Satan's temptations and the urges of the human Id.⁸⁶

Zoroastrianism

In the Old Testament, God was written as a god of wrath and vengeance and the devil was nowhere to be seen. A shift in perspective was made at some point between the Old and New Testaments that led to the split between good and evil, a step into dualism where good things were only associated with God and everything else was labeled evil and assigned to another entity. Around 728 B.C., the idea of this opposing evil power against a good God came about from Vedism in the Mede Kingdom:

The religion believes in two primary higher powers, "ahuras" and the "daevas", with the ahuras being a higher power, and both groups ruled by Ahura Mazda and Mithra. This religion later evolves into Zoroastrianism through the restructuring of Vedism by Zoroaster who lived around 628-551 B.C. Zoroaster (or Zarathustra in Persian) is given a vision from Ahura Mazda showing the Asha (truth) and the Druj (lie) which founds the dualistic nature of morality found in Zarathustra's teachings. From this, we see a new character introduced in the form of Angra Manyu or Ahriman, who is the form of pure evil itself by recruiting some of Ahura Mazda's daevas to become demons. Zoroaster considers himself a man that is the enemy of Druj and an ally of Asha, and wages war on those who support the daevas that have become demons by following Druj. Zarathustra does not intend to give any quarter in this war either as he is quite blunt by saying that those who follow Druj are sin incarnate and should be treated as such. Zoroastrianism is a religion based around an ultimate decision that everyone must answer: choosing to follow Druj or choosing to follow Asha. The chosen path is shown by the lifestyle that each individual leads, which is able to be altered; meaning if one decides to follow Asha

⁸⁵ Jabbour, Nabeel (2014), *The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross: Insights from an Arab Christian*, London, England: Omnibus Press

⁸⁶ Kelly, Henry Ansgar (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

after following Druj for some time, it is possible (with the reverse being true as well). At this point there are connections being drawn among the Devil, Angra Manyu, and Druj that would make sense given the timing from when Zoroastrianism comes about and when the New Testament takes place (where there is more emphasis on Satan and his demons).⁸⁷

Satan could be seen in the thematic good vs. evil Zoroastrianism possessed, which manifested itself Asha and Druj, meaning truth and lie respectively. This dualistic theme created Angra Manyu, a form of pure evil that recruited daevas, which would be understood as spiritual entities, to be his demon servants. Zoroaster, the creator of this religion, saw himself as an enemy of Druj, or the lie, and an ally of the truth, Asha, and said there is a war between those allied with truth and those allied with lies and daevas. The whole religion centered around the ultimate decision to follow the truth or follow the lie and would be reflected by the lifestyle the chooser led and could be altered. Satan would be seen as Angra Manyu, or Druj, which people could change their following to instead follow God, the truth. We often saw Satan referred to as the father of lies, and by direct contrast God as the creator of truth. The two entities were often depicted in spiritual warfare with each other, a concept that could be easily derived from the Zoroastrian religion.

To further the argument that the devil was formed from outside pagan influences, Satan can be traced back to another event in the sixth century B.C., to a political upset in Iran.

During Zoroaster's time as not only a priest but also as magus of this new religion, he converts a prince by the name of Darius who reigns over a region named Chorasmia, which plays into how the Devil officially comes about. The Persian King Cambyses, the ruler at the time in which Zoroastrianism rises to its peak, is conquering Nubia when an imposter magi claiming to be his brother starts a rebellion, hoping to make a theocracy in the name of the religion. Darius cuts him down before a theocracy could be achieved, but the fact is that if the coup succeeded,

⁸⁷ Casey Choi. "Satan And Demonology", 2018, 9-11.

<http://www.hendyamps.com/kingdomapologetics/resources/Satan-and-Demonology---Casey-Choi.pdf>.

R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, (New Haven, CT: Phoenix Press Inc. , 2002), 34
Link, Luther (1995), *The Devil: A Mask Without a Face*, London, England: Reaktion Books

the “Devil” or Ahriman or Angra Manyu would have been set up as a political figure to punish those going against the Zoroastrian law in a secular manner. From this political upset, it can be concluded that “Satan” comes from sixth century B.C. in Iran, which gives more than enough time between the birth of Satan and the writing of the New Testament for the Prince of Demons to be spread across multiple cultures and religions including Judaism.⁸⁸

Zoroastrian addressed the theory that Satan was a punisher of sins, reflected in that religion when Angra Manyu was acting as an imposter magi who claimed to be the Persian King’s brother in the sixth century B.C. If this imposter, the “Devil”, were to succeed in his plan to establish a theocracy, punishing those who went against Zoroastrian law, he would be acting in a similar way to how Satan was depicted in the Bible, being a punisher of sins. With the influence of Zoroastrianism, there were definite parallels between that and the Satan of the New Testament.

Appearance of Satan

The Christian Bible never describes the appearance of the devil, but Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that he disguises himself as an angel.⁸⁹ Early Christian artwork doesn’t include him either, but in the ninth century, he finally makes an appearance in Medieval art, depicted with goat legs, pointed ears, a beard, a flat nose and horns.⁹⁰ Some may argue that Satan appeared in a painting even earlier than this one, in the mosaic “Christ the Good Sheppard” as a blue angel

⁸⁸ Casey Choi. "Satan And Demonology", 2018, 9-11.

<http://www.hendyamps.com/kingdomapologetics/resources/Satan-and-Demonology---Casey-Choi.pdf>.

R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, (New Haven, CT: Phoenix Press Inc. , 2002), 36, 40, 41, 56, 58, 59.

Gerald Messadié, *A History of the Devil*, (New York City, NY: Kodansha America Inc. , 1996), 87, 90.

⁸⁹ Link, Luther (1995), *The Devil: A Mask Without a Face*, London, England: Reaktion Books

⁹⁰ Ibid.

behind some goats.⁹¹ Regardless of which was first, much of the iconography of Christian figures during medieval times were borrowed from already existing pagan iconography, which accounted for all of Satan's traditional appearance.⁹² Greek religion is the main source for this inspiration and ideas were borrowed from Pan, a goat-legged god of fertility, who was responsible for much of Satan's appearance, Poseidon, the god of the sea, who wielded a trident and influenced the trademark pitchfork, but Egyptian religion also held some influence as seen with Bes who inspired Satan's flame like hair.⁹³ Satan was depicted in all Christian art by the High Middle Ages in sculptures and paintings, usually naked with animal fur covering his genitals. The goat version of Satan was associated most with sorcerers as an object of worship and as an incubus, a demon that raped women in their sleep.⁹⁴ Italian Frescos often depicted Satan chained in hell eating the damned and were early enough to inspire Dante's inferno.⁹⁵ In medieval art, Satan could have appeared in any form, but the consistency came when he appeared in true form: short, hairy, black-skinned humanoids with clawed and bird feet and extra faces on their chests, bellies, genitals, buttocks, and tails.⁹⁶ The more modern image of Satan as a man, well dressed, with a tail and horns that were small comes from the influence of the opera, more specifically from Mephistopheles in *La damnation de Faust* by Hector Berlioz, *Mefistofele* by Arrigo Boito.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Benfield, Melinda *Satan's Secret Identity: The Sources of the details that went into artistic representations of the Devil* History 592: History of the European Witch-craze Dec. 2nd, 2015

⁹² Link, Luther (2010), "Devil", in Grafton, Anthony; Most, Glenn W. ; Settis, Salvatore (eds.), *The Classical Tradition*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 264–265

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Kelly, Henry Ansgar (2006), *Satan: A Biography*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Proof

Definition of Satan

Satan is not a personal being, but instead a conceptual embodiment of evil inclinations inside each person's mind. Satan was the personification of evil, animalistic instincts, and temptation that was too abstract for ancient people who had no understanding of human conscience to understand. These evil inclinations are selfish tendencies of self preservation with no consideration of the effect on others. This view of Satan makes people take responsibility for their own sins, as it is due to the sinful nature of man that one sins, not because of an external evil force. To be fully human is to be like God and like Christ, the fall into sin made us revert to acting like animals. To act like Christ is to act against those normal animalistic tendencies. And so to be authentically human is to be as Adam and Eve were, and as Christ currently is. To say, "well I am only human," does not make any sense because to be authentically human is to be as God originally intended you to be.

The reason Satan is mentioned in the New Testament is the same reason why other gods were mentioned in the Old Testament: it was an integral part of their culture and they held those beliefs to be true. God had to speak to them in a way they understood, and their idea of Satan was that understanding. This is known as accommodating language and it is utilized by God many different times in the Bible. ⁹⁸ For instance, Paul used accommodating language when he visited Mars Hill, where several polytheistic views were prevalent. Instead of correcting their

⁹⁸ In linguistics, accommodation is the process by which participants in a conversation adjust their accent, diction, or other aspects of language according to the speech style of the other participant.

existing views, he simply looked at the altar they had devoted to an unnamed god and explained to them that it was YHWH whom they were worshipping, and continued to use concepts that were already familiar to them in order to get them to understand who God was.

Satan in the Bible

The Old Testament only included two probable mentions of Satan, all of which can easily be explained. The most prominent example is found in Job, when Satan and God converse then Satan begins to torment Job. Many aspects of this story seem to be overlooked when Satan is being searched for in the Old Testament. For example, the introduction of Job describes a group of angels that presented themselves to God, one of which was Satan, who was an adversary for the narrative purposes. The Hebrew term used was *ha satan*, with the definite article before the name that would prevent this Satan from being identified as the Satan known in later theology. In that account, this son of God was simply doing his job in that he was testing the faithfulness of men to God. Satan is not a regularly appearing member in God's court anywhere else in the Bible. In fact, Habakkuk 1:13 talks about how God is too pure to look on evil, which is also an Old Testament verse that offers historical relevance to the passage of Job.⁹⁹ It is unlikely that God would converse with the creator of all sin when He Himself cannot look on it.

The second probable evidence for Satan in the Old Testament is found in Zechariah, when Joshua was brought before the heavenly court and God says to the accuser, "I the Lord reject your accusations Satan."¹⁰⁰ However, the "Satan" term used in this context was meant to be interpreted as *adversary*, not used as a name, just as "ha satan" was used to mean *adversary* in

⁹⁹ Habakkuk 1:13 NIV

¹⁰⁰ Zechariah 3:2 NLT

the case of the angel when it stopped Balaam and his donkey. The “Satan” in this story is a member of the heavenly court and seemed to have acted as the prosecuting attorney. Once again, God would not be inclined to keep evil company, and so the Satan in this story, too, is just a member of heaven.

In the temptation story, accommodating language was used when Jesus told the disciples about his experience in the desert when he got back. The disciples, having lived in that culture where there was no understanding of evil inclinations or human desires, Jesus explained his experience in terms they could understand. Jesus did not tell them that he was tempted by his fleshly desires for food, power or his doubt, but instead, he used the already existing concept of the devil to get his point across. The real purpose of this story wasn’t Jesus beating the devil, but him fulfilling a prophecy of the suffering servant, therefore getting hung up on details that would be impossible to get his disciples to understand was of lesser importance. It should be noted the Bible divulges, “Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.”¹⁰¹ The first temptation that taunted Jesus was to create food after he had fasted for forty days and nights. The second, or third temptation depending on which book you read, is when he is at the top of the tower and is tempted to jump so God may save him, displaying the desire to test how powerful God is, which may have been a result of his quickly approaching death and the slightest human doubt he may have experienced. The last temptation was to have all the kingdoms of the world, representing the natural human desire for power. And so each of the three temptations could be attributed to Jesus’s fully human self that enticed him.

¹⁰¹ James 1:14 NLT

The accounts of when Satan entered Judas and when Satan filled the heart of Ananais are both very similar to that of the Old Testament when Satan entered David. When it was mentioned in the Old Testament, the filling of the heart can be attributed to the common piety of the day that was avoiding saying that God was the direct cause of evil. Proof of this can be seen in the parallel verse in which it explicitly mentions God's anger moving against David. The New Testament accounts seem to be an evolved form of this piety, as the Jews had at this point been exposed to Zoroastrianism and outside dualistic influences that led to the common belief of Satan. This meant that the cause of all evil as they understood it, would have been caused by this evil entity and it would have been heretical to assume it was God's doing.

These examples also seemed very similar to when God would harden the hearts of people in the Old Testament. In those cases, hardening of hearts was not God's way of cruelly setting up people, but rather allowing them to give way to their sinful desires and let the consequences of their decisions ultimately destroy them. This correlates with the main argument of this thesis, that Satan is not an external force responsible for your sins, but rather a name given to the concept that humans are responsible for their own downfall. For those whose sin required an external force to invoke punishment, God hardened their hearts so that their actions would produce consequences that would serve as the punishment of their sins.

“Jesus rebuked Peter for striking with a sword, why? Because He wanted Peter to understand that what was happening right before Him had to happen for a greater purpose. God tells Moses that He will harden Pharaoh's heart, why? Because it had to happen for God to show His power to the Egyptians and the Israelites while also liberating the latter group. God hardened the hearts of the Canaanite kings, why? Because it had to happen for them to go to war against and lose to God and His people so that the nations would come to see the supremacy of God, who was fulfilling the promise He made to Abraham. In short, God does what He needs

to do to fulfill His purpose, and this is what justifies anything God does, for His purpose is good".¹⁰²

The purpose of the two phrases resulted in the same ending, destructive punishment. God is giving the people, in the New Testament cases Annanias and Judas, away to their sinful desires in which they pursued and wither destroyed themselves, Judas' suicide, or put themselves into a position to be destroyed.

In Luke 10:18, Jesus tells the disciples that he saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning, a verse that is much more complicated to explain than the previous account.¹⁰³ The theory that seems most probable is that Jesus was echoing what the disciples were saying. This was supported by the verb tense used in the original Greek septuagint, where it was translated to:

I beheld--As much of the force of this glorious statement depends on the nice shade of sense indicated by the imperfect tense in the original, it should be brought out in the translation: "I was beholding Satan as lightning falling from heaven"; that is, "I followed you on your mission, and watched its triumphs; while you were wondering at the subjection to you of devils in My name, a grander spectacle was opening to My view; sudden as the darting of lightning from heaven to earth, lo! Satan was beheld falling from heaven!" How remarkable is this, that by that law of association which connects a part with the whole, those feeble triumphs of the Seventy seem to have not only brought vividly before the Redeemer the whole ultimate result of His mission, but compressed it into a moment and quickened it into the rapidity of lightning! Note. --The word rendered "devils," is always used for those spiritual agents employed in demoniacal possessions--never for the ordinary agency of Satan in rational men. When therefore the Seventy say, "the devils [demons] are subject to us," and Jesus replies, "Mine eye was beholding Satan falling," it is plain that He meant to raise their minds not only from the particular to the general, but from a very temporary form of satanic operation to the entire kingdom of evil. (See John 12:31 ; and compare Isaiah 14:12).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Akinpelu

¹⁰³ Luke 10:18

¹⁰⁴ A.R. Fausset, David Brown, and Robert Jamieson. *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary On The Whole Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1961.

Summatively, this meant that the tense used was imperfect and should have been understood as Jesus saying, ‘I was beholding Satan as lightning falling from heaven. ’ Which in modern terms is interpreted to: ‘I followed you (the seventy two) on your mission and watched your triumphs, including the casting out of demons (as they told Jesus in the verse before). ’

In Acts 26, Paul explained to King Agrippa how he was converted to be a follower of Christ, an event in which God himself told Paul to turn people from the power of Satan to God. This is another case of accommodating language, because as a Pharisee, Paul was a strict believer in the theology of their time including the belief of Satan. However when the term “power” is used, it seems to be very similar to another instance in Ephesians when the people were warned that they were fighting higher powers and principalities, in the context of today it can be understood as the evil inclinations of the human subconscious. Romans 16:20 is similar because it was written by Paul as well, however in this instance he wrote that “God will crush Satan under your feet”.¹⁰⁵ The explanation of Satan representing the subconscious evil inclinations of man could counter any arguments that Romans 16:20 was written about a physical Satan.

Revelation is another book that has very explicit mentions of Satan. However, when it comes to the book of Revelation several factors must be taken into account. The first being that Revelation is written as apocalyptic literature and is often regarded as a book of mystery and is not written as a literal prophecy. John was shown many incomprehensible things that he then tried to put into words and in a way that he could understand it. It should be noted that the Book

¹⁰⁵ Romans 16:20 NIV

of Revelation is a vision that was shown to John, meaning that none of it literally happened, it is instead a visual metaphor that has a deeper meaning. Therefore it is not right for the reader to pick and choose which verses would be interpreted literally and which would be symbolically when the whole book itself is symbolic.

Names/Views of Satan

The only names that could be synonymous with Satan would be “the devil” and “The Great Dragon. ” All other names refer to separate entities. For example, Beelzebub was a nickname given by the Jews to the Canaanite god Baal as a form of mockery, Belial was not exclusive to describing a person and in the cases it did it was in non-canon books of the Bible, Lucifer was a reference to Venus and was used to describe a human king, and Abbadon is the angel of death who was also used in the time of Moses in Egypt.

The most accurate view of Satan uses Sigmund Freud's personality theory and the Human Id. The animalistic desires that our subconscious houses is where the tempter's voice comes from, meaning that Satan is actually a subconscious voice inside us. The reason this voice often seems to come from Satan is due to the suppression of desires and emotions that were deemed unfit and labeled evil. Although suppressed, the object of suppression will manifest itself in some way, and often to the extremity depending on the severity of the suppression. Instead of projecting those thoughts and desires out into another entity and placing the blame on them, responsibility needs to be accepted for actions and thoughts. Since sinful nature is a part of man, it is no wonder why our greatest enemy is our own sinful desires. This evil part of human

nature is not without purpose, but allows a person to know the true nature of themselves in a way that could never be understood if it wasn't there.

Metanarrative

This version of Satan fits into the metanarrative in this way: the beginning of the metanarrative includes its introduction to the world. Man is tempted, man falls, and from that point on he is susceptible and capable of giving in to this intangible force called "evil" that is the causation of sin. This evil grows and catalyzes up until the time of Noah, only to be stopped by the Flood which wipes out the world and allows God to start fresh with Noah and his family. Evil comes back, however, and it becomes clear that the only way to permanently defeat sin is for the ultimate sacrifice to be made. Becoming that ultimate sacrifice, Jesus came to earth and died on the cross for our sins, but evil is still on Earth. It is fighting back against the kingdom of God as the new heaven and new earth are yet to come. It is the job of those who have accepted this message and rescue from evil's grasp to bring this new Kingdom. It will not be an easy task, however, because in bringing the new Kingdom, they are in direct conflict with this force of evil. When the new heaven and new earth come, the force of evil will be banished and will not return.

Objections

Some people may argue that in cases like Matthew 25:41, Jesus was directly saying that there is a devil. ¹⁰⁶ However when it comes to scripture one must understand that Jesus, while he was all knowing, being fully man and fully God, was teaching an audience that way handicapped

¹⁰⁶ Matthew 25:41 NLT

by their inability to understand abstract concepts such as science. Jesus had to teach them about the Kingdom of God in ways they understood it meaning he would utilize pre-existing concepts in order to get his point across. The people he taught in the instance of Matthew 25:41 were part of a culture where the eternal fire Jesus spoke of was part of their religion. Jesus in this teaching was not purposefully targeting the Devil, his purpose was to inform the people who would be burned in the eternal fire. And in order to identify which eternal fire he was talking about, Jesus used their religious beliefs of the pit reserved for the devil and his angels to specify where those sinners would go.

Some may further argue that because Jesus calls out many other practices and beliefs of the church, that he would not have been afraid to disagree with the church on Satan. To this the counter argument can be made that yes, while Jesus would not have been afraid to speak his mind about the truth, he only revealed what the people were capable of understanding, and it still combatted the view of Satan this thesis argues. For example, part of the primitive instincts of man would be aggressiveness and self preservation, this meant that the natural order of things would be to fight back against those who attack you. However Jesus taught to turn the other cheek and love your enemy. These teaching tame the primitive instincts and would bring one closer to God's intended purpose for you. Going back to the original objection, the people Jesus was teaching had no understanding of the basis of human consciousness and the science of the brain. There would be no way for Jesus to explain the truth about what Satan was without first teaching them how to understand parts of the human brain and how the conscious works, of which Jesus himself had knowledge of because he was God.

When people argue that the Bible mentions the Serpent being crushed under the heel, the context of the culture needs to be taken into consideration. Hebrews never considered the serpent to be Satan, but instead as chaos, which was presented as a serpent and a monster, as seen in the account of the Garden of Eden. In Genesis, there was no mention of Satan being the serpent, and the first connection drawn between the two was made by Justin Martyr in the second century A.D. Historically speaking, the serpent is not Satan.

Conclusion

This thesis explored the existence of Satan and analyzed the historical origins and interpretations of the popular Christian belief of a physical Satan, and proved that Satan is not a physical being but rather a conceptual embodiment of evil inclinations inside a person's mind. This is proved by the biblical use of accommodative language and zoroastrianism influence and its dualistic themes that created the concept of a physical Satan.

Accommodating language is the shift in language of a speaker in order to better suit the person they are speaking with, and with the mention of Satan in Biblical stories, this term is thoroughly explored in the Bible. In the temptation story, accommodating language was used when Jesus told the disciples about his experience in the desert and, because the disciples lived in a culture where there was no understanding of human consciousness or science, Jesus explained his experience by using Satan. Jesus could not have told them that he was tempted by himself and his fleshly desires. Instead, he used the already existing, and already understood, concept of the devil to get his point across. The real purpose of this story wasn't Jesus beating the devil, but him fulfilling a prophecy of the suffering servant. This use of language accommodation is not isolated to just Satanic occurrences. For instance, in the Bible, Paul used accommodating language when he visited Mars Hill, and instead of correcting the already existing beliefs, he simply looked at the altar they had devoted to an unnamed god and explained to them that it was YHWH whom they were missing, and continued to use concepts that were already understood to get them to understand who God was.

Zoroastrianism played an influence in the false physical Satan. This can be seen when, with the origins of the name Belial, The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs was written in 2nd century CE, after the Jews exile in the Achaemenid empire where Zoroastrianism heavily influenced them. The Apocryphal books explains the appearance of dualistic themes involved in the literature, such as Belial being presented as the opponent of God, instead of a subservient entity. Additionally, the word Devil was only used in the New Testament, which also would have been written post Zoroastrianism influence. A shift in perspective was made at some point between the Old and New Testaments that led to the split between good and evil, a step into dualism where good things were only associated with God and everything else was labeled evil and assigned to another entity.¹⁰⁷ Around 728 B.C., the idea of this opposing evil power against a good God came about from Vedism in the Mede Kingdom.

While Satan may not physically exist, it is still a principality of the mind that can hold power over a person. This is just one conclusive result out of many and may not be an opinion that most people would like to accept as fact. The biggest take away from this paper is peace of mind that there is not some bat-winged, horned monster waiting to scare people, but also fear that the real Satan lives inside people's own minds. People, evil by nature, are the ones responsible for their own actions, sins, temptations, and, by consequence, downfall. What needs to be done is the shedding of the sinful desires and taming of the primitive instincts that essentially allow oneself to be free of Satan and fulfill the purpose God intended man to be before the fall.

¹⁰⁷ R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, (New Haven, CT: Phoenix Press Inc., 2002)

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