

CHAPTER 1

Considering Why We Have a Doctrine of Satan

All through the world today there are many who claim the days are approaching of swift judgment. Beyond that, they state, is a time of redemption and renewal. This thought has been articulated for thousands of years. Many throughout the world view this as the time of the Messiah's return. Those who believe the return of the Messiah is imminent, often see a different power approaching, and not only approaching but currently, actively involved in opposing the work of the Creator. Much of Catholic Christianity, Protestant Christianity, and Judaism believe this power is working to prevent the rescue of the inhabitants of the earth by the Messiah and seal humanity's fate by being dragged to an eternal torture in Hell. The belief in a supernatural Satan as the putrefying Lord of the underworld, is foundational to this sulphuric Hell. The Catechism of one of the great faiths of the world has this to say of a so-called evil entity;

In this petition, evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. the devil (dia-bolos) is the one who "throws himself across" God's plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ.⁷

Many who call this evil power Satan say that "Satan"⁸ is working secretly

⁷ #2851 Catechism of The Catholic Faith; VII. OUR FATHER PRAYER - "BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

⁸ Satan will be written with a small letter "s" in many places in this document from here on. To begin to come to correct understanding and use of the term it is helpful for the learner to begin to see this name for a cosmic being, spelled without a capital to indicate that it is not a name. The name Satan has been wrongly applied as a proper noun when it was originally and throughout the history of the Hebrew Scriptures, used as a simple noun or a label to describe an adversarial force which comes from Yahweh or from another human. The Hebrew word itself is a verb and the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia makes

to thwart the purposes of God (called Yahweh in the Hebrew Scriptures). Terms such as “demonic activity,” “satanic activity,” “the work of satan,” are very often used by believers in the God of the Scriptures to refer to the evil that is ongoing in the world. Martin Luther said much on the subject, he too thought the “Devil” was able to afflict humanity with his spells.

"Our bodies are always exposed to Satan. The maladies I suffer are not natural, but Devil's spells." (Martin Luther)

Luther had an odd relationship with the Satan in his mind. Satan was said to have slept with Luther more than Luther slept with his wife Katie.⁹

Although evil occurs at the hands of men, there is a prevailing view in many religions that evil is propagated by unseen spirit beings that must be stopped using spiritual ammunition such as the sign of the cross, or holy oil or water. The graphic 1974 thriller “The Exorcist,” showed the spiritual battle against a demonically inhabited girl with the Priest chanting, “The power of Christ compels you!” - repeatedly, at the foot of the apparently demonized girl’s bed. Demonic spiritual activity against a person is often attributed for the hardships of individuals and of nations. It is often seen as the cause for problems here and abroad. By some, the alleged power of Satan is claimed to be the active force that makes life difficult or the force that prevents us from performing the will of God. World-renowned spiritual leader Billy Graham has this question and answer posted on his organization’s web site to explain their concept of “satan” to an inquirer;

Q: I know Satan is real, but does he have supernatural beings under his control the same way God does, with His angels? I've always been curious how Satan gets his work done, because he sure seems active. — D.P.

A: Dear D.P.,

Yes, Satan certainly is active today—and he always has been active, because his goal has always been to block God's work. Whenever God is at work, you can be sure Satan also will be at work, counterattacking and trying to stop whatever God is doing.

The Bible doesn't go into great detail about Satan and how he works; after all, our focus should be on God, not Satan. (If we

this observation; *We are thus enabled to note in the term “Satan” (and Devil) the growth of a word from a general term to an appellation and later to a proper name.*

⁹ Page 172, The Prince of Darkness, Jeffrey Burton Russell, 1988 Cornell University Press.

concentrate mainly on Satan we'll become either overly-fearful or overly-fascinated—and both are wrong.) But the Bible does tell us that the devil has a multitude of demons under his authority, just as God has the angelic hosts under His control to do His will.¹⁰

The Bible teaches no such thing as a Satan that has a multitude of demons under his authority. Satan is often seen as a force diametrically opposed to Yahweh¹¹ and as fighting feverishly to claim as many souls for the kingdom of darkness as possible. Feverishly working to claim a victory before the end of the age when Messiah returns to rescue His faithful remnant and destroy the “devil and his demons” forever in a cataclysmic, apocalyptic battle. A battle that is said to take place between two great cosmic forces. This can be seen in the Book of Revelations where the writer tells of his vision of a great dragon hurled into the lake of fire. Both of the symbols for this apocalyptic battle are full of meaning and metaphor. It is virtually impossible to enumerate all the conditions, situations, issues, and incidents that are attributed to the alleged creature Satan. However, one thing we know for certain, is that the character of Satan possesses a personality and supposed physicality that is so shrewd and deceptive, yet so sinister and horrifying that at the mention of the supposed orchestrator of evil mental images of the “evil one” often come to mind. The thought of this torturous creature of hate makes the proverbial hair on the back of the neck stand up. Is this the character that is said to be found in the Scriptures or is legend and myth largely responsible for designing the form, features, and attributes of the “Prince of Darkness?”

There are truly many, many diversified concepts of “Satan” and just who he is, what he does, what he looks like and what kind of authority he has. The who, what, where, and when of Satan are questions that I believe can

¹⁰ Billy Graham Evangelical Association website; http://www.billygraham.org/MyAnswer_Article.asp?ArticleID=1698

¹¹ YAHWEH is known to be one possible pronunciation of the Hebrew spelling of the name of the Creator. This option for pronouncing the name is contested by numerous scholars and linguists who advocate a number of different forms for the appellation of the Most High. One of the closest pronunciations in my opinion is Yehovah, pronounced as Jehovah but replacing the J with the letter Y sound. There was no letter J in the English language until the 16th century and the 1611 King James Version of the Bible testifies to that through its use of the letter I sound and character where one would commonly see the letter J in English today. Webster's 1828 Dictionary states; J. This letter has been added to the English Alphabet in modern days; the letter I being written formerly in words where J is now used. It seems to have had the sound of y, in many words, as it still has in the German. The English sound of this letter may be expressed by dzh, or edzh, a compound sound coinciding exactly with that of g, in genius; the French j, with the articulation d preceding it. It is the tenth letter of the English Alphabet.

be answered. For some the answers have been found through contemporary media, colorful graphic images, or lively literature. For still others the answers have been found through tales from parents and grandparents, regaling by friends or siblings at a young age or even through subjecting oneself to a medium or spiritist, seemingly who possessed powers to contact the spirit world. For most though, whatever concept of Satan they currently hold to, is a concept that has in many ways been imposed upon them rather than one they have concluded by engaging in diligent questioning. It seems that a belief in Satan is somewhat of a second-hand belief. This belief has not been discovered by each individual but has been passed on by those who have gone before us. Perhaps, when their concept of Satan is scrutinized under the light of Scripture and the microscope of historical understanding and consideration of the formation of thought, some will see the holes in a belief system that includes a Satan. Recognizing that indeed, they have in fact received their particular understanding of Satan through ideas that have not been true to Scripture, instead of adopting the ancient understanding of satan such as would have been common to Christ, known as Yeshua¹², and those grounded in the available Scriptures of the first century.

For those of you who have been looking for the answers to your questions regarding the character of Satan through any of the aforementioned sources, such as metaphysical practitioners or traditional church teachings, I laud you for desiring to find answers and for being an active seeker. However, the answers to the difficult question of whom or what Satan is will be found in much more stable sources. Numerous scholars have written major works on the topic of Satan and evil. Scholars such as Paul Carus and Neil Forsythe have brought insight to the origins of Satan. I am also grateful to the prolific author, Professor Elaine Pagels who has added yet another layer to the dynamic topic of Satan in her book *The Origin of Satan*. Pagels makes us aware of the Gnostic Writings that contain such assertions that claim the serpent may have had sex with Eve. In her work, she also brings to light the fact that Satan as we know of him today, was created by Christianity. Pagels testifies that the ancient Hebrews knew nothing of the cosmic being that is now seen by many to be the epitome of evil. She relates the social implications of a figure of Satan and how he is invoked to express human conflict and characterize human enemies, as she puts it in her introduction.

In *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth*, by Neil Forsythe, we are privileged to read of the ancient belief in a cosmic evil force. Forsythe intricately elaborates on the development of varied Combat Myths from ancient history. These myths in his opinion have been rolled into the concept

¹² The name Yeshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus.

of Satan as we typically hear it today. Forsythe too recognizes the deeply poetic, metaphoric, and symbolic writing of the Biblical authors when relating his understanding of Satan as myth that became reality in the minds of the faithful.

It is worth mentioning the monumental work of Paul Carus in 1900, *The History Of The Devil And the Idea of Evil From the Earliest Times to The Present Day*. Carus' work shows the path of the concept of evil from ancient Egypt up until the period of the Reformation. Carus' clarity on the influence of Persian dualism on the Christian concept of Satan is illuminating. In his chapter titled *The Dawning of a New Era*, he writes;

Since the lower classes began to make their influence felt, it is natural that in the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament the conception of Satan grew more mythological and at the same time more dualistic. He developed into an independent demon of evil, and now, perhaps under the influence of Persian views, the adversary of man became the adversary of God himself.

Prior to this statement by Carus in his work, we are given a sizeable treatise on the Persian religion of Zoroaster. We are shown how this ancient religion was a primary catalyst for religion to move towards a two-God philosophy. Zoroastrianism remains known as the most consistent form of dualism. This Persian dualism, we are taught, is intricately connected to major religions today by the nature of a philosophy of an evil, supernatural being, and a good supernatural being. These beings are known as Ahriman and Ahura Mazda respectively. Much of common religion has conformed to the Persian philosophy with the most notable of the conformists being found in Christianity. A religion that has turned the Persian good God and evil God into the entities that are called God and Satan. Carus writes;

THE TRANSITION from Devil-worship to God-worship marks the origin of civilisation; and among the nations of antiquity the Persians seem to have been the first who took this step with conscious deliberation, for they most earnestly insisted upon the contrast that obtains between good and evil, so much so that their religion is even to-day regarded as the most consistent form of dualism.¹³

If one is willing to take the time, I assure you the answers can be found through the Scriptures, through history, and with the help of scholars such as those mentioned above. Resources such as these will prove to be the most

¹³ Pg 50, History of the Devil, in the chapter titled Persian Dualism. By Paul Carus 1900

likely candidates for our task of showing that Satan is not real. Yes that is the plight and as I set forth to prove to you that Satan does not exist I will cover as much ground as possible related to the topic, yet piecing together a corrected understanding of long held erroneous beliefs and concepts. Beliefs and concepts such as where the dead go, and the idea that a literal hell exists as a place set apart for the eternal torture of the unfaithful. Although topics such as these will creep into our study out of necessity to establish that there is no Satan, they are not the primary objective and will only be treated cursorily.

So to be clear, this book intends to show how Christianity has adopted an ancient pagan myth in the concept of Satan and further to that, how this evil being is mistakenly believed to literally exist by untold millions in many diverse religious sects. That is the truth that will be shared here with all who choose to explore further. With that, I must give two caveats. Regarding the use of source materials, the caveats are as follows;

- 1) In utilizing the Scriptures, one must take extra caution to ensure the Scriptures they are studying from are studied from a properly placed cultural, historical, linguistic, social, and religious perspective, based on the period of the writing.**

The Scripture, in fact any ancient writing, must be assessed through the eyes and ears of a hearer from the period in which it was written. This is proper historical and cultural context. Too many have assigned grievously improper interpretation to many Biblical writings because they failed to place the writings in the proper period to gain an understanding of the context they were written in. For instance, many of you reading this will have at one time or another (probably in High School) been forced to study Shakespeare.

If you are at all like I was, when my High School English teacher, Mr. Sigstad, had the class read Shakespeare orally, it was so very interesting but frustratingly difficult to comprehend. Once we were given some knowledge as to the cultural context of the writings in their proper historic period, our ability to engage in constructive thought about the writings started to blossom. When we were assisted in understanding the language of the period and many of the meanings, which were complicated to our ears because of the distance from the period of their writing, we began understanding Shakespeare afresh.

Therefore, I submit, that some knowledge of the language, the culture, the history, and the religion of the period wherein the writings originated, will be the only way to arrive at a correct understanding of any ancient text. Consideration of the respective Hebrew and Greek languages and trying to

perceive the prevailing thoughts of the people from the periods those texts were written in is vital to understanding the message of the text.

The second caveat in regard to utilizing sources such as Scripture, history, and the work of other scholars to answer our question about Satan is this;

- 2) We must not reject any source in our search that will aid in “Proving all things.” If you or I believe a source is rife with heresy or even anti-messiah sentiment, yet it provides a nugget of truth to assist in achieving the goal, then we ought to take that nugget and blow away the rest as chaff.**

We as a culture continue, and I am generalizing here, to be profoundly lacking in our ability to adopt a theological concept that is not generally accepted and approved by the laity. This being the case, I would like to make a suggestion. I suggest that for the reader to begin to ingest the information I will provide in the following pages, he or she must at least agree that because a concept or opinion is obscure does not mean it is wrong or heresy. If all obscure concepts, unapproved by the masses of faithful followers of a religious philosophy are rejected on some level, then we must reassess the value and significance for today of the ninety-five theses of Martin Luther.

If you are unfamiliar with the situation, I will encapsulate it for you by saying this; Martin Luther was a German Monk in the fifteen hundreds who came to realize many of the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church were not in agreement with Scripture. He believed that Scripture had the final word on matters of faith and religion and composed ninety-five arguments that systematically refuted many Catholic doctrines. Take for instance thesis number thirty-two. Luther writes;

Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

The general Catholic populous was taught that they might purchase eternal salvation with the payment of monetary amounts to the Catholic Church, called indulgences. This belief was common and the leaders of Catholicism saw Luther's refutation of it as obscure and very unwelcome. Luther posted a multitude of theses, decrying the efficacy and integrity of the act of advocating indulgences and collecting them to build the Pope's empire. Today we see the sense in Luther's position but looking back we might ask; "Were some of Martin Luther's concepts obscure?" Yes they were. "Were they incorrect because of this obscurity?" No!

If a concept disagrees with Scripture, no matter how many church councils have met and upheld it, it is wrong. Conversely, if a concept is in agreement with Scripture, no matter how obscure it is in relation to the practice and understanding of the time, it is still a correct concept. One might conclude that it is difficult to assign a concept from Scripture as either correct or incorrect, because there are seemingly many contradictory statements made in the Bible. However, I assert the appearance of contradictions in the Bible is not a problem with the Bible, rather it is a problem with the understanding of the reader. All apparent contradictions can be brought into a state of reconciliation if the reader makes the effort to adequately understand the passages in the fullness of their original intent and context. We must accept the obligation to carefully accept truth from any source if that truth adds to our much needed paradigm shift about the person of "satan."

Many concepts of Satan and his demons abound in common thought and literature. The most common thought seems to be the one that proceeds from organized religion, which claims to follow the Bible's teachings. Oddly, the majority who believe Satan is somewhat of a symbolic entity and a metaphor are quick to believe that demonic possession is common. The Barna research group supplies us with some of its poll statistics.

Six out of ten Americans (59%) reject the existence of Satan, indicating that the devil, or Satan, is merely a symbol of evil. Catholics are much more likely than Protestants to hold this view - 75% compared to 55% - although a majority of both groups concur that Satan is symbolic.

The rejection of Satan's existence seems to conflict with the fact that a slight majority (54%) also contends that, "a human being can be under the control or the influence of spiritual forces such as demons." People 57 or older were the group most likely to doubt Satan's existence (64%) and also emerged as those least likely to accept the notion of demonic influence (39%, compared to 55% among Baby Busters and 62% of Baby Boomers).¹⁴

There are many arguments on whom or what Satan is. Through this book, I hope to assist the reader in coming to an understanding of various points concerning satan. As we walk through this concept, we will be discussing satan as seen in the Tanak, known by many as the Old Testament and by a growing segment of the faithful as the Hebrew Scriptures. These Scriptures,

¹⁴ <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=122>

by the way, are the Scriptures used by Yeshua the Messiah in the first century C.E., as well as by all of the apostles and first century believers.

We will be discussing Satan in history. We will be discussing the history of who it is Satan answers to. What does pagan mythology have to do with Satan? What does the New Testament seem to say about Satan? Is there a difference in the treatment of Satan from the Tanak to the New Testament? Why do the Greek writings known as the New Testament appear to show a doctrine of a personal and physical Satan yet they are so different from the doctrine of Satan seen in the Tanak, the Bible Yeshua taught from?

Other thoughts and questions that will be considered are;

Where is Satan? What or who are Satan's demons? Is the first century Hebrew concept of Satan the same as the first century Greek concept of Satan? The concept of Satan today is not the same as the concept of Satan in the first century. One could look at the many perspectives of the late first century and the 2nd to 4th century "Church Fathers" on Satan such as Clement, Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine, however, that exercise will not serve the purpose of determining what the pre-Christian understanding of Satan was. The post first century view of Satan, which is still a prevalent perspective in society today, became entwined with Greek and Roman thought.

Jeffery Burton Russell expands on this thought in his book *Satan; An Early Christian Tradition*. Russell speaks of the inconsistent modalities of thought by some of the most notable Apostolic Fathers. We are told, "Irenaeus was less concerned with the mythology of demons than with the alienation of humanity from God, a concern that led him to tie the sin of the devil closely to the sin of Adam and Eve"¹⁵

It is however important that we explore what Yeshua understands about satan based on a first century perspective? If the ancient and present cultural concepts differ, where and when did the divergence occur? How much power does Satan have? Is the word "satan" a noun or perhaps is the name/word "satan" supposed to be an adjective?

There is a distinct need to focus on the belief in Satan if one is going to find the answer as to whether he exists or not. Many pious writers, speakers, and teachers have often said, "Don't focus on Satan; focus on Jesus." So if you feel that through attempting to understand who, what, where and why Satan is, is too much of a focus on "Satan" then it is your prerogative to choose not to explore this topic. However, allow me to inform you that the

¹⁵ Satan: The Early Christian Tradition, By Jeffrey Burton Russell pg 82

Greek word *satanas*, the word that is translated as satan, occurs 37 times in the Greek New Testament and plays a significant role in the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah as relayed to us in the Greek, by John the Revelator. The word devil occurs 61 times in the New Testament. By the sheer number of times the words Satan and devil are used in the New Testament (from here on I will also refer to the New Testament as "the Second Testament" or the "Apostolic Testimony") it is clear that if there is a Satan, someone wanted us to know and understand the matter. Further to that, if you are interested in acquiring more truth on this issue or you are a follower of the Messiah, I suggest you take the time to consider the matter on a level you may have not considered before. Unless the God of the Universe specifically instructs you from His word by His Spirit to not investigate this topic, there is no chance that you will be overcome by the wicked deeds of darkness simply by engaging in a search for the truth. In other words, by engaging in a study on "Satan" you are not at risk of becoming "filled" with demons as some have suggested. Although an odd thought to many intellectuals, the thought that a person might fear studying a topic out of a chance of becoming possessed by a demonic entity, is a real concern. We find this belief prevalent and testified to in an exhortation from C.S. Lewis. Lewis warned the faithful to be wary of becoming too interested in "demons." Perhaps this philosophy suggests the idea that becoming influenced by demonic powers is a real concern for some. C.S. Lewis wrote in *"The Screwtape Letters"*;

'There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors. '

So as one seeker of the truth to another, don't believe anything I say, unless the Scriptures prove to you that what I am saying is true. Ultimately, you are left to find your own conclusions and not adopt another man's ideas unless you are confident that you can prove them yourself. It is from the standpoint of Scripture being accurate, in its original manuscript form, that I meet the teaching and doctrine of a literal Satan head on. If you want proof of the validity and accuracy of Scripture then you need to take time to study Scripture. The Scriptures can be shown to be historically accurate as archeology continues to reveal large quantities of proof as the years pass by. If you are interested in what it is the Scriptures and the Apostolic testimony truly speak and mean on this topic, then we need not argue as to the authority of Scripture. I am not able to show you that Scripture is 100% accurate although that is my belief when understood in its original form and intent. I

am willing to show where man has adopted an inaccurate understanding of many parts of Scripture and the “New Testament” as it regards Satan. This pursuit will naturally lead to various other topics that will be presented in the following pages.

I simply ask of you that you come with me on a journey for the truth, a journey that for the time being sets our current understanding, as given us by other men, on the shelf. I ask that you would resist the urge to pull one or two verses out of the Greek, New Testament writings to use them as proof that your present understanding of a topic is rock solid. I respectfully ask that you will allow me the liberty to elaborate at length on associated topics I feel might be necessary to establish a point, a point that will affect our thinking on the non-existence of Satan. I ask that your mind on the matter would not be made up before truly proving to yourself the matter from an ancient Hebraic perspective, the perspective of the Messiah who in fact is Yahweh and does not change, as is indicated by John and Malachi respectively.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.....John1:1 and 13

For I am the LORD, I change not...Malachi 3:6

I ask that you take the full counsel of God on the matter, which is the entire Scripture and the inspired writing contained in the Second Testament, as understood in their proper context of their first century setting. I ask that you would be patient, that if there seems to be an apparent contradiction, that is to say where one verse appears to oppose another verse in different places in the Scripture and Apostolic writing, that you will see through and attempt to reconcile all the verses so that they agree with each other. This practice to move toward understanding Scripture is not often taught. Christianity as we know it appears to have decided to stop searching for answers in many theological areas. Beliefs such as; ‘the dead go to heaven’, or ‘that Jesus died on a Friday and was resurrected on a Sunday, a period consisting of 3 days and only 2 nights’, have become common and unquestioned by the masses. Three days and two nights is not possible according to the words of Messiah that tell us He will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights in Matthew 12:40.

It seems many in Christianity, in its typical form, have settled on a reasonable answer for many inconsistencies and questions about its beliefs. Perhaps this is done to simply placate the masses. Christianity has in effect, settled for some dead-man’s theology, which we will come to see is often

opposed to the theology of Yeshua the Messiah. Men such as Augustine, Dante, and John Milton have been among those who have been dead for centuries yet are found to have been pivotal in the development of satanology. In many ways man's theology and doctrine has broken the true theology of the Scriptures. Yeshua tells us that Scripture cannot be broken, as is testified in John 10:35 and the implication is that anything taught in the "Old Testament" must be held to be true in the period of the "New Testament" and beyond.

Included in this axiom is the teaching in the Hebrew Scriptures that clearly eliminates the potential for a cosmic satanic entity existing apart from the Creator and existing to thwart the Creator and mankind. So please read on and understand that to find the underlying cause of understanding Satan there will be the need to utilize many tools. I will employ some theology, some philosophy, some history, some chronology, some linguistics, and some logic. This will involve a rudimentary assessment of particular Greek and Hebrew wording at times, as well as considering the fallibility of many of the English translations of the Greek and Hebrew writings. To purport to be a theologian, philosopher, historian, chronologist, linguist, or logician would be foolish, therefore, I simply purport to be a lover of the truth and a follower of the Messiah who died and was resurrected. I also claim to believe Yeshua when He said He would ensure that we would be guided into truth after He left to resume His office in the Heavens. This is how he put it in John 16:13;

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. KJV

So, as we continue our search I would like you to be aware that this is neither just a scholarly work, nor an opinion put to ink, but it is a little of both.

Are we open to new ideas?

Almost everyone on the planet knows that we are in an age where so much knowledge is available that we often presume we have all things figured out. In 1899, the Commissioner of the U.S. patent office suggested the government close down that office because there was nothing left to invent. Charles H. Duell reportedly announced, "*everything that can be invented has been invented.*"

Today inventors and inventions continue to prosper and we are no closer to knowing everything there is to know in the field of inventions than we

are in knowing all there is to know about Scripture and history. We still have a lot to learn and develop in our societies around the world. It is ever more important today that we do not claim the ideas we have received to be accurate and correct for the past hundreds of years are the conclusion of the matter. Rather we ought to be willing to look at many things once thought to be “gospel,” from a different perspective.

It may seem implausible that our understanding of Satan as handed down from the Greek thinking Church Fathers of the first centuries of this Common Era might need some adjusting. It may be difficult to believe the common Satan doctrine that is maintained by North American Christianity is in fact not exactly as it seems. Is it possible that we, who believe we have been taught correct Biblical perspective of Satan, are the victims, in a sense, of an erroneous concept and understanding of Satan that has evolved since the pre-exilic period of the Israelites? Do we have the ability to look at a concept or doctrine that has been established for millennia and rethink it from a more advanced perspective? Our understanding of Satan is not the same as the understanding the Messiah had in the first century when He walked the earth in human form.

In his book titled *The Art of Making Sense*, Lionel Ruby puts forth a truly profound statement. Ruby says;

It is difficult to think well in a field which involves our emotions and self-interest. We often simply forget that we ought to exercise our critical powers. We become dogmatic and make positive and arrogant assertions without proof. We may become blind fanatics and stop thinking all together. We become followers of authorities without ever inquiring as to whether their pronouncements can be justified by the evidence

The claim of the existence of a literal Satan cannot be justified by evidence. It is very likely we can benefit spiritually from perhaps a more Biblically correct understanding of an issue that is incorrectly understood by the masses. Are we at risk of accepting the present understanding of “Satan” and being content with our belief because it keeps us at a comfortable level of understanding with little challenge to our established belief system? All we need ask ourselves is, “Is it possible?..... Is it possible we are wrong on who or what Satan is?”

The truth is hidden in mountains of time and buried under piles of Greek and Greco-Roman philosophy handed down and continually spun through the ages. It is possible that once the “Early Church Fathers” became disconnected from a Hebraic pattern of worship and understanding of Old Testament theology that they endorsed and expounded a concept of “Satan” which was never found in the Faith of Yeshua. The Church Fathers worked

hard to explain what the demons of other religions were and they decided at one point, that the demons were fallen angels and to be placed in the same category as "Satan." Clement of Alexandria¹⁶ (circa 150-213 CE) was the first major Christian writer to claim that the gods of other religions were demons: "*The verdict of the prophets is that the gods of all the nations are images of demons.*"¹⁷

Is it possible that the Creator of the Universe has remained the same on the concept of Satan, and we the creation, have changed the concept and in so doing we ourselves have changed? Within this change, we may have in some form minimized the fact that there is one God and none else¹⁸ by intimating Satan has the power to thwart, change, or alter the will of the King of the Universe. This attitude towards Satan, when honestly weighed, indicates that Satan has the power to create, making Him a "Creator." Not to mention the inherent idea in the Satan theology that Satan's demons have the power to procreate as is incorrectly understood of the "sons of God coming in unto the daughters of men," in Genesis Chapter Six¹⁹ by many in Christianity and Judaism. In an article on the textual

¹⁶ Clement was a Christian Apologist, missionary theologian to the Greek cultural world, and second known leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria. He synthesized Greek philosophy and Mosaic tradition, and attempted to mediate Gnostics and orthodox Christians. - <http://www.ntcanon.org/Clement.shtml>

¹⁷ Saint Clement, "*Exorcism to the Greeks*," quoted in G. Messandé, "*The History of the Devil*," p. 262

¹⁸ Isaiah 45:5 KJVR
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:
Isaiah 45:6 KJVR
That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else.
Isaiah 45:21 KJVR
Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; *there is* none beside me.

¹⁹ **Genesis 6:4** There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.
The concept of the "sons of God" referring to the fallen angels who then spawned demons with the women of the earth is a concept that, if true, indicates Satan's demons have the power to procreate and have organs for sexual function. These notions will not stand up to the light of Scripture and the following excerpt from a popular bible commentary sheds some light on the matter. Please peruse the topic on your own if you need more answers to this issue.
Gen 6:4 - There were giants in the earth in those days,.... That is, in the days before the sons of God took the daughters of men for wives, in such a general manner as before

controversy surrounding this issue we are given a brief explanation of this theory and its relevance to early Rabbinic and Christian thinkers.

The strange events recorded in Genesis 6 were understood by the ancient rabbinical sources, as well as the Septuagint translators, as referring to *fallen angels* procreating weird hybrid offspring with human women-known as the "*Nephilim*." So it was also understood by the Early Church Fathers. These bizarre events are also echoed in the legends and myths of every ancient culture upon the earth: the ancient Greeks, the Egyptians, the Hindus, the South Sea Islanders, the American Indians, and virtually all the others.²⁰

Ancient mythology has long put forth the belief that the gods impregnated human women to bring forth their progeny. The Scriptures are clear that there is only one God; therefore, there is only one power with the attribute and ability to create. This would very likely render the probability of a "fallen angel" procreating as a far stretch from the purpose in Yahweh's created angelic order. The desire to imbue an ancient Biblical narrative with mystical meaning has led scholars far off the mark on Genesis 6. Many of those men and women have deceived themselves by the desires in their own heart.

Is it not accurate that the heart is deceitfully wicked above all else, just as Jeremiah tells us?

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:
who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9*

Perhaps we cannot trust even our own hearts to give us clear guidance on concluding what the truth is about Satan but what we can trust is the word of Yahweh that stands forever.

declared, or before the declension and apostasy became so universal; even in the times of Jared, as the Arabic writers (n) understand it, who say that these giants were begotten on the daughters of Cain by the children of Seth, who went down from the mountain to them in the days of Jared, see Gen 5:20 the word "Nephilim" comes from a word which signifies to fall; and these might be so called, either because they made their fear to fall upon men, or men, through fear, to fall before them, because of their height and strength; or rather because they fell and rushed on men with great violence, and oppressed them in a cruel and tyrannical manner; or, as some think, because they fell off and were apostates from the true religion, which is much better than to understand them of apostate angels, whom the Targum of Jonathan mentions by name, and calls them Schanchazai and Uziel, who fell from heaven, and were in the earth in those days:

From John Gills Entire Exposition of the Bible

²⁰ Mischievous Angels or Sethites?
by Chuck Missler <http://www.khouse.org/articles/1997/110/>

Revealing the truth about the non-existence of satan has its advantages. There are a number of folks that I have had the privilege of dialoguing with about the issue of Satan. As they have come to an understanding that there is likely no horned, spike tailed, celestial nemesis to attack and oppress us as believers of Yahweh in Messiah, they enjoyed a renewed liberty in their walk of faith and no longer presume that all the negative “karma” is from Satan. They soon found that they no longer feared him and his works. Fear has been a result of a belief in Satan for far too long.

The little child that is told Satan will be watching for him or her to slip up and sin, so he can find a way into the crack in the door to their heart, is not an uncommon way to invoke fear of a supernatural demon in a small child. Images from the renaissance period that depict the dogs of hell devouring innocents bring people to their knees with rosary beads and prescribed prayers intended to be used to chase away the attacking satan. The fear of encountering a demon or a devil in the night has kept young women from enjoying a midnight walk with a friend or husband. Even the most faithful in the Christian faith have been given near panic attacks, supposing that they haven't been righteous enough to warrant protection from God against the horned beast of malevolence.

Undoubtedly, fear has its purpose in any person's life and properly placed fear serves a person well if they manage it well and allow fear to be a factor in keeping them safe from harm. Are we supposed to fear a Satan creature? Who and what are we told to fear in the Scripture? One certain thing is, if there is a Satan we are nowhere told in the Bible to fear him. As you may know, we are told to fear the God of the universe only. The following verses are a sampling of passages that indicate who it is we are to fear. The fear spoken of here is not a paralyzing spine tingling fear of evil one might experience when manifesting a fear of Satan. It is a fear of awe that is worthy of a Creator who spoke and the earth was created and who brought plagues on Egypt to mock its false gods. Let's hear these statements encouraging us to fear God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

1Samuel 12:24

Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

1Peter 2:17

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Revelations 19:5

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

The difficulty that many have with leaving behind an incorrect understanding of satan is that evil has to be attributed to a source. With Satan out of the picture, as the man hating bad guy, we are left with only two sources to blame for evil.

Dare I be so bold as to say a primary source of evil is the Creator of the universe, Yahweh, God Almighty? I ask that you trust what the Scriptures say on this and not the words of my pen. We stand to gain immensely by understanding that there are no other Gods and any who believe in a cosmic Satan are at risk of being guilty of idolatry, for their beliefs testify that there is more than the One God of the Universe. Isaiah speaks expressly of there existing only one supernatural force in the entire universe and both Isaiah and Amos repeat the claim that evil comes from that One God. This is stated in the following passages from these prophets.

That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. Isaiah 45:6-7

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it? Amos 3:6

In the above passages the Hebrew word for “evil” is the word *rawah* and is translated elsewhere as *adversity, affliction badness, calamity, distress, displeasure, misery, naught*. The concept of a satanic being²¹ exerting some measure of control over the world is so interwoven in our culture that the concept becomes elusive in trying to pin it down to a point in history where it started. Ancient Egypt, Accadia, and Persia all had a philosophy of an evil force that must be appeased or it would turn on humanity, however the Persians were the truly dualistic culture that moved the idea of a good god

²¹ “satanic being”- This term will throughout this paper refer to the contemporary understanding of Satan. This means that it refers to an alleged angel created by Yahweh before the earth was created and this angel rebelled against Yahweh because of his pride, was cast down to earth, and now is the ruler of hell committed to destroying mankind and drawing mankind away from a relationship with the Creator through tempting mankind to sin and in essence to rebel against the Creator as well

and bad god forward. This was noted in the previous pages as Paul Carus was quoted. Here is his statement again for reflection:

Since the lower classes began to make their influence felt, it is natural that in the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament the conception of Satan grew more mythological and at the same time more dualistic. He developed into an independent demon of evil, and now, perhaps under the influence of Persian views, the adversary of man became the adversary of God himself.²²

The vagueness about the whole idea will prove to be an adequate adversary itself in preventing the unearthing of a simple answer or solution to the question and problem. Meaning, if the clues were clearly recognizable and easily found, we would not be faced with the daunting task of re-assessing the entire Scripture to see how it lines up the fact that Satan does not exist as a literal entity. Although thousands in the past and millions in the present have propounded this concept, it is seen as impossibility and is readily rejected as a ridiculous theory by most in religions like Christianity today. It is an intriguing exercise to consider what Christianity, and Judaism, or Islam for that matter, would be like if there proves to be no Satan. One suggestion is that a lot of people would be teetering on questionable faith to find out that all the evil done against them was done by men with wicked hearts. Even more striking is the thought that God has done the evil to them just as those hearing Isaiah were shocked to know that God creates evil. (See Isaiah 45:6-7)

I encourage you though not to be too hasty to dismiss what seems to be a “new idea” when in fact it is a very old idea revisited. We must remember that the world was flat according to some in the ruling empire at one point in time and evidence suggested for a few hundred years that this was a verifiable fact. Although the Greeks and others had understood that the Earth was round centuries before the flat Earth proponents began their work, the thinking that the Earth was flat, seemed to be based on all the mainstream science and literature at that time. Therefore, seeing that something once known to be true can be lost and then reclaimed, I contend that it is possible to reclaim a truth and eliminate an error that has been embedded in our minds and culture through pervasive and persuasive ideas, thoughts, and concepts, which were brought into mainstream thought from ancient mythology and paganism. That truth is of Satan not existing as a cosmic force but that “satan” is an adversarial force from Yahweh or an adversarial force from man.

²² Paul Carus. *The History Of The Devil And the Idea of Evil From the Earliest Times to The Present Day*, from chapter, *The Dawning of a New Era*

As we embark on this journey of learning what “satan” really is, I will provide a couple of house keeping points, so to speak, to aid in the process. Firstly, where Scripture is quoted at length, it will be done so in line with the body of the text at times and at other times, it will be placed in the footnotes. Secondly, because of the obscure and difficult nature of the topic, I will state my conclusion in a very general sense in this first chapter and then articulate the position and its intricacies throughout the pages of this discussion. So in order to diligently pursue the truth, let’s be faithful and do as Paul told the Thessalonians in his letter to them when he told them to test, examine, prove, scrutinize to see whether a thing is accurate or not;

Prove²³ all things; hold fast that which is good.¹Thessalonians 5:21

It is prudent to make an effort to prove those beliefs that are held as sacred cows so to speak. That means every person interested in truth must test the things believed to be true, to see if they actually are. Many of the things one believes have not been thoroughly investigated with each of us taking the time to prove to ourselves that they are true.

Most North Americans and many from other continents have been subject to a default education about Satan but have not chosen to pursue it further. It is by default that so many of us have even learned a concept or understanding about Satan. This concept is by default because there was little to no choice for the learner as to whether or not they would receive an education on the topic. Rather, they were simply subjected to the predominant point of view of the social group they are most exposed to. Once taught incorrectly, time caused the roots of that incorrect teaching to go very deep.

The point is, what we are taught about someone or something from the beginning is often the only reality that we know. All our decisions and conclusions about a person are solely based on the information we believe about them. More likely than not, the first thing we are presented with about a person or concept is received as the truth. It is not until the scales of proof are loaded with enough evidence that they are tipped in the opposite direction and a new truth begins to replace a previously believed concept. So many neglect the duty to examine all of their beliefs in a critical manner that therefore a paradigm shift for them is next to impossible.

Bob McCue, the ex Mormon, current exposé of Mormonism, writes in numerous articles about the extreme difficulty humans have in changing

²³ According to Thayer’s Definition, prove means;

1) to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals

a belief that has been part of their life for an extended period. He writes; "Once we have a particular belief and have built a life around it, we are highly resistant to any information that suggest our belief is incorrect."

McCue goes on to explain that evidence must be piled up high on the side of our scale that is opposite to the dogmatic belief we once held. I agree with McCue that the tipping point often takes mountains of information, thought, and time. Often the result in a dramatic paradigm shift is a wonderful experience of celebrating the insight one has received. Often with this fundamental change in a belief come many emotions that cause the newly "enlightened" one to question their decision. The principle is the same for most people who adhere to a long held belief on practically any subject.

For instance, when my son Olli was about 4 or 5 years old he had seen me playing chess with his big brother Cass. It was easier for me to teach Oliver how to play checkers than it was to play chess, so we started using the chess set to play checkers. Soon he was jumping my men diagonally across the board to victory. A little over a year later after numerous games of checkers had been played with the chess pieces; we acquired a new chess set. Oliver was now ready to learn how to play chess. So we sat down on the floor and I showed Olli how to set up the pieces. At first, Oliver endeavored to correct me but after a lengthy explanation, I convinced him that this was a different game. Oliver continued to move his pieces diagonally, just as I had taught him in the games of checkers we had played previously using these same pieces. I quickly saw that Oliver had been taught a specific way to use the pieces and for him to change made for a challenging time of convincing him otherwise. This is little different with the religious concepts many of us have been taught early on in our religious walk. People taught a specific practice or concept generally believe that first concept to be true and correct. Many of us have been taught certain aspects of our faith and belief system, and because they were the first concepts we were fed, we now believe and accept those concepts as true and find it unnecessary to question them.

The resistance to changing core beliefs is not only common in today's society, it has been a formidable barrier to overcome for most, if not all, of known history. There was a time when the Roman Catholic institution was battling over the issue of whether the Sun or the Earth was the center of our solar system. Until that point, it was common knowledge that everything revolved around the Earth. The story of Copernicus shows the difficulties he went through to present the truth to some very entrenched people with a much-solidified belief that claimed the Earth was the center of the universe.

Copernicus brought his research that testified to a heliocentric universe but the religious leaders who played a major role in politics, demanded Copernicus was wrong and that he had better “lose” his information because the Earth, they said, is the center of the universe. Copernicus was silenced, and the Ptolemaic view of the Earth being a fixed immovable object continued to be taught by the leaders who rejected Copernicus and placed a moratorium on his scholarly predecessor Galileo.²⁴ Often, people have been led to believe incorrect information about a person or idea, only to be introduced to more correct information later on. At that point, they are faced with the challenge of having or rejecting a paradigm shift.

In countless cases, we have been given information about “Satan” that has led us to conclude that Satan is a fallen angel. Because of his pride and rebellion, he is trying to defeat Yahweh and rule the world through destruction of all that is good and those people that are good. The most prolific of religious institutions in the world is arguably the Catholic Church. We find in the widely published *Catechism of the Catholic Faith*, a statement of the fallen “satan” which is mirrored and mimicked in most of protestant Christianity, and seen in Islam and Judaism. In the section titled *The Fall of The Angels*, the message is as follows;

391 Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy.²⁶⁶ Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil."²⁶⁷ The Church

²⁴ In 1530, Copernicus completed and gave to the world his great work *De Revolutionibus*, which asserted that the earth rotated on its axis once daily and traveled around the sun once yearly: a fantastic concept for the times. Up to the time of Copernicus the thinkers of the western world believed in the Ptolemaic theory that the universe was a closed space bounded by a spherical envelope beyond which there was nothing.

Copernicus died in 1543 and was never to know what a stir his work had caused. It went against the philosophical and religious beliefs that had been held during the medieval times.

Two other Italian scientists of the time, Galileo and Bruno, embraced the Copernican theory unreservedly and as a result suffered much personal injury at the hands of the powerful church inquisitors. Giordano Bruno had the audacity to even go beyond Copernicus, and, dared to suggest, that space was boundless and that the sun was and its planets were but one of any number of similar systems: Why! -- there even might be other inhabited worlds with rational beings equal or possibly superior to ourselves. For such blasphemy, Bruno was tried before the Inquisition, condemned and burned at the stake in 1600. Galileo was brought forward in 1633, and, there, in front of his “betters,” he was, under the threat of torture and death, forced to his knees to renounce all belief in Copernican theories, and was thereafter sentenced to imprisonment for the remainder of his days.

<http://www.blupete.com/Literature/Biographies/Science/Copernicus.htm>

teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing."²⁶⁸

392 Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels.²⁶⁹ This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign.²⁵

As we continue through this book, the concepts I express will be elaborated on thoroughly. Some who have difficulty accepting the view presented here may ask if it is sensible to try to prove that the devil does not exist. I am not certain how Poet Charles-Pierre Baudelaire came to his conclusion, but somehow in his works he decided that the "Devils deepest wile was to persuade us that he does not exist."

I cannot say that I agree with Baudelaire as it seems that his premise is to assume that there is a "Satan" and if this mythological evil being can trick us into thinking that he doesn't exist, then we will find ourselves wandering aimlessly into sin because we will think that there is no sin. Although Baudelaire was not a theologian but a masterful poet, he clearly expressed many theological views in his poetry as all great poets are inclined to do. It seems in his statement telling of the devil's deepest wile, that he believed what he wrote. It seems Baudelaire also believed the reason the devil existed was to fool humankind into sin.

I think one might want to consider the very opposite of his words and realize that to believe Satan doesn't exist is one of the most liberating of conclusions and not a "wile" at all. The person is then able to truly live a monotheistic faith and accept the complete sovereignty of the Creator. This result is so because, as we will discuss often in this work, the belief in another supernatural power whether or not it is assigned a lesser role than the Supreme Being, is a form of dualism, and testifies that there are at least two Gods. That person will experience the solemn realization that there is nothing in the cosmos that causes them to sin but that they themselves are responsible for all the sin that they have chosen to do, and that there does not exist a Satanic influencing force, which has the power to move man to choose evil. Admittedly, there are proponents of a cosmic Satan who do not claim Satan made them do it. However, they are in effect only slightly closer to a true monotheism than are those who attribute sin and evil acts to the supposed "Satan."

²⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church PART ONE THE PROFESSION OF FAITH ; SECTION TWO THE PROFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH; CHAPTER ONE; I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER; ARTICLE I "I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH" Paragraph 7. The Fall

CHAPTER 2

Satan, Evil Force at Creation or Man Created with a Potential for Evil?

Is It Even Logical To Have A Satan In God's World?

In proving there is no Satan, I am left with no other choice but to assess the logic of the mythical concept of a Satan and to consider some of the inconsistencies in the general North American belief about “satan.” In the “New Testament,” we are told that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. If *the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, should we not attempt to correctly understand just what that work of the Messiah is supposed to have accomplished and what or who the devil is? First take a look at the whole verse, which tells of the reason, or at least one of the reasons Christ came.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1John 3:8

The entire concept of a devil and the existence of “Satan” is inextricably wrapped up in theology and the Bible. Therefore, I am presenting an argument against the existence of “satan” and the “devil,” which are seen as one and the same. This can only be done using the theological work that is most commonly employed in developing a doctrine of the person of “satan.” The use of the Bible in this work will be extensive and at times overwhelming to some who have not built a familiarity with the Bible to any degree. If you must, feel free to excuse yourself from sections of this study that become clunky due to the need to process Biblical information. Although most authors want the reader to ingest every word they have penned, it is completely understandable