Satan in early Gentile Christian communities:

An exegetical study in Mark and 2 Corinthians

Thomas J. Farrar

5 January 2014

http://www.dianoigo.com

1. **Introduction**

This is part of a series of exegetical articles on the subject of the devil and Satan, and more specifically on evaluating the soundness of the Christadelphian view of the matter by a detailed analysis of biblical passages. Two previous articles have focused on the tempter who came to Jesus in the wilderness,[1] and on the teachings about the devil in the parables of Jesus.[2] The focus of this article is more specifically on the significance of the word Satan (Greek: *satanas*) in the New Testament.

By way of background we will first survey Christadelphian teachings about Satan. We will then take an overview of the word *satan* in the Old Testament. With this background in mind we will attempt to show that the word *satanas* as used in the New Testament is a proper name, correctly transliterated Satan. This will be done with specific recourse to the Gospel of Mark and Paul's epistles to the Corinthians. From there we will consider and evaluate Christadelphian interpretations of one specific passage in Mark (8:33) and two specific passages in 2 Corinthians (11:14 and 12:7) and offer an alternative exegesis.

2. **The Christadelphian doctrine of Satan**

In the book with which he effectively launched the Christadelphian movement c. 1848, Elpis Israel, Dr. John Thomas did not offer a detailed analysis of the biblical term Satan but instead brought various biblical terms for forces of evil together in a unified, thematic approach:

> "Sin made flesh, whose character is revealed in the works of the flesh, is the Wicked One of the world. He is styled by Jesus, the Prince of this world. Kosmos, rendered world in this phrase, signifies, that the order of things constituted upon the basis of sin in the flesh, and styled the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26), as opposed to the kingdom of God...the lord that dominates over [all the phases of this kingdom] from the days of Jesus to the present time, is SIN; the incarnate accuser and adversary of the law of God, and therefore styled 'the Devil and Satan.'"[3]

Dr. Thomas did not in this work offer an analysis of all, or even most of the biblical passages about Satan, but he did lay out a template for others to follow. The first Christadelphian to write a major treatise on the subject of the devil and Satan was Robert Roberts, the protégé of Dr. Thomas. Roberts' 1884 book *Christendom Astray*[4] was a compilation of lectures on major doctrinal subjects on which Christadelphians perceived the Bible and mainstream Christian theology to be at odds. The arguments contained therein surely led many to commit themselves to the Christadelphian belief system. While not much used for evangelistic purposes today, the work remains a mainstay of Christadelphian personal libraries. One of the lectures in the book was entitled, "The Devil not a personal supernatural being, but the scriptural personification of sin in its manifestations among men." This material was separately published as a pamphlet

---

[1] Farrar 2013.
[2] Farrar 2014.
[3] Thomas 1867: 97, 99.
[4] Roberts 1884.

under the title *The Evil One: Bible Teaching concerning the Devil and Satan*.[5] In the Old Testament he claimed that the Hebrew word *satan* should be understood "to mean adversary in its simple and general sense"[6] and used this approach to interpret the texts in which it occurs with reference to various individual adversaries. Turning to the New Testament, he observed, "The Hebrew word 'Satan' was adopted into the Greek language; whence we meet with it in the New Testament."[7] As in the Old Testament, it was thus claimed that 'Satan' means adversary, but he observed that in the New Testament there is a "great adversary – the carnal mind – as collectively exemplified in the world that lieth in wickedness".[8] Having examined a number of New Testament texts where the word occurs, he concluded:

> "These general explanations will cover all the other instances in which the word 'Satan' is used in the New Testament. All will be found capable of solution by reading 'Satan' as the adversary and having regard to the circumstances under which the word is used. Sometimes 'Satan' will be found a person, sometimes the authorities, sometimes the flesh; in fact, whatever acts the part of an adversary is, scripturally, 'Satan.'"[9]

Robert Roberts' contemporary, Thomas Williams, was a prominent early Christadelphian apologist in the United States. In 1892 he published a tract entitled *The Devil: His Origin and End*,[10] which itself later became a chapter of a larger volume entitled *The World's Redemption*.[11] This work was an early influence on the present author's thinking on the subject, to the extent that I transcribed it in full onto my personal website.[12] Williams first observes:

> "The Hebrew word *satan* is properly translated as 'adversary'. It has not in itself a bad meaning, but its use is "more frequent in relation to evil or unrighteous opponents or adversaries."[13]

He proceeded to argue that the word takes on the same basic sense in the New Testament too:

> "With these clear testimonies in mind as illustrative of the meaning of 'satan' it is not difficult to understand any passage where the word is employed. It may stand for a state of mind adverse to one's intentions and efforts; for a state of the body, adverse to health; for a state of society or politics adverse to the performance of duty or the belief of truth; and in no case is it necessary with 'satan' any more than with 'diabolos' to imagine the existence of the devil or satan of popular delusion."[14]

There appears some tension between the 'satanology' of Roberts and Williams. Roberts appears, like Dr. Thomas before him, to see Satan in the New Testament as pointing to a specific unifying

---

[5] Roberts 1881.
[6] Roberts 1884: 109.
[7] Roberts 1884: 111.
[8] Roberts 1884: 112.
[9] Roberts 1884: 116.
[10] Williams 1892.
[11] Williams 1898.
[12] See http://www.angelfire.com/on3/tomjoel/man/devil/
[13] Williams 1892.

[14] Williams 1892.

element, "the great adversary – the carnal mind." Though he allows the word to refer to context-specific, generic adversaries in some passages, these are related to the Great Adversary as cause and effect. Williams, on the other hand, does not take 'satan' in the New Testament to be a technical theological term but a generic noun meaning 'adversary' (which may, however, on occasion refer to the carnal mind as *diabolos* does more commonly).

Many decades later, Peter Watkins published his important study on the devil, *The Devil – the Great Deceiver*. He offered a corrective to the approach taken by Williams (and to a lesser extent, Roberts) by noting the distinction in the way the word satan is used in the two Testaments: "in the New Testament Satan is not *an* adversary, but *the* adversary."[15]

He expressed the point fully as follows:

> "Many of those who do *not* believe in a personal devil have a very simple way of disposing of the word. *Satan*, they say, means adversary; all we have to do is substitute the word adversary for satan, whenever we meet it in scripture, and there will be no problem. Very facile, but not very satisfactory. Satan certainly means adversary, but we must distinguish between the use of the word in the Old Tesatment and the New Testament. The easy answer referred to above may be used, generally, in the Old Testament, but not in the New Testament. And even in the Old Testament we must be careful to distinguish between the use of the word as a common noun (*an* adversary), and as a title or name (*the* adversary)...[turning to the New Testament] The first thing that should impress us is that the word occurs in the New Testament at all. The New Testament was written in Greek, and satan is a Hebrew word. It has been transliterated – carried over, letter by letter – into the Greek New Testament as *satanas*. There are several Greek words that mean 'adversary'. These were avoided by the New Testament writers, and instead this Hebrew word was inserted into the Greek text. Obviously therefore, it has a special significance in the New Testament that would have been missed if an ordinary Greek word had been used instead. Satan was the word that the Spirit intended, and the translators have done wisely in not translating it here. Satan in the New Testament is always a special adversary – the great adversary – and the suggestion often heard, that we should render satan the adversary, in the usual way must be resisted."[16]

Watkins' approach reduced the flexibility for interpreting New Testament Satan texts, because they always had to refer to the great adversary, the carnal mind. The difference between Roberts' approach and Watkins is subtle but important. For Roberts, the word Satan could refer to different adversaries in the New Testament, but always called to mind the association with the great adversary. For Watkins, there is only one Satan in the New Testament, and all passages must refer to it, whether literally or metaphorically. "The subject of Satan and demons – or the devil and his angels – must be thought of as one elaborate, sustained New Testament parable."[17]

---

[15] Watkins 1971: 48.
[16] Watkins: 17-18.
[17] Watkins: 34.

In spite of Watkins' contribution to the Christadelphian doctrine of Satan, a pamphlet from the same publishing house (The Christadelphian) fifteen years later reverted to the older 'generic adversary' approach to Satan which makes no distinction between the Testaments:

> "Let us remind ourselves what we have learned so far: a "satan" is an adversary, and nearly always an evil adversary. In the examples we have looked at, "satan" was:
>
> - an angel of God, doing His will;
> - a man posing as a worshipper of God;
> - other men who were "adversaries";
> - and now Peter, an apostle of the Lord, who was opposing the will of God.
>
> With this general understanding of the meaning of "satan", we should find a lot of Bible passages much clearer."[18]

Duncan Heaster, whose book *The Real Devil* represents the most comprehensive Christadelphian study on satanology to date, again took a modified approach to Satan in the New Testament. For him,

> "the word 'satan' means 'adversary', and 'the devil' refers to a false accuser. These terms can at times refer to individuals or organizations who are in some sense 'adversarial', and sometimes in the New Testament they refer to the greatest human adversary, i.e. sin. Close study of the New Testament makes it apparent that quite often, the 'satan' of both the Lord Jesus and His first followers was related to the Jewish system which so opposed Him and the subsequent preaching of Him. Not only did the Jews crucify God's Son, but the book of Acts makes it clear that it was Jewish opposition which was the main adversary to Paul's spreading of the Gospel and establishment of the early church"[19]

Thus, while he acknowledges sin as the greatest human adversary and retains this as the referent of the word *satan* in some passages, for him the 'Jewish satan' has superseded sin in terms of its explanatory power for New Testament *satan* texts. He offers a linguistic rationale for his generic view of the word satan as meaning 'adversary' in the New Testament:

> "Sometimes the original words of the Bible text are left untranslated ("Mammon", in Mt. 6:24, is an Aramaic example of this). 'Satan' is an untranslated Hebrew word which means 'adversary', while 'Devil' is a translation of the Greek word 'diabolos', meaning a liar, an enemy or false accuser. 'Satan' has been transferred from the Hebrew untranslated, just like 'Sabaoth' (James 5:4), 'Armageddon' (Rev. 16:16) and 'Hallelujah' (Rev. 19:1-6). If we are to believe that Satan and the Devil are some being outside of us which is responsible for sin, then whenever we come across these words in the Bible, we have to make them refer to this evil person. The Biblical usage of these words shows that they can be used as ordinary nouns, describing ordinary people. This fact makes it

---

[18] Pearce 1986: 6-7.
[19] Heaster 2012: 167-168.

impossible to reason that the words Devil and Satan as used in the Bible do in themselves refer to a great wicked person or being outside of us."[20]

Jonathan Burke has also contributed a lengthy Christadelphian study on Satan and Demons, although it remains unpublished. This work is significant because it responds to a critique of the Christadelphian view by a non-Christadelphian, Anthony Buzzard. One of Buzzard's primary arguments concerned the significance of the definite article (of which 'the' is the analogue in English) in understanding passages about the devil and Satan. He observed (concerning Rev. 2:13), "*The* Satan is very different from the indefinite adversaries (satans) cited from the Old Testament."[21]

To this line of reasoning, Burke responds:

> "A definite construction necessitates a definite subject in any given context, but it does not necessitate that the same subject is referred to in every context…The issue is that Buzzard assumes - without evidence, and indeed against evidence to the contrary - that 'the satan' or 'the devil' refers to the same adversary in each case."[22]

The first part of Burke's response is technically correct. When Burke denies that 'the satan' refers to the same adversary in every case, it is not clear whether he means only that the satan(s) of Job and Zechariah need not be the same adversary as that of the New Testament; or whether he claims that **within the New Testament** 'the satan' does not always refer to the same adversary. Although the arguments he marshals in the subsequent pages are from the Old Testament, a subsequent comment concerning the wilderness temptations suggests the latter is his view: "the Christadelphian interpretation of satan actually allows the identification of satan in one passage as different to the identification of satan in another passage".[23]

An important observation here is that Burke's response here is at odds with Watkins' view that there is but one great recurring adversary or Satan in the New Testament. This difference manifests itself, as will be seen, in a different interpretation of 'Satan' in 2 Cor. 11:14. In spite of his defense of Watkins' "forceful argument that when Christ spoke of satan and demons, he did so in parables,"[24] Burke appears not to share Watkins' conviction that the subject of Satan and demons is one elaborate, sustained New Testament parable.

In summary, one observes that there is a spectrum of Christadelphian views on the 'definiteness' of Satan within the New Testament (see figure below). On the far left is the view that there is no definitive or quintessential New Testament Satan; rather, this is just a common noun meaning 'adversary' which can take on any number of meanings as the context dictates. This extreme is represented by Thomas Williams. On the far right is the view that there is a definitive or quintessential New Testament Satan: the great adversary, the carnal mind. 'He' is the referent of all references to Satan in the New Testament. This extreme is represented by Peter Watkins. The other Christadelphian writers lie somewhere between these two extremes, emphasizing to some
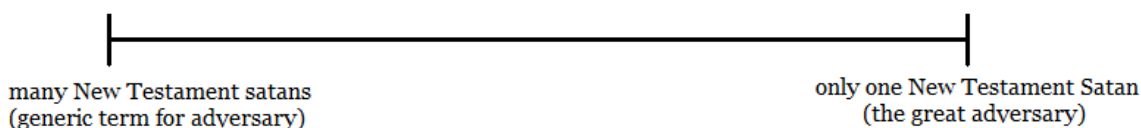
---

[20] Heaster 2012: 158.
[21] Buzzard 2000.
[22] Burke 2007: 22.
[23] Burke 2007: 29.
[24] Burke 2007: 93.

extent the definitiveness of the great adversary but allowing for references to other satans in some passages.

many New Testament satans
(generic term for adversary)

only one New Testament Satan
(the great adversary)

3. Old Testament background to the word *satanas*

The New Testament was originally composed in Greek.[25] However, *satanas,* as it occurs 38 times in 36 verses of the New Testament, is not a Greek word. How then did it find its way into the New Testament? Some background is needed here.

3.1. Satan in the Hebrew Old Testament

In Hebrew, *satan* is a common noun meaning 'adversary' and, less frequently, a verb meaning to oppose or to accuse. It often carries a forensic connotation. Its most widespread use is of human adversaries (usually individuals but can also be a collective noun): 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kings 5:4; 1 Kings 11:14, 23, 25; Ps. 109:6. In Num. 22:22, 32 it refers to the angel of the Lord. In Job 1-2 and Zechariah 3, the word *satan* occurs with the article – it is now 'the adversary' rather than 'an adversary.' The consensus among biblical scholars is that 'the adversary' here refers to a heavenly being (though not necessarily the same individual in both cases):

> "In the Hebrew Bible, anyone or any creature can be a satan, an adversary. But at some point, the concept illustrated by the word satan in the Bible began to be personified into the being we have come to know as Satan. This being is mentioned eighteen times in three books in the Hebrew Bible: once in 1 Chronicles (21:1), three times across two verses in Zechariah (3:1-2), and fourteen times within the first two chapters of the book of Job. In reality, both in Zechariah and Job, the definite article is used, literally 'the satan.' Still, these two books personify 'the satan,' introducing us to a being with agency, and so the NRSV translates these occurrences with the proper name, Satan. (The definite article in Hebrew can sometimes introduce proper names.) Even if it is not referring to the proper name Satan, they are referring to an office or role occupied by a heavenly being."[26]

The word *satan* carries a legal connotation, particularly in Psalm 109 and Zechariah 3 where in each case the or a *satan* "functions as prosecuting attorney."[27] Fokkelman likewise translates the

---

[25] A few have argued that Matthew was originally composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, but this view is rejected by the majority of textual scholars. Even if it were true, there are no extant copies of Matthew in the 'original' Semitic language.

[26] De La Torre & Hernandez 2011: 57. For similar summaries see Boyd 1975: 16; Hooks 2006: 63-64; Laato 2013: 4-5.

[27] Petersen 1984: 189.

satan in Job as "the Prosecutor" (of God's heavenly council).[28] In Job and Zechariah the satan(s) are not in open rebellion against God like the Satan of the New Testament, but there are hints of antagonism. In Zechariah 3, the *satan* "opposes God in a malicious way, as v. 2 clearly indicates."[29] In Job, too, there are hints of antagonism between God and the *satan*: "you incited me against him to destroy him without reason" (Job 2:3). It has further suggested that the preposition 'before' (*al*) in Job 2:2 means "in defiance of God."[30]

A similar kind of adversarial heavenly being is found in [1 Kings 22:19-23](#)/[2 Chr. 18:18-22](#), although the word *satan* does not occur there.

The most disputed *satan* text in the Old Testament is [1 Chr. 21:1](#). Here, *satan* occurs without the definite article, which some say indicates that it is the proper name of a specific being appointed to the office of adversary. Kelly says that "Almost all modern translators and interpreters of this passage say 'yes' to this interpretation."[31] Nevertheless it has been challenged by scholars such as Day,[32] Japhet[33] and Stokes.[34] Japhet understands this 'satan' to be an anonymous human adversary while Day and Stokes maintains that it is an indefinite celestial being.

In summary, then, it would be anachronistic to read a later concept of Satan back into the Old Testament, and indeed, from a historical perspective there may be "no single Satan figure of the Old Testament."[35] Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see how the concept of a specific angelic being called The Adversary could be inferred – as it was by the Jews – by putting together the key satan texts of Job 1-2, Zech. 3:1-2 and 1 Chr. 21:1.[36] And, as Branden observes, these passages "do not strictly rule out the possibility of identifying the adversary as the personal Satan of the intertestamental literature and the New Testament."[37]

3.2.   Satan in the Greek Old Testament

In the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., the Jews of Alexandria produced a Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint (LXX). This version of the Old Testament was effectively the Bible of the earliest Christians, especially those who did not understand Hebrew (whether diaspora Jews or Gentiles). This is evident in the New Testament writings themselves:

"Because Christianity originated mainly within Greek-speaking Judaism, Christians naturally used the Greek versions of Scripture. At first, as the NT shows, this was done without comment or apology."[38]

---

[28] Fokkelman 2012: 18.
[29] Klein 2008: 136.
[30] Hooks 2006: 72.
[31] Kelly 2006: 29.
[32] Day 1988.
[33] Japhet 1993: 374-375.
[34] Stokes 2009.
[35] Brown 2011: 203-204.
[36] See, for example, Russell 1977: 203-204.
[37] Branden 2006: 17.
[38] Dines 2004: 75.

In light of the importance of the Septuagint to the New Testament writers and early church, it is worth considering how this version of the Old Testament handled the Hebrew word *satan*. Because the work of translation was carried out by many different people over a period of decades, there was some diversity in the approach.

In some instances (1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kings 5:4) the Septuagint translators rendered *satan* with the Greek word *epiboulos,* an adjective (functioning as a noun) which means "plotting against; treacherous."[39]

In other cases, the word *satan* was translated with the Greek noun *diabolos* (enemy, adversary[40], slanderer[41]): 1 Chr. 21:1; Ps. 108(109):6; Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1-2. In the latter two cases the article was carried over from the Hebrew to the Greek: *ho diabolos*, 'the enemy'. It has a more negative connotation than the word *satan*. In Num. 22:22, 32 satan was translated with the Greek verb *diabolē*, which refers to false accusation, slander, quarrel or enmity, and in this case specifically to the act of withstanding.[42] This shows that the word need not imply wickedness, since it is used here of the angel of the Lord. Kelly suggests that the translators consciously "avoided calling the Angel of Yahweh a *diabolos*" here.[43]

It is worth that the Septuagint translators tended to render *satan* with a form of *diabolos* when the word refers to an angelic being, and with *epiboulos* when it refers to a human. This may not be a conscious decision but it still results in differentiation for the reader of the Septuagint.

The translator(s) took an altogether different approach in 1 Kings 11. In the Hebrew the word *satan* appears thrice, in vv. 14, 23 and 25. In v. 14 (a reference to a man, Hadad the Edomite, as an adversary of Solomon) the Septuagint transliterates the word *satan* into Greek rather than translating it. The same is true in v. 23 (which in the LXX forms part of v. 14). In v. 25, however, the Septuagint translated *satan* with the Greek verb *baruthemeo*, meaning "to be indignant."[44]

Why did the translator transliterate instead of translating in this case? It is a difficult question. The majority of scholars understand the Septuagint to have been written primarily to meet the needs of "Greek-speaking Jewish communities of Egypt, especially Alexandria."[45] It is likely that by the time of translation in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., the Hebrew word *satan* had already taken on a special significance due either to its theological (see above) or legal[46] importance. Perhaps because of this, the translator felt Greek-speaking Jews would understand the term and there was no need to translate it. This is not the Old Testament *satan* text where we would most expect to see this occur, but the different translators had their own idiosyncrasies. Indeed, the translator(s) of 1 Kings deal with the Hebrew word *satan* in three different ways, two of which are unique compared with the rest of the Septuagint.

---

[39] Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie 1992: 168.
[40] Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie 1992: 101.
[41] Arndt, Danker & Bauer 2000: 226.
[42] Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie 1992: 101.
[43] Kelly 2006: 31.
[44] Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie 1992: 77.
[45] Dines 2004: 44.
[46] von Rad states, "So far as we can see, the word has a special place in the judicial life of Israel. The satan is the enemy in a specific sense, i.e., the accuser at law." (von Rad 1964: 73.)

We can summarise our brief survey of the Old Testament testimony by stating that the word *satan* does function as a common noun meaning adversary (often with a legal connotation). It is used of various parties, both human and angelic. However, there are two passages in which the word occurs with the definite article ('the satan') to refer to a specific office (or even individual) within the heavenly court (Job 1-2; Zechariah 3). There is one further passage where the word may be used as a proper name, Satan (1 Chronicles 21). Furthermore, satan in all three cases was translated in the Septuagint as *diabolos*, and in the case of Job and Zechariah, with *ho diabolos* (the accuser; the slanderer). In all three of these passages there is general agreement among Old Testament scholars that the referent of the word *satan* is an angelic being. Thus we have a clear precedent for taking 'the satan' and 'the slanderer' (devil) in the New Testament to refer to an angelic being.

3.3. Satan in the Apocrypha

The transliterated Greek term *ton satanan* also occurs once in the deutero-canonical portion of the Septuagint (often referred to as the Apocrypha) in The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach (sometimes called Ecclesiasticus). Brenton translated Sirach 21:27, "When the ungodly curseth Satan, he curseth his own soul," and the New English Translation of the Septuagint rendered, "When an impious person curses the satan, he curses his own soul." By contrast, the NRSV renders, "When an ungodly person curses an adversary, he curses himself."

As the translations show, some have taken 'satan' here to mean adversary in the ordinary sense,[47] while others, in view of the definite article, take it to refer to 'the satan' or Satan in a specialized sense. For Hart, the meaning was that "not Satan, but the man himself is responsible for his sin."[48] If this reading is correct, Sirach implicitly confirms the existence of a personal Satan but warns against using him as an excuse for sin. More recently, however, numerous scholars have argued that Sirach was denying Satan's existence and identifying him with innate human wickedness: "The satan of Sir. 21:27 is primarily the personal adversary, but the skillful ambiguity of the saying is aimed also to stigmatize the 'impious' belief in the existence of the heavenly enemy."[49] And again, "For Sirach, therefore, the devil does not exist: Satan is only a metaphor to indicate our worst instincts."[50] [51]

However, while Ben Sira was "reluctant to enlarge upon the subject of angels" in light of his conservative worldview,[52] he does not explicitly oppose belief in a personal Satan. His main concern is to combat "deterministic approaches, according to which divine determinism extends to human sin."[53]

---

[47] Skehan & Di Lella 1987: 311-312. See also Brunton 1927: 109-110; Quinn & Wacker 2000: 146.

[48] Hart 1909: 154.

[49] Boccaccini 2008: 36.

[50] Sacchi 1996: 223. See also Capelli 2005: 142; Tennant 2012: 116; Kelly 2006: 75.

[51] Harrington is more guarded in his analysis, stating, "Ben Sira proposes a modified dualism in which everything (good and evil) remains under God's sovereignty (see Isa. 45:7) and appeals somewhat vaguely to the divine plan working itself out in the 'nature of things.' He does not present a strong Satan figure who leads the children of darkness to do the deeds of darkness." (Harrington 2005: 52)

[52] cf. Bamberger 2010: 55.

[53] Brand 2013: 95.

In summary, in the Hebrew Bible *satan* is a common noun meaning adversary with a judicial connotation. In Job and Zechariah, and possibly in 1 Chronicles, we have the makings of 'the adversary' as a specific office or even individual within the heavenly court. In these texts the Septuagint translated the word *satan* with *diabolos*, thereby laying the foundation for the use of the latter term in the New Testament.

The Septuagint also transliterated the Hebrew word *satan* into Greek on one occasion where it refers to a human adversary (without the article). The apocryphal book of Sirach transliterated *satan* with the article into Greek. Here, it may be a reference to one's human adversary but is more likely a polemic against blaming a personal being called 'the satan' for one's sins, possibly denying the existence of such a being and identifying him metaphorically with the evil impulse (*yetzer hara*) in man.

4. Satan as a proper name in the New Testament

The Greek word *satanas* in the New Testament (which occurs 38 times in 36 verses) is transliterated from Aramaic,[54] but ultimately derives from Hebrew.[55] It usually occurs with the article and would thus be translated literally into English as 'the satan' or, if taken as a proper name, Satan (proper names in ancient Greek are often preceded by the article, so if one were to translate the New Testament woodenly one would have references to 'the Jesus').

This raises an important question: is *ho satanas* a proper name? There is widespread agreement amongst scholars that indeed, Satan always functions as a proper name in the New Testament.[56] Indeed, Christadelphian writer Peter Watkins all but conceded this point when he said that "Satan in the New Testament is always a special adversary – the great adversary." However, as we saw earlier, Christadelphian writer Duncan Heaster claimed that *satanas* in the New Testament is simply a transliterated Hebrew word (Aramaic, technically) with the same generic meaning that it takes in the Old Testament.

Is this feasible? Well, there are quite a number of transliterated Hebrew and Aramaic words in the New Testament. Some of them are proper names, including people's names (such as Thomas and Bartimaeus), angels' names (such as Michael and Abaddon) and place names (such as Sodom and Golgotha). Others are not proper names but common nouns (such as *mamonas*, *raka* and *rabbi*) or other expressions (such as *Amen*, *talitha cumi* and *Maran atha*). Thus, *prima facie* we have a basis for arguing that *satanas* in the New Testament is either a proper name, Satan, or a transliterated Hebrew-Aramaic word meaning 'adversary.' Which is it?

First of all, it is known that Satan was being used as a proper name in Jewish writings prior to or contemporary with the New Testament, such as the [Book of Jubilees 10:11; 23:29; 50:5](#),[57] the [Testament of Job](#),[58] and [The Assumption of Moses](#).[59] As we noted earlier, this may even be the

---

[54] Strong 2009: 1668; Partridge 1970: 157; Millard 2005: 144.
[55] A textual variant in 2 Cor. 12:7 reads *satan* rather than *satanas*, which would be a transliteration directly from Hebrew. However, textual scholars have regarded *satanas* as the original reading.
[56] Bell 2007: 10; Guiley 2009: 222; Arndt, Danker & Bauer 2000: 916.
[57] Schaferdiek 1971: 154.
[58] Garrett 1998: 41.
[59] Branden 2006: 17.

case in the Old Testament in 1 Chronicles 21, as well as in the Apocrypha in Sirach 21:27 (although in the latter case it may be a polemic *against* the existence of the being so named). Thus we have a precedent for taking Satan as a proper name in the New Testament.

Secondly, let us compare *satanas* with other transliterated Hebrew-Aramaic expressions in the New Testament which are not proper names. In this study we are focusing especially on the Gospel of Mark and the epistles to the Corinthians because of their audiences.

4.1. Satan as a proper name in Mark

A strong case can be made that Mark's Gospel was written primarily to "a Greek-speaking audience that did not know Aramaic…gentile Christians, familiar with both the gospel traditions and the Judaism of the first century."[60] A well-supported tradition holds that Mark wrote his Gospel for the church at Rome.[61] That his readers did not know Aramaic is evident from the fact that he provides translations of several Aramaic expressions into Greek (Mark 5:41; 7:34; 14:36; 15:34). That their familiarity with Jewish customs was limited can be seen from the explanation provided in Mark 7:3-4.

Mark uses other Hebrew-Aramaic terms in his Gospel which he does not explain: *Amen* (Mark 3:28; 6:11; etc.), *Gehenna* (Mark 9:43, 45, 47), *Hosanna* (11:9-10), *pascha* (14:1), *rabbi* (Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45), *rabboni* (Mark 10:51); *sabbaton* (Mk 1:2 etc.), and *satana* (Mark 1:13, 3:23, 26; 4:15; 8:33).

In the case of *pascha*, this term was probably well known to Gentile Christians as 1 Cor. 5:7-8 implies that they observed the Passover festival in some form.[62] Anyone with a slight knowledge of Judaism would have known about the Sabbath, and indeed the term is transliterated nearly 100 times in the Septuagint.

Hosanna is an Aramaic term from synagogue liturgy meaning "Save us!"[63] that was taken over by the early church[64] (and continues to be used in songs of praise to this day!)

Gehenna refers to a place, the Valley of Hinnom, but thereby refers metaphorically to the place of final punishment. This term could not have been translated into Greek without retaining at least the 'Hinnom' or 'Henna' as a transliterated name (as the Septuagint did, e.g. *pharanx huiou Ennom*, Jer. 7:32). It is thus effectively a proper name, and the transliteration rather than translation of the 'Ge' prefix probably means that it had become a technical theological term in the early church (as it did in rabbinic Judaism as well).

Since John provides translations for the terms *rabbi* and *rabboni* in his Gospel (1:38; 20:16), it stands to reason that Gentile readers could not necessarily be assumed to know these Aramaic terms. Mark may have assumed his readers would recognize that these terms were equivalent to

---

[60] Stein 2008: 9-10.
[61] Stein 2008: 10.
[62] See Marshall 1980: 117.
[63] Millard 2005: 140.
[64] Dormeyer 1998: 147.

the Greek *didaskalos,* which he used more frequently and in an almost identical way (as a form of respectful address).

Thus, in the case of all the other transliterated Semitic terms in Mark, we have either a translation into Greek, or a plausible explanation for how the term would have been known to the early church. However, for the term *satanas* there is no obvious explanation. As we saw above, the similar transliteration *satan* occurs in just one obscure text in the Septuagint, and without the article at that. This is hardly grounds for Mark to assume that his readers would know what he was talking about when he referred to *ho satanas* with the article.

Simply put, if we look for other transliterated Semitic terms in Mark which occur with the article and are not translated for the reader, all we will find are proper names: *ho iesous* (Jesus) and *ton ioannen* (John) in [Mark 1:14](), *ho herodes* (Herod) in [Mark 6:17](), *to pilato* (Pilate) in [Mark 15:1](), etc.

It must therefore be concluded that in Mark, *ho satanas* is the proper name or title of a specific entity or at very least the technical term for a specific theological idea which had become well-known in the church. It cannot be allowed to vary in meaning from one passage to another. As Gibson explains,

> "The figure whom Mark designates as the perpetrator of Jesus' Wilderness temptation, whether called Satan or one of a host of other names, was not an 'unknown quantity'. On the contrary, in Mark's time and in the thought world which Mark and his audience shared, Satan's identity and the activities characteristic of him were both well-defined and widely known."[65]

> "ho Satanas is here at Mk 1.13a a proper name, not a common noun, and denotes a particular being, a distinct personality"[66]

Hence, "Satanology is an important theme for Mark"[67] as opposed to a scattering of references to various adversaries.

Christadelphians might claim that *ho satanas* is the 'proper name' of a personification of evil desires, which became established in the early church as a technical theological term. As we saw earlier, numerous scholars interpret Sirach 21:27 as identifying *ho satanas* with evil desires and rejecting the idea of a personal being called *ho satanas.* From this premise one could argue that the early church followed this wisdom tradition and rejected the apocalyptic tradition which viewed Satan as the proper name of a personal being.

One problem with this view is that, if it were the case, we would expect the New Testament to be explicit about it and clearly differentiate between the true, figurative doctrine of Satan and the false, literal doctrine of Satan. The need to be explicit about this would have been especially

---

[65] Gibson 2004: 58.
[66] Gibson 2004: 58 n. 54.
[67] Dochhorn 2013: 104.

great in books with a great deal of apocalyptic imagery, such as Matthew and Revelation, since the doctrine of a real, personal Satan was firmly entrenched in apocalyptic Judaism.[68]

Instead, the New Testament writers consistently assume that their readers know what they mean by *ho satanas*. Even more remarkably, they consistently refer to *ho satanas* **as though he were a person**, as Christadelphians acknowledge. This is the last kind of figurative language that would be expected from a church seeking to distance itself from the view that *ho satanas* was a personal being!

This problem comes to the fore in Mark's Gospel. In Mark 3:23, 26 *ho satanas* clearly refers to a personal being, equivalent to Beelzebul, the prince of demons (Mark 3:22). This person is the referent of *ho satanas* here even if it is claimed that Jesus did not believe in his existence but only assumed it for the sake of argument (itself a dubious claim in view of the parable in Mark 3:27).[69]

Since we have already seen that *satanas* in Mark functions as a proper name or title and not a generic term for adversary, we are required to infer that *satanas* has the same meaning in Mark 1:13 and 4:15 as it has in 3:23-26, especially since *satanas* occurs with the article in all three texts.[70] It can be said with near certainty that Mark would not use the transliterated Aramaic term *ho satanas* with the article to refer to two or three[71] different 'satans' without defining 'the satan' clearly in each case.

Given that *ho satanas* functions as a proper name in Mark, in order to avoid the conclusion that it is the proper name of a personal being we must either interpret *ho satanas* in Mark 1:13 and 4:15 as 'the alleged personal Satan believed in by the Jews,' or else interpret *ho satanas* in Mark 3:23-26 as the personification of the evil desires. Neither option is plausible. In this case, the implication of taking Satan as a proper name is that Satan refers to a real personal being.

4.2. Satan as a proper name in Paul's epistles to the Corinthians

As for audience of Paul's letters to the Corinthians, "the picture that emerges is one of a predominantly Gentile community".[72] Indeed:

"Paul's letters give a strong impression of a significant, and probably majority, Gentile audience in almost every case...in 1 Corinthians it seems clear that Paul addresses a number of questions that have to do with the way the audience are to relate to their

---

[68] See Sim 2005: 36ff.
[69] See my analysis of this text in Farrar 2014: 9-14.
[70] The article occurs in Mark 3:26 but not 3:23. It also occurs in the parallel saying to 3:23 in Matt. 12:26, as well as in Luke 11:18. The article does not occur in Mark 8:33, which will be commented on below.
[71] Most Christadelphian writers have taken Satan in Mark 1:13 as a personification of evil desires, in Mark 3:23-26 as a Jewish concept which Jesus rejected, and in Mark 4:15 either as the Jewish religious leaders or again a personification of evil desires. For a full discussion of these passages see Farrar: 2013 and Farrar: 2014.
[72] Fee 1987: 4.

Christian belief and practice with those familiar to them from their Gentile/Greco-Roman environment and their own Gentile identity."[73]

Thus in all probability, Paul's audience in Corinth did not know Aramaic; and yet Paul uses the transliterated Aramaic word *satanas* five times in his two epistles without ever explaining what it means. Thus Williams explains:

> "Paul probably had to make a deliberate effort to import Satan into his Gentile churches, since *Satanas* is an Aramaism, generally unknown to native Greek speakers at the time."[74]

And again:

> "By leaving the word un-translated (transliterating: *Satanas*) and persistently giving it the definite article, Paul probably intends this to be a personal name or at least a definite title: 'Satan'."[75]

This conclusion is in no way mitigated by the presence of the Hebrew transliteration *Amen* (1 Cor. 14:16; 16:24; 2 Cor. 1:20) and the Aramaic expressions *Maran atha* (1 Cor. 16:22) and *pascha* (1 Cor. 5:7) in the letters to Corinth without explanation. In the latter case, as discussed above, the text implies that the Passover festival was known and observed in Gentile churches. As for *Amen* and *Maran atha*, these expressions would certainly have been known to the Corinthian church through liturgical use[76] (as 1 Cor. 14:16 itself implies in the case of *Amen*).[77]

An expression like *ho satanas*, however, even if preserved through liturgical use (which is far less likely) would have required detailed doctrinal explanation. This again points to its functioning as a personal name or at least a definite title, and not merely a word meaning 'adversary' which was flexible in application. This is exegetically important since (as we shall see) Christadelphians have tended to interpret Satan in some of the Corinthians texts (such as 2 Cor. 11:14) to be a certain human adversary (individual or collective) opposed to Paul's work.

In summary, there is good reason to think that *ho satanas* functions as a proper name, Satan, in Mark and 1 Corinthians. That being the case, we have every reason to assume, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that it functions as a proper name in the other nine New Testament books where it occurs (Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy and Revelation).

5. The meaning of the word *satana* in Mark 8:33

The question to which we now turn is the meaning of Mark 8:33 (and its parallel in Matthew 16:23). Specifically, what did Jesus mean when he rebuked Peter with the words, "Get behind

---

[73] Sim & McLaren 2014: 146.
[74] Williams 2009: 102.
[75] Williams 2009: 88.
[76] Fee 1987: 838; see also Barton 2004: 335.
[77] Dormeyer 1998: 147.

me, Satan!" The Markan version of this narrative is quoted in its immediate context below. The reader is also encouraged to read [Matthew 16:13-28].

> 27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.
>
> 31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."
>
> 34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:27-38 NRSV)

5.1.   Christadelphian Interpretation

When we examine the way Christadelphians have interpreted Mark 8:33 (or its parallel in Matthew) over the decades, it becomes apparent that the approaches mirror the spectrum of views on the uniqueness or definitiveness of 'Satan' in the New Testament as the great adversary, the carnal mind.

Robert Roberts, for instance, took Satan simply to mean 'adversary' here but also inferred a figurative reference to the great adversary by means of synecdoche, a figure of speech in which a part of something is referred to as the whole.[78] For Roberts, Peter is "part of the great adversary."

> "Jesus on a certain occasion styled Peter 'Satan'…(Matt. 16:23; Mark 8:33). Understanding 'Satan' to mean adversary, we can comprehend this incident. Peter protested against the sacrifice of Christ. He thereby took the attitude of an enemy, for had Jesus not died, the purpose of his manifestation would have been frustrated…In opposing the death of Christ, Peter, was therefore, Satan, *in the Bible sense*. This sense Christ actually defines: 'Thou (Peter) savourest not the things that be of God but THOSE THAT BE OF MEN'. To be on the side of men against God is to be Satan. Peter was, for

---

[78] An example would be the headline, "Canada Votes", in which that part of the population who vote are referred to as though they are the entire country.

the moment, in this position. He made himself part of the great adversary – the carnal mind…Was Peter Satan in the orthodox sense? He was, if the orthodox construction of the word is correct; for Jesus says he was. But Peter was a man who became Christ's leading apostle. Therefore, the orthodox construction is a mistaken and ridiculous construction, from which we shake ourselves free, in recognition of the fact that Peter for the moment was a Bible Satan."[79]

Thomas Williams, as we saw earlier, viewed Satan strictly as a common noun meaning 'adversary' in the New Testament just as in the Old. He uses Matt. 16:23 as his proof text for this claim:

"The facts in these cases interpret the word, and there is not the slightest hint that it means the devil of popular belief. A case in the New Testament will help further to put the matter in the true light. [*quotes Matt. 16:22-23*] It was not a separate supernatural satan that inspired the words of Peter. No such satan is needed here in order to understand the words. It was Peter's love for his Master and, no doubt, his thought of fighting for his protection that prompted the words. Nevertheless the apostle was opposing the right and was therefore an adversary."[80]

Within Watkins' modified approach that saw 'Satan' as an elaborate, sustained New Testament parable, Mark 8:33/Matt. 16:23 was no longer a proof text to show the generic nature of the term, but rather a text that had to be weaved into the new paradigm. Since for Watkins there is only one New Testament Satan, and since Jesus appears to call Peter Satan, necessarily took the term metaphorically:

"And why was Peter called Satan, when his untimely intervention sprang only from his affection for the Lord? Remember that in the New Testament Satan is always a name with a sinister significance…However good his intentions, Peter was tempting the Lord to disobey God. He was doing what the serpent had done to Eve. When Jesus had expressed his readiness to die in Jerusalem, Peter had rebuked him. One can almost hear the voice of the serpent in Peter's words, 'Thou shalt not surely die'. The suggestion then is that Peter is called Satan because he is playing the role of the serpent. If the Lord Jesus had listened to Peter, the tragedy of Eden would have been enacted again – this time with irrevocable consequences for all humanity."[81]

Pearce reverted to the approach taken by Williams. Having concluded that the Old Testament word satan means an adversary, most often an evil adversary, Pearce argues as follows under the heading 'Peter – a Satan!':

With this valuable background understanding we now look at an example of the use of "satan" in the New Testament. Peter had just made his great declaration of belief in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" and Jesus had pronounced a blessing upon him as a result. But Jesus then went on to speak of his own fate; he would have to

---

[79] Roberts 1884: 112.
[80] Williams 1892.
[81] Watkins 1971: 28-29.

go to Jerusalem and there the leaders of the Jews would seize him and he would be killed, but he would rise again the third day (Matthew 16:21). Peter could neither understand nor accept this and began to rebuke Jesus: "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." In other words, "You must not think of such a thing". But Jesus said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan: you are a hindrance to me".

Why was Peter a "satan"? Because he was being "an adversary" to Jesus; he was trying to persuade the Lord not to do what he knew had to be done in his obedience to the will of God. If Peter had had his way, Jesus would have rejected his Father's will and his great sacrifice for sin upon the cross would never have taken place. So Jesus had to tell this "adversary" (satan) to "get behind me". And then he adds a comment which is most important for our understanding: You are an adversary and a stumbling block to me, says Jesus in effect to Peter, for your mind is not on the "things of God, but the things of men" (verse 23, RV).[82]

In his recent and monumental book *The Real Devil*, Duncan Heaster likewise retains the interpretation of Williams and Pearce:

"Thus Peter was called a Satan. The record is crystal clear that Christ was not talking to an angel or a monster when he spoke those words; he was talking to Peter...the word 'Satan' just means an adversary...Peter is described by Jesus as a stumbling block across His path to the cross, and thus Peter is a 'Satan' (Mt. 16:23)"[83]

Finally, in his treatise *Satan and Demons* (a response to a critique of the Christadelphian position), Jonathan Burke neglects to clearly state whether he takes *satana* in Mark 8:33 to mean 'adversary' generically or as a metaphorical reference to the 'great adversary', the carnal mind. However, he does compare this passage to the wilderness temptation narratives, and argues that in both cases Christ is faced with a temptation "to follow God's interests, or his own." Like Roberts, he adduces the reference to Peter's setting his mind on human things as proof of the internal nature of the adversary. To this evidence he adds the reference in the following verse to "the denial of self."[84]

We now have a clear background on the history of Christadelphian interpretation of the word *satana* in Mark 8:33 and Matt. 16:23. We have seen that there have been, and continue to be, two distinct views of what the word means here. For some, Jesus calls Peter an adversary in a straightforward, literal sense because of his opposition to Jesus' purpose. For others, Jesus refers to the grand New Testament parable of Satan, the personification of the carnal mind, and figuratively identifies Peter with it.

5.2.   Analysis and Proposed Interpretation

When Jesus originally spoke these words to Peter, he presumably spoke them in Aramaic. As previously discussed, although *satan* was originally a Hebrew word, it was transliterated into

---

[82] Pearce 1986: 6-7.
[83] Heaster 2012: 159-160.
[84] Burke 2007: 184.

Aramaic as a loanword, *satana*, where it retained the following meanings: "hostile being, hinderer, disturber; accuser, Satan."[85] Thus, when Jesus spoke these words to Peter in Aramaic, while he may have explicitly used Satan as a proper name, it more likely sounded like, "Get behind me, hinderer."

However, at some stage after this incident occurred, it was preserved in an oral tradition. It was traditionally believed that Mark used Peter as his eyewitness source, in which case the oral tradition may come from Peter himself. Peter may have passed the oral tradition to Mark in Aramaic, or it may have already been translated into Greek. What is certain is that some point – under divine inspiration, we believe – this story was translated from Aramaic into Greek.

When that occurred, the word *satana* was not translated into Greek using a word with a similar meaning, such as *diabolos* or *antidikos*; instead it was transliterated as *satanas*. We have seen above that this suggests the word was understood to be a proper name, or at least the title of a specific being or entity. Mark clearly interpreted these words of Jesus to mean more than simply that Peter was an adversary or hinderer to him.

This conclusion is not invalidated by the absence of the article with *satanas* in this text. The word *satanas* is used here in the vocative case to denote direct address. The article is only very rarely used in such cases.[86] Indeed, in Matthew 4:10, the only other text where *satanas* is used in direct address, there is also no article, even though it refers to a noun which is definite in the immediate context (*ho diabolos*; *ho peirazon*).

The Greek is therefore ambiguous as to whether *satanas* is definite or indefinite in Mark 8:33 (and Matthew 16:23). The use of the word as direct address is consistent with it being a proper name, and we have already argued earlier that Mark uses the term in that way. We can thus draw a preliminary conclusion that, according to Mark (and by extension, Matthew) Jesus called Peter "Satan" and not merely "adversary."

It is true that the context of the statement speaks of Peter setting his mind on human things and on the need for self-denial. However, this language does not rule out the presence of external, supernatural influence on Peter. Indeed, such an understanding of the reference to Satan is supported by the highly epiphanic and apocalyptic nature of this narrative.

In both Mark and Matthew, Peter has just confessed that Jesus is the Messiah, which (in Matthew) is attributed not to flesh and blood but a direct revelation from the heavenly Father (Matt. 16:17). Peter is thus under the influence of supernatural forces. Likewise, in both Matthew and Mark this dialogue is followed by a saying about the coming of the Son of Man (Mark 8:38; Matt. 16:27-28), and then by the highly supernatural transfiguration experience which involved Peter (Mark 9:1ff; Matt. 17:1ff).

Witherington states the implications of this context:

---

[85] Jastrow 1926: 1554.
[86] Wallace 1996: 67-68.

19 | P a g e   w w w . d i a n o i g o . c o m

"It is, of course, possible to see the use of the term 'Satan' here as generic, simply meaning adversary, but the apocalyptic character of the narrative suggests a stronger reading. While Peter is not possessed, he is influenced by the forces of darkness to think in a merely human manner about the future of Jesus. So Peter unwittingly serves as Satan's tool here, ironically at the precise moment when he also has gained a partial insight into Jesus' identity."[87]

The view that Peter here acts as an agent or tool of Satan (or, for some, is even possessed by him!) has gained wide acceptance among recent commentators and scholars.[88] It is worth quoting France's observations which tie in with our conclusion that Satan is always a proper name in the New Testament:

"It is sometimes suggested that, in view of the root meaning of the Semitic term, 'the Adversary,' it might be used here in that weaker sense, 'my adversary,' rather than with overt reference to the devil himself. Not only is there no parallel to such a use, but the retention of the Aramaic form rather than the use of a Greek equivalent such as *antidikos* surely indicates that it was recognized and remembered as a proper name, applied, however incongruously, to a human spokesman of Satan."[89]

Indeed, this is basically the view taken by the Christadelphian writers Watkins and Roberts, who both understood Jesus to be making a figurative reference to the 'great adversary,' Satan, and not merely calling Peter an adversary. Watkins and Roberts, of course, understand Satan to be a personification of sin,[90] not a person. However, only the personal view of Satan unites all four Markan passages about Satan (1:13; 3:22-27; 4:15; 8:33) under a single referential meaning, since Satan in Mark 3 clearly refers to a personal being (whether real or hypothetical). This consistency is an attractive characteristic for the interpretation of a transliterated Hebrew-Aramaic term which was (from a lexical point of view) foreign to Mark's readers.

5.2.1. Comparison with Luke 22:31-32

As a further observation on the meaning of the phrase, "Get behind me, Satan" we can compare it to another text which links Peter with Satan: Luke 22:31-32. In this passage, prior to predicting Peter's threefold denial, we have Jesus saying:

31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. (NASB)

"You" in v. 31 is plural in the Greek, meaning that Satan wanted to sift all the disciples like wheat. However, "you" in v. 32 is singular, indicating that Jesus prayed for Peter specifically so

---

[87] Witherington 2001: 243.
[88] See, for example: Stein 2008: 403; Wessel & Strauss 2010: 832; Dochhorn 2013: 99; Shively 2012: 162; Garrett 1998: 76-79.
[89] France 2002: 338 n. 61.
[90] As was noted concerning the Corinthian Satan texts, this interpretation runs afoul of Occam's Razor by requiring two figures of speech (personification and metaphor or synecdoche) to be combined before the sense of the passage is intelligible.

that he could then strengthen the others. The "sifting like wheat" metaphor probably draws on Old Testament judgment imagery of sifting and of separating wheat from chaff (Ps. 35:5; Jer. 13:24; Amos 9:9; cf. Matt. 3:12).

Importantly, the verb rendered 'demanded *permission*' in the NASB is *exaiteo,* meaning "to ask for with emphasis and with implication of having a right to do so."[91] To whom has Satan requested permission? As Jesus' response was to pray, it is clear that Satan's request was to God. This is widely believed to reflect Job 1:6-12, where the adversary likewise demanded that a righteous person be exposed to hardship.[92] Thus, whereas Satan serves as the heavenly Prosecutor, Jesus counters him as the heavenly Advocate (cf. 1 John 2:1). In view of this allusion, Satan must be understood here as a supernatural being, not the carnal mind (or any extension of that idea). This passage requires us to interpret Peter's denial of the Lord "in the context of Satan's incitement of the disciples to fall."[93]

This provides a literary-historical setting within which the interpretation of Mark 8:33/Matt. 16:23 as an implied reference to the activity of the personal Satan fits seamlessly.

5.2.2. Comparison with texts about Satan and Judas

In both Luke 22:3 and John 13:27, Satan is said to "enter into" (*eiserchomai*) Judas. This is the language of demonic possession (Mark 5:12; 9:25; Luke 8:30, 32), which provides additional grounds for understanding Satan as a hostile spirit being in his interactions with Peter. It also provides some background to interpreting a difficult saying of Jesus concerning Judas:

> "70 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" 71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him" (John 6:70-71 NRSV).

This is the only place in the New Testament besides Mark 8:33/Matt. 16:23 where either of the nouns *satanas* or *diabolos* are used of a human being.[94] That the two words are equivalent in their use with respect to Judas may be verified by comparing John 13:2 with 13:27.

The word *diabolos* lacks the definite article in John 6:70, which has led most English translations to render it "a devil" as the NRSV does. Accordingly the saying has commonly been interpreted as identifying Judas as an adversary or slanderer, the common meaning of the noun *diabolos*.[95] This is more plausible here than in Mark 8:33, since *diabolos* is a Greek word and not a transliteration.

However, another possibility exists. The NET renders v. 70, "Jesus replied, 'Didn't I choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is the devil?'" Wallace explains the rationale for taking *diabolos* as a definite noun here:

---

[91] Arndt, Danker & Bauer 2000: 344.
[92] Pao & Schnabel 2007: 384.
[93] Nielsen 2000: 123.
[94] The references to undignified people as slanderers in 1 Tim. 3:11, 2 Tim. 3:3 and Titus 2:3 are excluded since *diabolos* functions as an adjective in these texts (Wallace 1996: 224).
[95] See, for example, Tenney 1997: 202.

"A curious phenomenon has occurred in the English Bible with reference to one particular monadic noun,[96] *diabolos*. The KJV translates both *diabolos* and *daimonion* as 'devil.' Thus in the AV translators' minds, 'devil' was not a monadic noun. Modern translations have correctly rendered *daimonion* as 'demon' and have, for the most part, recognized that diabolos is monadic (cf., e.g., 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 20:2 [in which *diabolos* lacks the article]). But in John 6:70 modern translations have fallen into the error of the King James translators. The KJV has 'one of you is a devil.' So does the RSV, NRSV, ASV, NIV, NKJV, and JB. Yet there is only one devil. A typical objection to the rendering 'one of you is the devil' is that this would identify Judas with the devil. Yes, that is true – on the surface. Obviously that is not what is literally meant – any more than it is literally true that Peter is Satan (Mark 8:33 and parallels). The legacy of the KJV still lives on, then, even in places where it ought not."[97]

In support of taking *diabolos* as definite in John 6:70, he further adduces a rule of Greek grammar called Colwell's rule. Such considerations are beyond our scope, but it is worth noting that the even the word *theos* (God) occurs a number of times in John's Gospel without the article, with God as the referent (John 1:6; 1:18; 3:2; 3:21; 8:54; etc.)

Hence it is plausible that, like Mark 8:33, this saying of Jesus refers to one of his disciples figuratively as Satan because the person has become a tool of the enemy.

In summary, *satanas* in Mark 8:33 is not merely a generic term for adversary (contra Williams, Pearce and Heaster). As Roberts and Watkins acknowledged, it is a figurative reference to Peter's being an agent of Satan (a proper name or definite title). However, as the context of Mark's Gospel and a related passage from Luke shows, Satan refers not to a personification of sin but to a supernatural personal being.

6. The meaning of *satanas* in 2 Corinthians

Paul makes reference to Satan twice in 1 Corinthians and thrice in 2 Corinthians. Our analysis focuses on two of the texts from 2 Corinthians. They are quoted in their immediate contexts below:

1 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! 2 I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough. 5 I think that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. 6 I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this evident to you...

---

[96] A monadic noun is a one-of-a-kind noun.
[97] Wallace 1996: 249. Other proponents of taking *diabolos* in John 6:70 as an allusion to Satan, the devil, are Zuck 1983: 298; Ridderbos 1997: 438; Gundry 2011.

12 And what I do I will also continue to do, in order to deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about. 13 For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! Even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds. (2 Corinthians 11:1-6, 12-15 NRSV)

6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of **Satan** to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:6-10 NRSV)

Let us consider how Christadelphians have approached Paul's references to Satan in the epistles to the Corinthians.

6.1. Christadelphian exegesis of Satan texts in 1 and 2 Corinthians

The founder of the Christadelphian movement, Dr. John Thomas, suggested that 'Satan' in 2 Cor. 11:14 referred to the same unknown human adversary who he believed tempted Jesus in the wilderness.[98] He interpreted other Satan texts in the Corinthian epistles (1 Cor. 5:5 and 2 Cor. 2:11) with reference to sin in the flesh.[99]

Roberts and Williams proposed that Satan in 1 Cor. 5:5 refers to the world, "which was a satan, or an adversary to Christ and His ecclesia,"[100] or "which is the great enemy or adversary of God."[101] Neither writer offers an interpretation of the other Corinthian texts in his treatise on the devil.

The 'generic human adversary' interpretation still has currency today, as Burke writes concerning 2 Cor. 11:14:

"What then is the identity of the satan in this passage? The text leads us naturally to the conclusion that the satan was a particular adversary of Paul's, a certain false teacher who - with his equally false messengers - was opposing the true teaching of Paul and the other apostles."[102]

---

[98] Thomas 1867: 78.
[99] Thomas 1867: 102.
[100] Williams 1892.
[101] Roberts 1884: 113.
[102] Burke 2007: 63.

Abel proposed that Satan in 2 Cor. 11:14 refers to "Jewish adversaries who were undermining the apostle Paul's influence in the Corinthian ecclesia," and more specifically to their "chief leader."[103]

Pearce did not refer to any of the Corinthian Satan texts in his pamphlet on the devil.[104]

Heaster suggests that Satan refers in 1 Cor. 5:5 to the Roman authorities,[105] in 2 Cor. 2:11 to "the local 'satan' of the Roman or Jewish authorities,"[106] and in 2 Cor. 11:14, "The individual 'Satan' in the singular referred to in 11:14 can either be the Jewish system as a whole trying to give a Christian façade...or an individual leader of the Jewish system...[such as] the High Priest."[107] The latter interpretation is again followed in 2 Cor. 12:7.[108] For 1 Cor. 5:5 and 2 Cor. 2:11 he also suggests a metaphorical interpretation of Satan as the desires of sin, and so remains non-committal.

Among Christadelphian writers it is only Watkins who has appreciated the significance of Satan as a specialized term rather than a word meaning adversary; consequently he sticks to a spiritualized interpretation of Satan in 1 Cor. 5:5, where "delivering unto Satan means the giving over of a man to the consequences of his own godless desires,"[109] and in 2 Cor. 11:14, where Satan refers to "the prototype of all false teachers, the serpent,"[110] who in Watkins' understanding "became" Satan, i.e. a symbol of human desires that are hostile to the will of God. Watkins understands the phrase "even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" to refer to the way "The serpent presented himself to Eve as one who could enlighten by communicating the mind of God."

6.2.   Analysis and Proposed Interpretation

We should first observe that besides these two texts are two other likely references to Satan in 2 Corinthians by other titles: "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4) and "Beliar" (2 Cor. 6:15). Arguments for the identification of these terms with Satan will not be made here, but command widespread scholarly support.[111] Note the light and darkness imagery in 2 Cor. 4:4, which also occurs in 2 Cor. 11:14 (see also Acts 26:18, taken from Paul's speech to Agrippa).

Now, all of the Christadelphian interpretations of 2 Cor. 11:14 and 2 Cor. 12:7 which understand "Satan" to refer to an adversary other than 'the great adversary, the carnal mind' can be all but ruled out on the grounds that Satan functions as a proper name in this epistle. This would leave only Watkins' interpretation of 2 Cor. 11:14 to evaluate (since he did not offer any view on 2 Cor. 12:7).

---

[103] Abel & Allfree 2011: http://www.wrestedscriptures.com/b07satan/2corinthians11v14.html
[104] Pearce 1986.
[105] Heaster 2012: 425.
[106] Heaster 2012: 428.
[107] Heaster 2012: 437.
[108] Heaster 2012: 440.
[109] Watkins 1971: 41.
[110] Watkins 1971: 26.
[111] See Williams 2009: 100-101. This is not to say that 'Belial' refers to Satan in the Old Testament; only that by the first century it had become an epithet for Satan in Judaism.

6.2.1. Satan in 2 Corinthians 11:14

Watkins' view that this text refers to the serpent's behaviour in the Garden of Eden is difficult to reconcile with the present tense of the verb *metaschematizetai* (disguises). Note the contrast with 2 Cor. 11:3, where *exepatesen* (deceived) is used of the serpent in the aorist tense. Watkins' interpretation of 2 Cor. 11:14 is farfetched, which is probably why other Christadelphian writers have avoided it; nevertheless it is the only one which attempts to reconcile the passage with his insight that the word Satan refers everywhere to the same great adversary.

Other Christadelphians, as we saw above, take 'Satan' in 2 Cor. 11:14 to refer to some specific human adversary, either individual or corporate. This would require understanding the phrase *angelon photos* to mean "messenger of light" (referring to a human messenger) rather than "angel of light." From a lexical point of view this is possible, as "a human messenger serving as an envoy" is the basic definition of the word.[112] However, in Judaism and early Christianity the word became the term used for the transcendent beings known in English as angels. This meaning of the word dominates the New Testament usage, with at least 154 out of 176 occurrences (88%) referring to angelic beings. There are only six occurrences (3%) which can be said with certainty to refer to human messengers (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; Luke 9:52; James 2:25). Note that none of these are in Paul's writings. Thus before even looking at the specific context we must consider it unlikely that the word *angelos* refers to a human messenger.

The fact that the word is modified with "of light" renders a reference to a human messenger even less likely. Thrall proposes that the term angel of light derives "from the general idea that angels make their appearance in a state of radiant glory: see, e.g., Luke 2:9; 24:4".[113] The Qumran sect also used the term "angel of light" in a dualistic way contrasted with the angel of darkness, and Thrall notes the similarities between these outlook and 2 Cor. 6:14-15.[114]

Further evidence that the term "angel of light" here refers to a supernatural being is found in the Epistle of Barnabas, a late first century or early second century Christian work which contrasts "the light giving angels of God" with "the angels of Satan" (Barnabas 18:1). This language also suggests that Satan himself is a supernatural being and has his own angels (a point relevant to the interpretation of 2 Cor. 12:7).

As for the language of disguise or transformation, Williams remarks, "That angels in general or Satan in particular might transform themselves was well known in Judaism."[115] Close parallels to Paul's language are found in the Latin and Greek versions of a Jewish text called the Life of Adam and Eve (the Greek version is also known as the Apocalypse of Moses). This text gives an expanded version of the events in the Garden of Eden. In the Greek version, Satan disguises himself as an angel (Apocalypse of Moses 17:2; 29:15), and the Latin version states, "Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of angels" (Life of Adam and Eve 9:1). The original composition of this Jewish text probably occurred in the late first century B.C. and

---

[112] Arndt, Danker & Bauer 2000: 8.
[113] Thrall 2000: 696.
[114] Thrall 1994: 32-33.
[115] Williams 2009: 94. See the list of Jewish parallels in Keener 2005: 230.

certainly before 70 A.D.,[116] and thus may have been known to Paul at the time he wrote 2 Corinthians in the late 50s. McDonald writes, "Whether Paul knew these documents is uncertain, but the tradition that lies behind them is also assumed by Paul."[117]

The relevance of this textual tradition for interpreting 2 Cor. 11:14 is heightened by the fact that he has just referred to Eve and the serpent in 2 Cor. 11:3. This makes the case for a supernatural interpretation of both the terms "angel of light" and, more importantly, "Satan," very strong indeed. Indeed, the one follows from the other, as a human adversary could hardly disguise himself as an angel.[118] However, the implication in this case goes further.

Williams argues that in 2 Cor. 11:2-3 Paul implies that Eve committed some sort of sexual infidelity, as she is the counter-example to the "pure virgin." He notes that this idea can be found in rabbinical literature, certain early Christian writings, and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve. This "specifically links 2 Cor 11 to the midrashic development of Genesis, a development which understands Satan as the source of temptation." [119] Hence, in the way he refers to the events in Eden Paul implicitly claims that the serpent deceived Eve at Satan's instigation! Williams concludes:

> "Notably, therefore, Paul assumes that his readers know what he is talking about when he suggests that Eve was no chaste virgin or that Satan can transform himself. The fact that this is an unspoken subtext should not diminish its significance. On the contrary, the narratives which Paul can unquestioningly rely on, in which he expects his readers to fill in the blanks, are likely to be firmly established among his followers."[120]

Notice too that in Paul's argument in vv. 14-15, the self-evident truth that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" is taken as the major premise, from which follows the minor premise that "the super-apostles are ministers of Satan and can also disguise themselves."[121] Paul's argument becomes circular logic if "Satan" and the super-apostles *both* refer to individual Jews or groups of Jews opposed to the gospel.

A Christadelphian reader may protest at this point, "Why are you bringing in all these other uninspired Jewish and Christian writings? Can't we just stick to the Bible?" This is a fair question. As an authoritative witness to God's truth we appeal only to the Bible. However, we need to remember that we are almost 2000 years removed from the cultural, linguistic and historical setting in which Paul wrote. Some of the terms in Paul's letters are not easy to understand on their own. In order to gain insight into how he may have used these terms we look at similar terminology in texts that arose from a similar historical setting. If there is a close correspondence (as we have found that there is, in the case of 2 Cor. 11:14), it is likely that Paul used the terminology with a similar meaning.

---

[116] Rost 1976: 154.
[117] McDonald 2004: 442.
[118] Buzzard (2000) makes the same point in his critique of Christadelphian satanology.
[119] Williams 2009: 95.
[120] Williams 2009: 95.
[121] cf. Matera 2003: 253.

w w w . d i a n o i g o . c o m

In summary, there is compelling evidence for understanding "Satan" in 2 Cor. 11:14 as referring to a supernatural personal being, and it is also possible that Paul endorses contemporary midrashic traditions which understood Satan to have instigated the serpent in Eden. Given that Satan is a proper name, this must inform our interpretation in other texts in the epistles to the Corinthians; indeed, in Paul's other letters and throughout the New Testament!

6.2.2. Satan in 2 Cor. 12:7

Most English translations do render angelos with "messenger" in 2 Cor. 12:7. In this case the Christadelphian view is not completely novel. The famous patristic preacher John Chrysostom of Antioch took 'Satan' in this text in the generic sense of adversary and understood it to refer to men such as Alexander the coppersmith.[122]

Our understanding of the precise referent of the "angel of Satan" or "messenger of Satan" in this text will be coloured by our understanding of Paul's "thorn in the flesh," which has proven to be a rather thorny exegetical problem. The two main views among commentators have been a severe physical ailment or illness,[123] or an experience of severe persecution.[124]

Most commentators take 'Satan' as a proper name referring to the personal Satan, but tend to take 'messenger' metaphorically as a reference to Paul's illness (if the physical affliction view is preferred) or to human messenger(s) (if the persecution view is preferred). Against the metaphorical interpretation of *angelos* is that it would be unique in Paul's writings and, indeed, within the New Testament. Against the human messenger interpretation, as Thrall observes, is that Paul presumably had more than more than one persecutor and yet *angelos* is singular.[125]

She adds additional arguments against interpreting the messenger or angel of Satan with reference to Jewish opposition:

> "In the Jewish failure to believe, Paul saw the hand of Satan, the great adversary of the gospel. But this kind of trouble could hardly be classified as one of the 'weaknesses' of v. 10. Moreover, it is difficult to believe that Paul would think of Jewish resistance to the gospel as designed for his own personal spiritual benefit, which is what this theory ultimately implies."[126]

The recent studies of Williams and Becker both argue for understanding the "angel of Satan" as a reference to a real spirit being, a member of Satan's retinue, which would imply a "kind of Satanic hierarchy in analogy to the heavenly retinue."[127]

Williams follows an interpretation which links the thorn in the flesh with Paul's recollection of being "caught up to the third heaven" in the preceding verses (2 Cor. 12:1-4). Certainly this suggests a supernatural setting for the whole argument of chapter 12! Williams states:

---

[122] Matera 2003: 283.
[123] Baker 1999: 432; McDonald 2004: 451.
[124] Thrall 1994: 116.; Keener 2005: 240.
[125] Thrall 2000: 817.
[126] Thrall 2000: 811.
[127] Williams 2009: 105ff; Becker 2013: 136.

> "If we place 2 Cor. 12:7 in the context of early Jewish mysticism, then we find precedent for the view that angels block, punish, and buffet the ascending visionary."[128]

He refers to a doctoral dissertation by Paula Gooder which makes a detailed case that "Paul reached only as high as the third of seven heavens. Paradise, not the highest heaven, was as far as he got, his path being blocked by an angel of Satan."[129] Hence the verb *huperairomai* in 2 Cor. 12:7 would have a double meaning: it takes its usual literal meaning 'to ascend,' as well as its figurative meaning, 'to become conceited.'

This 'blocked on the way up' interpretation, and indeed the claim that 2 Cor. 12:7 refers to an angel of Satan rather than a messenger are nothing to be dogmatic about. They are mentioned as a suggestion and a check on those who claim the notion of a personal Satan is disappearing from Pauline scholarship.[130] In any case the conclusion that Satan here refers to a supernatural being follows naturally from the premise that Satan is a proper name, together with the more straightforward exegesis of 2 Cor. 11:14. The similarities of this passage with Job provide additional evidence for this conclusion.

Baker notes the paradox that the thorn "was given" to him, a divine passive which means God is the presumed subject of the action, and yet the thorn is linked to the activity of Satan. He suggests this description is modeled after Job 2:1-10, in which God holds complete power over his world, and yet "allows Satan a measure of autonomy within God's rule, particularly to offer people an alternative to trusting God and following his will."[131] Talbert also observes that the language of affliction of a righteous person being instigated by a being called Satan (or 'the satan') is reminiscent of Job.[132] Since it is generally agreed amongst scholars that the satan of Job is a heavenly being, it follows that the same is true of the Satan of Paul.

In summary, it is plausible that the *angelos* referred to by Paul in 2 Cor. 12:7 could be a metaphor for a physical affliction, or a human opponent. However, the view that it refers to an angelic being is currently enjoying an increase in scholarly support, and would then match the similar term used in the Epistle of Barnabas. Regardless of which view we take of the *angelos*, 'Satan' can only refer to what it refers to everywhere else in the New Testament: a personal angelic enemy of God and his people.

---

[128] Williams 2009: 106-107.

[129] Williams 2009.

[130] Some Christadelphians have begun to claim that mainstream New Testament scholarship is in the process of jettisoning the idea of a supernatural Satan. This claim is based primarily on Caird's suggestion that some in the early church may have viewed Satan as a personification rather than a person (Caird 1995: 110). Paul was the only possible example cited by Caird. Thus, it is important to counter the claim of an alleged inevitable shift of scholarly opinion toward the Christadelphian camp by drawing attention to studies such as Williams' and Becker's, which represent a new wave away from the 'demythologised' perception of Paul's worldview which dominated late 20th century Pauline scholarship and argue that Paul was, after all, a Jewish man of his times.

[131] Baker 1999: 430.

[132] Talbert 2002: 152.

7. Conclusion

The straightforward conclusion we draw from our study is that Satan in the New Testament is a proper name and always refers to a particular personal being. It cannot possibly be a generic word which can refer to various adversaries depending on the context. Some Christadelphians, most notably Watkins, have acknowledged that Satan has a uniform meaning throughout the New Testament. Nevertheless, Watkins failed to see that this observation is fatal to Christadelphian satanology, since it is not plausible to interpret every instance of Satan in the New Testament as he proposes (the personification of sin).

Texts such as Luke 10:18, Luke 22:31, 2 Cor. 11:14, 1 Thess. 2:18, 2 Thess. 2:9, Rev. 2:13 and Rev. 20:7 plainly do not refer to Satan as the personification of evil desires; indeed, few Christadelphians generally have claimed that they do, except perhaps by metaphor or synecdoche. Such is the only recourse left to Christadelphian interpreters who accept Watkins' insight. Yet this approach involve interpreting Satan as a figurative reference to a figure of speech. A combination of two figures of speech (metaphor and personification, or synecdoche and personification) is required to make some of these passages intelligible, and in this the Christadelphian approach runs afoul of Occam's Razor.[133]

To see how complicated the figures of speech actually become under the Christadelphian view of Satan, consider Heaster's view that Satan in 1 Thess. 2:18 refers to "Jewish oppositions to the Gospel and Paul's planned preaching visit to Gentile Thessalonica" (op. cit., p. 169). If it is admitted that Satan is the proper name of the personification of evil desires, then this interpretation must be linked to it. The Jewish opposition to the Gospel serves their evil desires, and therefore, **metaphorically**, they **are** those evil desires. Thus it is necessary to combine two figures of speech together – personification and metaphor – in order to make sense of the passage. Any person who adheres to the principle of Occam's Razor would have to doubt the validity of such an approach.

The time is now ripe for Christadelphians to take the difficult step of reforming their understanding of the biblical Satan.

---

[133] Consider, for instance, Heaster's view that Satan in 1 Thess. 2:18 refers to "Jewish oppositions to the Gospel and Paul's planned preaching visit to Gentile Thessalonica" (2012: 169). If Satan is the proper name of the personification of evil desires (a figure of speech), then the "Jewish oppositions to the Gospel" can only refer to that personification by way of metaphor or synecdoche (another figure of speech): the Jewish oppositions figuratively 'are' the personification because they follow the personification or are part of the personification's kingdom.

References

Abel, R. & Allfree, J. (2011). *Wrested Scriptures: A Christadelphian Handbook of Suggested Explanations to Difficult Bible Passages*. Retrieved from http://www.wrestedscriptures.com

Arndt, W., Danker, F.W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baker, W.R. (1999). *Second Corinthians*. College Press.

Bamberger, B.J. (2010). *Fallen Angels: Soldiers of Satan's Realm*. Jewish Publication Society.

Barton, J. (2004). *The Biblical World*. Taylor & Francis.

Becker, M. (2013). Paul and Evil. In E. Koskenniemi & I. Frohlich (Eds.), *Evil and the Devil* (127-141). T&T Clark.

Bell, R.H. (2007). *Deliver us from Evil: Interpreting the Redemption from the Power of Satan in New Testament Theology*. Mohr Siebeck.

Boccaccini, G. (2006). Where Does Ben Sira Belong? The Canon, Literary Genre, Intellectual Movement, and Social Group of a Zadokite Document. *XERAVITS/ZSENGELLÉR, Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*, 21-41.

Boyd, J.W. (1975). *Satan and Mara: Christian and Buddhist Symbols of Evil*. Brill Archive.

Brand, M. (2013). *Evil within and without: The Source of Sin and its Nature as portrayed in Second Temple Literature*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Branden, R.C. (2006). *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew*. Peter Lang.

Brown, D.R. (2011). The Devil in the Details: A Survey of Research on Satan in Biblical Studies. *Currents in Biblical Research 9(2):* 200-227.

Brunton, V. (1927). *Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach*. Cambridge University Press Archive.

Burke, J. (2007). *Satan and Demons: A Reply to Anthony Buzzard*. Retrieved from

  http://www.dianoigo.com/writings_by_others/Satan_And_Demons.pdf

Buzzard, A.F. (2000). *Satan, the Personal Devil*. Retrieved from

  http://focusonthekingdom.org/articles/satan.htm

Caird, G.B. (1995). *New Testament Theology*. Oxford University Press.

Capelli, P. (2005). The Outer and the Inner Devil: On Representing the Evil One in Second

  Temple Judaism. In G. Stemberger & M. Perani (Eds.), *"The words of a wise man's*

  mouth are gracious"(Qoh 10, 12): Festschrift for Gčunter Stemberger on the occasion of

  his 65th birthday (Vol. 32) (139-152). Walter de Gruyter.

Day, P.L. (1988). *An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible*. Scholar's Press.

De La Torre, M.A. & Hernandez, A. (2011). *The Quest for the Historical Satan*. Fortress Press.

Dines, J.M. (2004). *The Septuagint*. M.A. Knibb (Ed.). Continuum.

Dochhorn, J. (2013). The Devil in the Gospel of Mark. In E. Koskenniemi & I. Frohlich (Eds.),

  Evil and the Devil (98-107). T&T Clark.

Dormeyer, D. (1998). *New Testament Among the Writings of Antiquity*. Continuum.

Farrar, T.J. (2013). *The Devil in the Wilderness: Evaluating Christadelphian exegesis of the*

  Temptation narratives. Retrieved from

  http://www.dianoigo.com/articles/The_Devil_in_the_Wilderness.pdf

Farrar, T.J. (2014). *The Enemy is the Devil: The parables of Jesus and Christadelphian*

  satanology. Retrieved from

  http://www.dianoigo.com/articles/The_Enemy_is_the_Devil.pdf

Fee, G.D. (1987). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Fokkelman, J.P. (2012). *The Book of Job in Form: A Literary Translation with Commentary*.

  BRILL.

France, R.T. (2002). *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids:

  Eerdmans.

Garrett, S.R. (1998). *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Gibson, J. (2004). *Temptations of Jesus in Early Christianity*. Continuum.

Guiley, R. (2009). *The Encyclopedia of Demons and Demonology*. Infobase Publishing.

Gundry, Robert H. (2011). *Commentary on John*. Baker Academic.

Harrington, D.J. (2005). Jesus Ben Sira of Jerusalem: A Biblical Guide to Living Wisely. Liturgical Press.

Hart, J.H.A. (1909). *Ecclesiasticus: The Greek Text of Codex 248 Edited with a Textual Commentary and Prolegomena*. Cambridge University Press.

Heaster, D. (2012). *The Real Devil* (3rd ed.). Carelinks Publishing.

Hooks, S.M. 2006. *Job*. College Press.

Japhet, S. (1993). *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*. Westminster John Knox Press.

Jastrow, M. (1926). *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature: With an Index of Scriptural Quotations* (Vol. 2). Pardes.

Keener, C.S. (2005). *First-Second Corinthians*. Cambridge University Press.

Kelly, H.A. (2006). *Satan: A Biography*. Cambridge University Press.

Klein, G.L. (2008). *Zechariah*. B&H Publishing Group.

Laato, A. (2013). The Devil in the Old Testament. In E. Koskenniemi & I. Frohlich (Eds.), *Evil and the Devil* (1-22). T&T Clark.

Lust, J., Eynikel, E. & Hauspie, K. (1992). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint, Part I*. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

Marshall, I.H. (1980). *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*. Paternoster Press.

Matera, F.J. (2003). *II Corinthians: A Commentary*. Westminster John Knox Press.

McDonald, L.M. (2004). 2 Corinthians. In C.A. Evans & I.A.H. Combes (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary* (Vol. 2) (367-458). David C. Cook.

Millard, A. (2005). *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus*. Continuum.

Nielsen, A.E. (2000). *Until it is Fulfilled: Lukan Eschatology According to Luke 22 and*

Acts 20, Part 4. Mohr Siebeck.

Pao, D.W. & Schnabel, E.J. (2007). Luke. In G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson (Eds.), *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (251-414). Baker Academic.

Partridge, E. (1970). *A New Testament word book: a glossary.* Books for Libraries Press.

Pearce, F. (1986). *Do you believe in the Devil?* Birmingham: The Christadelphian.

Petersen, D.L. (1984). *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary.* Westminster John Knox Press.

Quinn, J.D. and Wacker, W.C. (2000). *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary.* Eerdmans.

Ridderbos, H.N. (1997). *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Roberts, R. (1881). *The Evil One: Bible Teaching concerning the Devil and Satan.* Birmingham: The Christadelphian.

Roberts, R. (1884). *Christendom Astray* (1969 edition). Birmingham: The Christadelphian.

Rost, L. (1976). *Judaism Outside the Hebrew Canon: An Introduction to the Documents.* Abingdon Press.

Russell, J.B. (1977). *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity.* Cornell University Press.

Sacchi, P. (1996). Jewish Apocalyptic and its History. Continuum.

Schaferdiek, K. (1971). "satanas." In G. Kittel, G.W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 7). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Shively, E.E. (2012). *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark: The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22-30.* Walter de Gruyter.

Sim, D.C. (2005). *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew.* Cambridge University Press.

Sim, D.C. & McLaren, J.S. (2014). *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. T&T Clark.

Skehan, P.W. & Di Lella, A.A. (1987). *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes*. Doubleday.

Stein, R.H. (2008). *Mark*. Baker Academic.

Stokes, R.E. (2009). The Devil Made David Do It… or 'Did' He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the 'Satan' in 1 Chronicles 21:1. *Journal of Biblical Literature 128(1):* 91-106.

Strong, J. (2009). "Satanas." In *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible*. Hendrickson Publishers. (Original work published 1890)

Talbert, C.H. (2002). *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Smyth & Helwys.

Tennant, F.R. (2012). *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*. Cambridge University Press.

Tenney, Merrill C. (1997). *John: The Gospel of Belief*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Thomas, J. (1867). *Elpis Israel: Being an Exposition of the Kingdom of God; with Reference to the Time of the End, and the Age to Come* (4th ed.). Logos Publications.

Thrall, M.E. (1994). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the second epistle to the Corinthians* (Vol. 1). Continuum.

Thrall, M. (2000). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the second epistle to the Corinthians* (Vol. 2). Continuum.

Von Rad, G. (1964). "diabolos." In G. Kittel, G.W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 2). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Wallace, D.B. (1996). *Greek Grammar beyond the basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Zondervan.

Watkins, P. (1971). *The Devil – The Great Deceiver: Bible Teaching on Sin and Salvation*. Birmingham: The Christadelphian.

Wessel, W.W. & Strauss, M.L. 2010. Mark. In T. Longman III & D.E. Garland (Eds.), *Expositor's Bible Commentary (Vol. 9)* (671-989). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Williams, G. (2009). *The Spirit World in the Letters of Paul the Apostle: A Critical Examination of the Role of Spiritual Beings in the Authentic Pauline Epistles*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Williams, T. (1892). *The Devil: His Origin and End*. Advocate Publishing House.

Williams, T. (1898). *The World's Redemption*. Advocate Publishing House.

Witherington, B. (2001). *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Zuck, R.B. (1983). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1). David C. Cook.