

CHAPTER 8

THE PHARISEES BROUGHT SATAN TO A SYNAGOGUE NEAR YOU

Part of the answer as to where the obfuscated doctrines about Satan and Hell came from, lies in remembering the Pharisees were a sect that started only about three or four hundred years earlier than the time of Christ. It is not common knowledge that many of the doctrines of the Pharisees had developed from a group called the *Parsees* or *Parsis* (pronounced *par-sees*). A “Parsi” was a Persian Magi and professed all of the Persian ideology as it pertained to the cosmic dualistic system of a good God and an evil God both existing. As stated previously, numerous mystical doctrines were introduced to the people of God from the Parsis who eventually became the Pharisees. One such doctrine is the Immortal Soul Doctrine. Kaufman Kohler tells of the notion of the Immortal Soul Doctrine coming from nations other than the Hebrew nation. Many of the doctrines of Christianity and Judaism are borrowed from other religions.

The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul is widely different than the belief in Resurrection and was adopted only by the Hellenistic Jews who followed Plato's philosophy, as did the Medieval Jewish philosophers.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Kohler, *Origins of the Synagogue and Church*, pg. 166

Kohler is careful to explain that the possible state of eternal compensation or punishment for those who are not receiving their due in the earthly life was sought-after information by the Hebrews. The answer that filled the intellectual void created by the question of afterlife consequences would be imparted to them through the Persians and other nations that purported a system of what Kohler calls, "Retribution in the hereafter."

The Aryan nations the Hindoos and the Persians, however, besides the Egyptians, set up and fashioned the world of Retribution in the hereafter. The Hasidim, under the Persian regime, adopted it, seemingly as an Apocalyptic or secret lore, and from then it was transmitted to the Pharisees, and at first probably kept within an esoteric circle.⁴⁶

The group that believed these afterlife ideas was a large component of the scholarly class of Hebrews who left Persia after the exile and returned to Jerusalem. It is no wonder Cyrus was so eager to send the "Jews" back to rebuild the Temple. Going out from his kingdom were a group of people, which included the group eventually to become the Pharisees. This was an educated group who had received, in the truest sense, the concepts of the Zoroastrian dualistic religion and had added them to their ancient Mosaic belief system. Cyrus was not threatened by the return of the exiles as he saw quite clearly that their beliefs were of little consequence to his own because many of the scholarly class of the returning exiles held a dualistic philosophy just like the Persians. Adding to the ancient pathways that came from Yahweh was prohibited by the Mosaic Law, but subtle Persian influence was no match for the will and constitution of large numbers of Jewish exiles. As the main body of intellect responsible for transmission

⁴⁶ Kohler, *Origins of the Synagogue and Church*, pg. 164

of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets, these Pharisees were not diligent to keep the dualistic philosophy learned in exile from mixing with their previously balanced and monotheistic theology. So the transmission of the Law was no longer pure, the Pharisees, who were really recipients of mystic information that came down to them through a line of Persian Magi called Parsi, wove false in with the true and error in with that which was correct. In *“The Origins of the Synagogue and Church”* Kohler writes of the Pharisees and the development of their eschatology and ideology. He tells how they assimilated some of the Persian belief system;

... since the Scriptures do not indicate a place of punishment for those found wicked in the divine judgment, or a place of reward for those found righteous, the Apocalyptic writers borrowed their ideas from the Persians. They selected the valley of Gehinnom, the ghastly fire-place, where under king Manasseh sacrifices had been offered to Molech, as the place of punishment for the souls of the sinners, who, according to the measure of their wickedness, were to undergo pain or annihilation under the direction of Dumah, the chieftain of the netherworld. The prevailing view of the Apocalyptists regarded fire as the means of punishment for sinners.⁴⁷

The Sadducees Had Some Heretical Input Too

The centuries immediately before and immediately after the beginning of the Common Era brought on a form of mystical faith-practices and beliefs because of the Pharisees' influence. That point is made regularly but the Sadducean side of the story is

⁴⁷ Kohler, *Origin of the Synagogue and Church*, pg 168, posthumously 1929 *The Macmillian Company New York*

important too. The Sadducees also played a significant role in the evolution of Judaism, which evolved into Christianity. This group had some beliefs that were not held by either the Pharisees or the Essenes and disputes often arose between the groups, particularly between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Also a Hellenized group, it is understood that the Sadducees did not maintain a pure Mosaic style of faith as the Scriptures teach either. The ISBE gives valuable information on this group in the article titled, *Sadducees*. Notice the statements on how Hellenized the Sadducees were.

Tendencies of Sadducees Toward Hellenism as Causing Rise of Hasidhim:

Probably the priestly party only gradually crystallized into the sect of the Sadducees. After the return from the exile, the high priest drew to himself all powers, civil and religious. To the Persian authorities he was as the king of the Jews. The high priest and those about him were the persons who had to do with the heathen supreme government and the heathen nationalities around; this association would tend to lessen their religious fervor, and, by reaction, this roused the zeal of a section of the people for the law. With the Greek domination, the power of the high priests at home was increased, but they became still more subservient to their heathen masters, and were the leaders in the Hellenizing movement. They took no part in the Maccabean struggle, which was mainly supported by their opponents the

ḥăṣīdhīm, as they were called (the Hasideans of 1 Macc 2:42, etc.)..⁴⁸

Why is all this important? That is a good question. The answer is that to understand how demonology became part of our culture today we need to explore the powerful influences of the religious leaders that impacted Christian doctrine.

Believing In Satan Is A Motherhood Statement According To Some

It seems clear from history that the concepts of the Greek and the Persian cultures, both containing ideas of a cosmic evil being, were slowly brought into the main belief system of many of the “Jews” of the first century. This occurred over a period of hundreds of years, which covered the time of the Jewish return from exile in the early 500’s BC to the period of the second century of the Common Era. Along the path to early Christian thought the false understanding of whom and what was the cause of bad and evil upon humanity came to be given a name. Two names of this supposed supernatural force that opposes the omnipotent Creator are “Satan” and the “Devil.” These terms, along with the word or term “demon”, need to be explored to see if we can detect traces of the path these terms followed out of the Persian exile into the Greek and Greco-Roman system to nestle in Judaism and Christianity. It was there that the idea of a real Satan became, as one old friend of mine put it, “a motherhood statement.” By that was meant, that having to prove there is a “satan” or “demons” is like having to prove that your mother loves you. Some think that it is so clear there is a cosmic “satan” why would someone even question it anymore than questioning if a Mother loves her child. Generally, it is accepted without question by everyone that their

⁴⁸ Excerpt from International Standard Bible encyclopedia article, “*Sadducees*”

mother loves them. This is the idea of my old friend's reference to the existence of "Satan" as a motherhood statement.

There are those who think that everyone knows there is a "satan" and therefore there is no reason to question it. Well, when we look at the etymology and early understanding of the words "Satan" and "demon" in an upcoming chapter, we may see that sometimes it is ok to question if your mother loves you. In considering the etymology, that is to say, how the words came to become what they are today and from where are their origins, we could quote many references that speak of the influence of the Persian culture on the demonology concept that is entwined with true biblical concepts.

We could quote those who are considered by the Catholic and Christian religious systems to be "Church Fathers." A survey of the theology of many of the "Church Fathers" will reveal the diverse theories of the concept of "Satan" and the understanding of places such as Heaven and Hell. Many writers share facts about the Pharisee ideology telling how it was affected and formed by ideas that came from the Parsi sect. Clear testimony exists that teaches the Pharisees received knowledge from a group of Persian Magi, or wise men. It is put this way by Mark Willey in an internet article on *The Secrets of Zoroastrianism*; I have highlighted a significant statement in the article below.

PHARISEES VS. SADDUCEES

After Alexander conquered Jerusalem in 332 B.C. the direct Persian influence ended. From this time to 73 A.D. the Jews were given freedom of religion except for a brief Hellenizing period from 198 B.C. to 165 B.C. A council of Jews, called the Sanhedrin, was established to resolve religious issues. It was constituted of the two major parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Down to the time

of Jesus, the Sadducees, who called themselves "purists," believed in "no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" – Acts 23:8. They believed exclusively in the original law of Moses and rejected the laws of the Pharisees: see Josephus in Book XIII Chapter XI. Their god was a national god. The Sadducees were the vast majority of Jews. **The politically connected Pharisees were the Persian faction. The word "Pharisee"; as well as "Parsee," Persians in India; and "Farsi" (Pharsee), the modern Iranian language, are all derived from the name of the Persian town or region of Fars.** The connotation given Pharisee was separated from the people of the land, the am ha-aretz.

"Now it was from this very creed (of Zoroaster) that the Jews derived all the angelology of their religion...the belief in a future state; of rewards and punishments, the latter carried on in a fiery lake;...the soul's immortality, and the Last Judgment—all of them essential parts of the Zoroastrian scheme, and recognized by Josephus as the fundamental doctrines of the Judaism of his own times."

Only Pharisaism survived the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 A.D. "Present-day Judaism is Pharisaic Judaism." It was able to survive

because of its Zoroastrian pacifism.⁴⁹(emphasis added)

Did You Investigate Your Belief In Satan?

Whether the ideas that underlie the belief in Satan are sensible or not is up to you to decide. When we maintain an uninvestigated belief our tendency is to simply say, “Look around, look at all the evil in the world, look at the overwhelming evidence of Satan and demons in our culture. Look at the masses that believe in Satan and look at all the media that swirls around this topic. Satan must be real. However, those are only the myopic conclusions of an unexplored belief. That said, one can see how the idea of a supernatural entity sanctified for evil has become a mainstay in this world. However, when you and I truly take time to understand the beliefs we have it is refreshing to learn that what everyone around us believes is only believed because everyone around us believes it. A perpetuating cycle of reaffirmation takes place if you and I don’t check our second-hand beliefs at the door and make a bold move to find out just exactly how the idea of Satan and demons flourished in the millennia long past. But, the difficulty in these explorations is that they are not usually a matter of reading a few lines or quotes from scholars. They take a surmountable amount of work for most people. Investigating a belief is not for the faint of heart or for the apathetic. A belief is only investigated by those willing to set their version of the truth on the shelf for a time while they unlock clues and evidence that may lead them further from their version than they would normally be comfortable with. There is a great reward for those who abandon all lies and enter the realm of truly understanding why they believe what they believe. Therefore, our work on the belief in Satan is far from complete.

⁴⁹ <http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/6315/religion/zorobig.html> Emphasis added. Footnote 12 in the above quote is a reference to *The Gnostics and their Remains*, C.W. King and G.F. Moore, London 1887, page 120. Footnote 13 is; Jesus and the Pharisees, D.W. Riddle, page 3

We will continue to peel back the layers of the onion that have been fused together over time and because of religious influence. Layers of myth, lore, legend, and lie that have become a belief in Satan. This belief is so entrenched that many will not consider investigating their understanding to see if it agrees with Scripture and history. Any doctrine that has brought so much fear, confusion, and mysticism into Christianity needs to be unravelled. With a little more work, a little more time, and a little more understanding, we can confidently put this mythological monster back into the fairytale it came from. We not only can Imagine There's No Satan...we can learn there is no Satan at all and continue to learn about the Creator with a newfound sense of awe.

CHAPTER 9

WHO GAVE SATAN HIS NAMES?

The name Satan carries a huge set of ideas, images, and beliefs with it. But this simple three letter Hebrew word (*stn*- שטן) was innocuous and void of demonic associations before it entered Jewish literature and Christianity. The word *satan* itself is a loan word from the Hebrew language. In Hebrew it is *sawtawn*. And to put it in the simplest possible terms the word *satan* is not a name. It clearly referred to a human adversary or some type of adversarial action from God against man. According to Hebrew scholars, *sawtawn* and therefore the word “Satan,” was never intended to be a name for a fallen angel. Searching the entire Hebrew Scriptures, we are unable to find the word *satan* used as a name. It is always a reference to an adversary and in the places where it appears, we find *sawtawn* is preceded by the definite article equivalent to “*the*”. In the Hebrew text it reads *ha sawtawn*. This should be our first clue to direct us to consider whether *ha sawtawn* is a name or not. Upon examination we learn *the satan* is not a name and never was a name. Further more, when we follow the word into the Greek language it becomes *satanas*. *Satanas* is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *sawtawn*. To transliterate a word is to change the spelling of a word in order to achieve a pronunciation that is compatible with the language into which it is being inserted. Any transliterated word we find in the New Testament must be assessed as if it were the original Hebrew word. As an example we find Francis A.