

## Satanological terminology in the wilderness temptation pericope

Three terms are used to describe Christ's adversary in the Synoptic temptation pericope: "satan" (ὁ σατανᾶς in Mark 1:12, vocative σατανᾶ without the definite article only in Matthew 4:10), 'the tempter' (ὁ *peirazwn*, only in Matthew 4:3), and "the devil" (ὁ διάβολος). Elsewhere in Matthew (and only Matthew), the term "the evil one" (ὁ *ponēros*), may also be used (Matthew 5:37; 6:13; 13:19, 38), though this is debated in the literature.<sup>1</sup> The Synoptic writers introduce these terms early in their gospels, without explanation of their meaning, indicating the original audience of the text was expected to be familiar with them.

Scholars typically assume the terms all refer to a specific supernatural evil being well known to the audience of the text.<sup>2</sup> However, this assumption is vulnerable to criticism on lexical grounds. Building on Williams' statement that "There was, then, no standard nomenclature for this figure; we find no edifice which we may call the Jewish doctrine of satan",<sup>3</sup> this article presents a diachronic lexical analysis challenging that assumption, demonstrating that in Second Temple Period literature the term "satan" (Greek σατανᾶς, Hebrew שָׂטָן), is predominantly used as a common noun rather than a personal name, the term "the devil" (ὁ διάβολος), is rarely if ever used to refer to a supernatural evil being, and the terms "the tempter" (ὁ *peirazwn*), and "the evil one" (ὁ *ponēros*), have no pre-Christian witness as a reference to a supernatural evil being. The article concludes by discussing exegetical implications and making suggestions for future research.

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<sup>1</sup> Black 1990, 333.

<sup>2</sup> Carter 2005, 107.

<sup>3</sup> Williams 2009, 88.

### **Satan** (*σατανᾶς, שָׂטָן*)

The term *satan*, whether in Greek (*σατανᾶς*), or Hebrew (*שָׂטָן*), is used rarely in pre-Christian literature<sup>4</sup> and never as a proper name.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Laato notes that “we lack an established tradition whereby the name of the personal Evil or the leader of demons is Satan”.<sup>6</sup>

In Wisdom of Sirach (21:27), the Greek term is used of the evil inclination.<sup>7</sup> In 1 Enoch<sup>8</sup> the term appears only four times (41:9; 53:3; 54:6),<sup>9</sup> and is not used as a proper name;<sup>10</sup> instead Shemihazah and Azâzêl are the names of the supernatural evil opponent.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the *satan* in 1 Enoch is an obedient servant of God, not an evil adversary.<sup>12</sup> In Jubilees 10:11 the term “*satan*” as a proper name was interpolated into the text by later scribes; textual evidence indicates the original word was *Mastema*,<sup>13</sup> and all other instances of the term in Jubilees (23:29; 40:9; 46:2; 50:5), use it as a common noun.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Breytenbach and Day 1992, 987.

<sup>5</sup> Jenks 1991, 134.

<sup>6</sup> Laato 2013, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Sacchi 2004, 351; Capelli 2005, 142.

<sup>8</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>9</sup> All references to *satan* are found in the Aramaic texts at Qumran, since the available Greek text ends at chapter 32 (there are no uses of the Greek word *σατανᾶς* in this text).

<sup>10</sup> Goldingay 2006, 55.

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton 1992, 987.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly 2013, 45.

<sup>13</sup> Hanneken 2012, 74.

<sup>14</sup> Almond 2014, 170; Hanneken 2012, 74.

In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs the term is rarely used (and never as a proper name); in contrast with less than half a dozen uses of *satan*, the term *Beliar* is used around thirty times.<sup>15</sup> This very likely reflects the composite nature of the work, which scholars agree contains both Jewish and Christian material<sup>16</sup> Although much of the material is pre-Christian,<sup>17</sup> scholarship is divided on whether the work is a Jewish text which has been interpolated by a Christian editor, or a Christian work which has borrowed from earlier Jewish material.<sup>18</sup> The overwhelming use of *Beliar* suggests the work of a Jewish writer, since this is a term virtually unique to Jewish literature, used only once in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 6:15), and found in subsequent Christian literature only as a quotation from the New Testament. However, the textual history of this work is highly complex and in its current form it is not possible to date either the original form of the text or its subsequent layers, with any degree of reliability.

Although the Testament of Job uses the terms “the *satan*” (3:6; 4:4; 6:4; 7:1; 16:2; 20:1; 23:1; 27:1; 41:5), and “the *devil*” (3:3; 17:1; 26:6), its very uncertain date precludes its use as a reliable source of contextual data for the New Testament.<sup>19</sup> However, it is significant that this text never uses “*satan*” as a proper name.

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<sup>15</sup> Charlesworth 1983, 782; an additional use of *satan* (not counted by Charlesworth nor included in the translation by Kee in Charlesworth), is also found in the Greek text of Testament of Levi 16:10 (in Kee’s translation Testament of Levi ends at 16:5), presented by Penner and Heiser, “καὶ μὴ κατισχυσάτω με πᾶς σατανᾶς πλανῆσαί με ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ σου”, Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>19</sup> “If the book could be securely dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. or slightly before, some of its content features take on added importance for contextualizing New Testament theology. For example, the reference to Satan as the devil would clearly anticipate New Testament understanding of Satan as a

The term occurs once in the Life of Adam and Eve (17:1), known as the Greek Apocalypse of Moses, a composite Jewish and Christian work of uncertain date,<sup>20</sup> surviving in texts of several languages (Greek, Armenian, Georgian, Latin, Slavonic), most likely written near the end of the first century and therefore not a pre-Christian source.<sup>21</sup>

In the Qumran literature the Hebrew  $\text{יָצֵר}$  is used no more than three times, and only as a common noun.<sup>22</sup> Despite suggestions that it is used as a proper noun in the Prayer of Deliverance (11Q5 xix 13-16),<sup>23</sup> the context of the passage and comparison with related texts indicates it is not used as a proper noun or name here;<sup>24</sup> in fact Tigchelaar has argued that here it is used of the evil inclination.<sup>25</sup> Significantly, in 4Q Barkhi Nafshi the  $\text{יָצֵר}$  of Zechariah 3 is “transformed into a wholly internal evil inclination that is the abstract personification of the human desire to sin”,<sup>26</sup> and represented as “an evil tendency rather than a demonic being”.<sup>27</sup>

### **The devil (*ὁ διάβολος*)**

The term “the devil” (*ὁ διάβολος*), is virtually never used in pre-Christian Second Temple literature outside the Old Greek texts of the Hebrew Scriptures.

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personal figure of definite identity, as opposed to the word’s meaning as a title in the Hebrew Bible (“the satan”; i.e., “the adversary”) because of the presence of the definite article.”, Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Johnson 1985, 252; Voicu 2010, xxviii.

<sup>22</sup> Hamilton 1992, 988.; Kelly 2006, 43; Stuckenbruck 2013, 62-63.

<sup>23</sup> Stuckenbruck 2013, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Kelly 2006), 43-44; Goldingay 2006, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Brand 2013, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Brand 2013, 48.

<sup>27</sup> Rosen-Zvi, 2011, 47.

In the Old Greek texts it is found in 1 Chronicles 21:1 (of the adversary which attacks Israel, prompting David's census), Esther 7:4; 8:1 (of Haman), Psalm 108:6 (of a human slanderer), Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7 (of Job's adversary), and Zechariah 3:1-2 (of the accuser of Joshua); in each case it translates the Hebrew *יָצָוּר*,<sup>28</sup> indicating *יָצָוּר* was not understood as a personal name at this time. Even in Job and Zechariah (where some scholars consider it to refer to an angelic servant of God), it is not used of a supernatural evil being, still less a tempter.

It appears once in 1 Maccabees (1:36), used of human adversaries.<sup>29</sup> It appears once in Wisdom of Solomon (2:24), where death is said to have entered the world due to the envy of the devil. The lack of any other use of the term in this work represents a challenge to its interpretation, but it is significant that it is interpreted in 1 Clement as a reference to Cain,<sup>30</sup> which many scholars believe is the intended meaning here.<sup>31</sup> This is more likely than a supernatural referent, since the idea of the devil being prompted by envy to tempt Eve "is likewise not attested before the first century C.E., at the earliest".<sup>32</sup>

The term is found five times in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (T Naph 3:1; 8:4, 6, TAsh 1:9; 3:2). In Philo it appears in Questions and Answers on Genesis (II:36), in the phrase "Moreover, the devil proceeds with great art, speaking by the mouth of the serpent".<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Breytenbach and Riley 1999, 244.

<sup>29</sup> Although the literal direct subject of *σατανᾶς* in the text is an enemy fortress, this is synecdoche for the human enemies described as being in the fortress.

<sup>30</sup> Byron 2011, 223.

<sup>31</sup> Davies 1987, 56; Kelly 2006, 78; Clifford and Durken 2013, 21; Byron 2011, 220; Bouteneff 2008, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Collins and Collins 1998, 190.

<sup>33</sup> Yonge with Philo of Alexandria 1995, 798.

Whilst it might be assumed Philo understood the devil as a supernatural evil being (representing itself as, or speaking through, the serpent), Philo never indicates a belief in such a being and this is the only use of a satanological term in Philo. Instead the devil in Philo appears to be “the principle of evil”,<sup>34</sup> since Philo consistently identifies the evil inclination as the cause of sin.<sup>35</sup>

The term was apparently used in a now lost work called the Ascension of Moses (or Assumption of Moses), often confused with the Testament of Moses (which does not contain any reference to the devil at all), with which it shares a complex history.<sup>36</sup> The text is of uncertain date,<sup>37</sup> though a first century date is preferred;<sup>38</sup> there is only one confirmed use of “the devil”, but the late first century Epistle of Jude (Jude 9), uses text which later Christian writers attribute to the Ascension of Moses. No pre-Christian witness of this text or the phrase used by Jude has been found.

Although the term is used once in the extant Greek fragments of Book of Jubilees (10:8),<sup>39</sup> all of these date from the second century of the Christian era onward.<sup>40</sup> There is no equivalent word in the Ethiopic text (which differs significantly from the later Greek fragments in this verse),<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy, 94.

<sup>35</sup> Miriam Brand.

<sup>36</sup> Aside from one Latin manuscript of the sixth century, the text is found only in fragmentary quotations in other works; De Silva 2000, 1193.

<sup>37</sup> Charlesworth 1983, 920; De Silva 2000, 1193.

<sup>38</sup> Charlesworth 1983, 921.

<sup>39</sup> Jubilees 10:8 “ὁ δὲ διάβολος ἠτήσατο λαβεῖν μοῖραν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν πρὸς πειρασμὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων”, Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Wintermute 1985, 242; Charles 2004, 2; Heiser 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Jubilees 10:7-8 (English translation of the Ethiopic text) “And the chief of the spirits, Mastema, came and he said, “O Lord, Creator, leave some of them before me, and let them obey my voice. And let them do everything which I tell them, because if some of them are not left for me, I will not be able to exercise

which is significant since the Ethiopic text was translated from a pre-Christian Greek text, which it rendered very literally.<sup>42</sup> There is therefore no evidence that the term is found in a pre-Christian text of Jubilees.

In Joseph and Aseneth (12.9), the term is found only in manuscripts from the tenth century onwards, and is absent from the sixth-seventh century Armenian translation, as well as several late Greek manuscripts;<sup>43</sup> consequently, it is not included in the standard scholarly English translation.<sup>44</sup> In Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah (3:3), the term appears in one of the late Greek fragments,<sup>45</sup> but it is not in the earlier Ethiopic text, which reads very differently;<sup>46</sup> significantly, one of the other late Greek fragments agrees with the Ethiopic text in this verse, and does not contain the term *διάβολος*.<sup>47</sup> However, since even the earliest part of the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah (the Martyrdom of Isaiah), is typically dated to the early second century,<sup>48</sup> this text is not a pre-Christian witness.

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the authority of my will among the children of men because they are (intended) to corrupt and lead astray before my judgment because the evil of the sons of men is great.””, Charlesworth 1985, 76.

<sup>42</sup> Wintermute 1985, 242; Charles 2004, 2-3.

<sup>43</sup> Charlesworth 1985, 221.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph and Aseneth 12:9 “And the lion their father<sup>f2</sup> furiously persecutes me,<sup>g2</sup>”, Charlesworth 1985, 221.

<sup>45</sup> *Legenda Graeca* “καὶ ἐξέκλινε πάντα τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λατρείας καὶ προσκυνήσεως. καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ μετὰ καὶ τῶν βεβήλων καὶ ἀκαθάρτων εἰδώλων”, Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>46</sup> (English translation of the Ethiopic text) “this youth escaped and came to Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, but he did not walk in the ways of his Samaritan father because he feared Hezekiah.”, Charlesworth 1985, 159.

<sup>47</sup> (Amherst Papyrus) “οὗτος ἦν νεώτερος, καὶ ἔφυγεν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Ἰε(ρου)σαλήμ ἡμ(έρ)αις (Ἐζε)κίου βασι(λέως) Ἰούδα. κα(ὶ) οὐκ ἐπάτει εἰς Σαμαρίαν ἐν ὁδῷ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὸν Ἐζεκιάν ἐφοβεῖτο.”, Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Knight 1995, 9.

Although the term is found in History of the Rechabites (19:1; 20:1; 21:2), this work cannot be dated with certainty before the second century,<sup>49</sup> the text has been interpolated heavily by Christians,<sup>50</sup> and the Syriac and Greek texts frequently differ markedly, the Greek containing numerous expansions and language demonstrating it is a Christian text.<sup>51</sup> The term occurs several times in the Life of Adam and Eve (15:3, 16:1-2, 17:4, 21:3), written at the end of the first century. It is used just once in the Testament of Solomon (15:11), typically dated to the second century and most likely written by a Christian who may have used earlier sources.<sup>52</sup>

The term became widely used in Christian literature from the second century as a reference to a supernatural evil being, and was used in many apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works such as Apocalypse of Sedrach (4:5; 5:3), a second century work consisting of a Jewish text with Christian edits,<sup>53</sup> 3 Baruch (4.8), a text of the third or fourth century,<sup>54</sup> and Apocalypse of Daniel (14:15), a ninth century Christian work.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Charlesworth 1985, 445.

<sup>50</sup> Charlesworth 1985, 444.

<sup>51</sup> Charlesworth 1992, 632.

<sup>52</sup> Eve 2002, 170; Duling 1992, 118.

<sup>53</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>54</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Penner and Heiser 2008.

### **The evil one (*ton ponērou*)**

The Greek term “the evil one” (*ton ponērou*), has no Second Temple pre-Christian witness as a reference to a supernatural evil being. It is found in one fifteenth century Ethiopian manuscript of 1 Enoch,<sup>56</sup> but not the other two main recensions (manuscripts B and C).<sup>57</sup> Evidence against the reading “the evil one” is that Satan in 1 Enoch is not described as one of the evil angels, and is represented as the obedient servant of God rather than an evil being. In Slavonic Enoch there is only reference to “the worship of evil” (2 Enoch 34:2), though Charlesworth adds a gloss, “the worship of (the) evil (one)”;<sup>58</sup> regardless, there is evidence the text here has been interpolated by Christian scribes.<sup>59</sup>

The Book of Jubilees shows only a generic use of “evil one”; 23:29 has “and there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy”,<sup>60</sup> 40:9 has “And there was no Satan and there was no evil [alternatively “no evil person”]”,<sup>61</sup> 46:2 has “there was no satan or anything evil

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<sup>56</sup> Manuscript A, 1 Enoch 69:15

<sup>57</sup> The uncertainty in the manuscript tradition is noted in a footnote in Charlesworth, who identifies “the evil one” as the reading of recension A; “So A. B: ‘*Akd*’. C: ‘*Aka*’, which may be proper names or corruptions of the ‘*ekuy*’ of A, or vice versa. Cf. EC, p. 125, n. 14.”, Charlesworth 1983, 48.

<sup>58</sup> 2 Enoch 34:2 “And all the world will be reduced to confusion by iniquities and wickednesses and [abominable] fornications [that is, friend with friend in the anus, and every other kind of wicked uncleanness which it is disgusting to report], and the worship of (the) evil (one).”, Charlesworth 1983, 158.

<sup>59</sup> Orlov, Boccaccini, and Zurawski 2012, 223.

<sup>60</sup> “And all of their days they will be complete and live in peace and rejoicing and there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy, because all of their days will be days of blessing and healing.”, Charlesworth 1985, 102.

<sup>61</sup> “And the kingdom of the Pharaoh was upright. And there was no Satan and there was no evil.”, Charlesworth 1985, 130; “and there was no Satan and no evil person (therein).”, Charles 2004, 71.

[alternatively “or any evil one”] all the days of the life of Joseph”,<sup>62</sup> and 50:3 has “And then it will not have any Satan or any evil (one) ”.<sup>63</sup>

Although the term is found in the Armenian recension<sup>64</sup> of the pre-Christian Story of Ahikar,<sup>65</sup> it is absent from the earliest textual witnesses (Syriac texts MS. Syr.<sup>2</sup> and MS. Syr.<sup>g</sup>, and the Arabic version). In the Testament of Job 7:1; 20:2, it appears only in an eleventh century manuscript.<sup>66</sup> In the History of the Rechabites 7.8, it appears only in a corrupt form of the text.<sup>67</sup>

The term appears in Pseudo-Ezekiel,<sup>68</sup> a second century work reconstructed from a number of Qumran texts,<sup>69</sup> but it is unclear whether the original text dates to the Qumran community<sup>70</sup> and the Qumran source texts on which the reconstruction is based only describe a “son of Belial” as an “evil man” rather than “the evil one”, thus not a reference to a supernatural being.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “And there was no Satan or anything evil all the days of the life of Joseph which he lived after his father, Jacob, because all of the Egyptians were honoring the children of Israel all the days of the life of Joseph.”, Charlesworth 1985, 137; “And there was no Satan nor any evil”, Charles 2004, 77.

<sup>63</sup> Charlesworth 1985, 142.

<sup>64</sup> Story of Ahikar 2:33 (Armenian recension) »Son, give ear unto the laws of God, and be not afraid of the evil (one), for the commandment of God is the rampart of man.«, Charles 2004, 734.

<sup>65</sup> Charles 2004, 716.

<sup>66</sup> »in V only “the evil one” (7:1; 20:2) and “wretched one” (27:1).«, Charlesworth 1983, 839.

<sup>67</sup> »D: “Behold, I am almost like the counsel of this one to Adam and Eve in Paradise, who through the counsel of the Evil One transgressed [restored later; this singular form is incorrect here] the commandment.” D is corrupt.«, Charlesworth 1985.

<sup>68</sup> “(ii 3) And the LORD said, ‘A son of Belial will consider to suppress my people, (4) but I will not let him have (it) and his dominion will not last.’ (5) And (6) I shall kill the evil one in Moph.”, Lorein 2003, 150.

<sup>69</sup> Lorein 2003, 150.

<sup>70</sup> Lorein 2003, 150.

<sup>71</sup> 4Q386 Frag. 1 ii:3 “3 And when will you assemble them?” And YHWH said: “A son of Belial will plot to oppress my people, 4 but I will prevent him, and his dominion will not exist; but a multitude will be

The term also appears in the Christian era texts 2 Baruch 70:2 and Odes of Solomon 14:5; 33:4, which post-date Matthew and Luke.

Summarizing the lexicographical evidence, Black notes “this term or designation for Satan is, outside the New Testament and dependent patristic writings, nowhere attested in classical, Hellenistic, or Jewish Greek sources”, which he gives as the reason against reading it as “the evil one” even in Matthew.<sup>72</sup> He goes on to say “The situation is no different when we turn to Hebrew or Aramaic sources”,<sup>73</sup> quoting Dalman saying “The designation “the Evil One” (*der Böse*) for Satan never appears in Jewish literature”,<sup>74</sup> and adding “The position has not, to the best of my knowledge, changed since Dalman”.<sup>75</sup> Finally he quotes Harder saying “This is a distinctive NT usage for which no model has been found in the world into which Christianity came”.<sup>76</sup> Turning away from the Greek *ton ponērou* to possible Hebrew antecedents, Black notes that only two pre-Christian texts have been found with an analogous Hebrew term.<sup>77</sup> However he notes that in both cases this Hebrew term is applied to Belial (not a supernatural

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defiled, offspring will not remain. 5 And from the grapevine there will be no new wine, nor will the bee (?) make honey. [Blank] *Blank* And the 6 wicked man I will kill in Memphis and I will make my sons go out of Memphis: I will turn myself toward their re[mn]ant.”, Martínez and Tigchelaar 1997–1998, 775–777.

<sup>72</sup> Black, 1990, 333.

<sup>73</sup> Black, 1990, 333.

<sup>74</sup> Black, 1990, 333.

<sup>75</sup> Black, 1990, 333.

<sup>76</sup> Black, 1990, 333.

<sup>77</sup> “So far as our knowledge goes, these two sets of texts, 4Q Amram<sup>b</sup>, 4Q280,286 (287) and the Targum of Isa. 11.4 are the only passages in Jewish literature where the designations רשעא/הרשע are used for Satan or a manifestation of Satan.”, Black, 1990, 336.

being called Satan),<sup>78</sup> and that in the LXX the Hebrew הרשע “is more frequently rendered in the LXX by ἀσεβής than by πονηρός, which occurs only rarely, e.g. 2 Kgdms 4.11; Isa. 53.9 (both of ‘evil men’).”<sup>79</sup> Black suggests that the Hebrew term “may well have been in more frequent use in Judaism than its extremely rare occurrence suggests”,<sup>80</sup> and speculates it may have been “adopted by the early Church, in its almost literal Greek equivalent ὁ πονηρός”,<sup>81</sup> but provides no evidence for pre-Christian use of *ton ponērou* as a reference to Satan and does not challenge the consensus on this point which he quoted previously. Two pre-Christian Hebrew texts using רשע/הרשע, and no pre-Christian use of *ton ponērou* as a reference to Satan (only to evil men or generic evil), remain the extant lexical background to the New Testament term.

In the Talmuds the term “the evil one” is used of specific human individuals; Nebuchadnezzar,<sup>82</sup> Haman,<sup>83</sup> Esau,<sup>84</sup> Tronianus,<sup>85</sup> and a Samaritan.<sup>86</sup> It is also used without an explicit referent in the phrase “We are the sons of the evil one”, in a passage contrasting the wicked with the

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<sup>78</sup> “In its context, however, following the execration of Belial, and the mention in the parallel line of the ‘sons of Belial’, the expression ‘the Evil/Ungodly One’ is simply here a synonym for Belial as well as for Melchireša”, Black, 1990, 336.

<sup>79</sup> Black, 1990, 336.

<sup>80</sup> Black, 1990, 336.

<sup>81</sup> Black, 1990, 336.

<sup>82</sup> Talmud Babylon, b. Meg. 1:13, VII.1.B, b. Meg. 1:13, VII.1, b. Meg. 1:13, I.1.B, Neusner 2011, 50, 52, 187.

<sup>83</sup> Talmud Babylon, b. Meg. 1:13, VI.1.I, Neusner 2011, 80.

<sup>84</sup> Talmud Babylon, b. Meg. 4:3, II.10.E, Neusner 2011, 146; Talmud Jerusalem y. Ned. 3:8, I.1.G, Neusner 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Talmud Jerusalem, y. Sukk. 5:1, I.7.A, y. Sukk. 5:1, I.7, Neusner 2008.

<sup>86</sup> Talmud Jerusalem, y. Moed Qat. 3:7, I.8.G, Neusner 2008.

righteous (described as “sons of the righteous one”, a messianic human figure),<sup>87</sup> but it is never used any satanic or demonic figure.<sup>88</sup> The term “evil one” is used several times to address the evil inclination.<sup>89</sup> Thus the balance of evidence in the Talmuds indicates that the term “the evil one” was used of human evildoers not supernatural evil beings, and that the *yetzer ha ra* was addressed as “evil one”, all of which is in continuity with pre-Christian usage of the equivalent term in Greek.

Care must always be taken not to assume Talmudic content is representative of first century Jewish beliefs, given the composite nature of the Talmuds and the lateness of their final form, but if the term “the evil one” was a normative term for a supernatural evil satan or “the devil” in the first century, it is extraordinary that this does not appear anywhere in the Talmudic literature.

### **The tempter (*ó peirazwn*)**

The term “the tempter” (*ó peirazwn*), has no pre-Christian witness in the intertestamental or Qumran literature at all. It appears in History of the Rechabites (2:9;<sup>90</sup> 4:1-2<sup>91</sup>), but only in the

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<sup>87</sup> Talmud Babylon, b. Sanh. 4:5, IV.1.H, Neusner 2011, 187; Talmud Jerusalem, y. Sanh. 4:9, I.1.I, y. Sanh. 4:10, I.1, Neusner 2008.

<sup>88</sup> “In the Talmud in a saying of R. Shimeon b. Laqish (3rd cent.) the evil impulse is brought into relation to Satan and the angel of death, but Satan is not called the evil one.”, Geoffrey William Kittel, Gerhard; Friedrich, Gerhard; Bromiley, ed., “Πονηρός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 6; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 552.

<sup>89</sup> Talmud Babylon, b. Ned. 1:1g, II.2.H, b. Naz. 1:2d, I.4.D, Neusner 2011; Talmud Jerusalem y. Ned. 1:1, V.2.D, y. Naz. 1:5, II.1.P, Neusner 2008.

<sup>90</sup> “καὶ εἶπεν ἡ νεφέλη· Ζώσιμε, ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ, δι’ ἐμοῦ οὐ διέρχεται πετεινὸν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, οὐδὲ πνοὴ ἀνέμου οὐδὲ αὐτὸς ὁ ἥλιος, οὐδὲ ὁ πειράζων ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ δύναται διελθεῖν δι’ ἐμοῦ.”, Penner and 2008.

Greek text belonging to the Christian era; it is absent from the Syriac. It is also absent from the Apostolic Fathers, appearing in Christian texts later in the second century.

The textual evidence therefore leads directly to the conclusion that this term was not used of any evil supernatural evil being in the pre-Christian literature, and only later became an established term for Satan among Christians (perhaps by the end of the first century), from which time it was added by Christian scribes to earlier Jewish works which did not originally use it.

### Summary

The following paragraphs summarize the lexical evidence for the Synoptics' satanological terminology in Second Temple pre-Christian texts.

The term “satan” is used in Sirach 21:27 of the evil inclination. It is also used in 1 Enoch (41:9; 53:3; 54:6), Jubilees (23:29; 40:9; 46:2; 50:5), Qumran texts 1QH 4:6; 45:3; 1QSb 1:8, 4Q504 1–2 iv 12, and Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (TDan 3:6; 5:6; 6:1, TGad 4:7, TAsh 6:4),<sup>92</sup> as a common noun, not used of a unique referent as a proper noun or name. In 1 Enoch it is used of an obedient angelic servant of God, in 11Q5 xix 13-16 (the Prayer for Deliverance), it most likely refers to the evil inclination, and in in 4Q Barkhi Nafshi the *שָׂטָן* of Zechariah 3 is the evil inclination.

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<sup>91</sup> “Καὶ εἶδον ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπον γυμνὸν καθήμενον καὶ εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· Ἄρα μὴ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πειράζων; 2 καὶ ἐμνήσθη τῆς φωνῆς τῆς νεφέλης ὅτι εἶπέν μοι ὅτι Οὐ διέρχεται δι’ ἐμοῦ οὔτε αὐτὸς ὁ πειράζων ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.”, Penner and Heiser 2008.

<sup>92</sup> Assuming these sections of the text genuinely pre-date the Christian era.

The term “the devil” is used in the Old Greek in 1 Chronicles 21:1 (of the adversary which attacks Israel, prompting David’s census), Esther 7:4; 8:1 (of Haman), Psalm 108:6 (of a human slanderer), Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7 (of Job’s adversary), and Zechariah 3:1-2 (of the accuser of Joshua). It is found in Wisdom of Solomon (2:24), where it most likely refers to Cain, and 1 Maccabees (1:36), used of human adversaries. Significantly, in all these texts it is always found in the form “the devil”, even though the term clearly does not have the same referent in each passage. This is evidence that the term was not understood at this time of a unique referent, certainly not an established term for a specific supernatural being, evil or otherwise. It is found in Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (TNaph 3:1; 8:4, 6, TAsh 1:9; 3:2), and possibly Ascension of Moses, but there is no evidence these texts predate the Synoptics.

The Greek term “the evil one” has no Second Temple pre-Christian witness, prompting many scholars to argue that *ton ponērou* should not even be read as “the evil one” in Matthew; several times in the Talmudic literature “evil one” is used in the vocative of the evil inclination. The term “the tempter” has no Second Temple pre-Christian witness, and is also absent from the Apostolic Fathers.

Even more significant than the infrequency of pre-Christian uses of these terms, is the fact that so few of them are used of a supernatural evil being; the only such uses of “satan” and “the devil” are found in just two texts, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Ascension of Moses. However, the value of these texts for an understanding of these terms in the Synoptics is questionable, due to their uncertain date.

In the case of the Ascension of Moses, the text is typically dated near the end of the first century. In the case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the complex textual history has not been deciphered by the few fragments at Qumran, which have failed to provide evidence of an earlier Hebrew text.<sup>93</sup> Following de Jonge,<sup>94</sup> many scholars accept that the text in its current form is at earliest a second century Christian product, bearing no certain witness to a pre-Christian Jewish text.<sup>95</sup> The search for a pre-Christian original has been generally abandoned.<sup>96</sup>

### **Exegetical implications**

Lack of pre-Christian parallels to the Synoptic temptation pericope, and similarities with rabbinic haggadic midrash concerned with disputes over the interpretation of Scripture, strengthen the proposal that the most relevant literary analog for the temptation pericopes of Matthew and Luke is the early rabbinic description of a man arguing with his (personified), evil inclination; psychological dualism. This is supported by the scholarly consensus that the temptation pericope is in the form of haggadic midrash, and is to be read more figuratively than literally.

Current scholarly commentary typically treats the wilderness temptation account as a visionary experience,<sup>97</sup> symbolic description,<sup>98</sup> or dramatization of events throughout Jesus' ministry,<sup>99</sup> and commentaries advise against reading the account as literally historical.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> De Jonge 2003, 81; Ferguson 2003, 455.

<sup>94</sup> De Jonge 2003, 82.

<sup>95</sup> Mason 2008, 128; Syreeni 2005, 92; Kugler 2001, 37-38; Kraft 2009, 52.

<sup>96</sup> Kugler 2001, 27.

<sup>97</sup> Twelftree 1992, 822; Blomberg 1979-1988, 785; Witherington III, 2010; Borg 2005, 206; France 2007, 131; Evans 1990, 68.

<sup>98</sup> Collins 1992, 382; Dunn 2003, 380; Best 2005, xvii; Lieu 2005, 93.

Second Temple Period etiology of sin and evil was far from uniform. Though belief in supernatural evil was prevalent it did not necessarily involve a satanic figure,<sup>101</sup> and such beliefs were rejected directly by some Jewish teachers.<sup>102</sup> The books of the Maccabees, Wisdom of Sirach, 2 Baruch, and 4 Ezra, all contain an anthropological etiology of sin and evil which excluded a supernatural satan and demons.<sup>103</sup>

First century Christian belief in supernatural evil was similarly non-uniform. According to Högskolan, there is “some disagreement as to how real the devil was for John”,<sup>104</sup> with some commentators believing the devil in John is “a literary personification of sin rather than as an independently acting being”.<sup>105</sup> Thomas notes John never uses satan and demons as an etiology of illness, and “shows no real interest in the topic”;<sup>106</sup> he also says “Neither James nor John give any hint that the Devil or demons have a role to play in the infliction of infirmity”.<sup>107</sup> McKnight similarly says “James traces “evil” not to God or even to Satan, but the seductive power of human desires”,<sup>108</sup> while Caird says “it is a matter of some delicacy to

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<sup>99</sup> Dunn 2003, 381; Lieu 2005, 93; Marshall 1978, 168.

<sup>100</sup> Dale 2002, 204; Neufeld 2007, 203; Hagner 1998, 63; Hare 2009, 22; Robbins 2007, 158.

<sup>101</sup> Williams 2009, 88.

<sup>102</sup> Bamberger 2006, 42.

<sup>103</sup> Eve 2002, 255; Arbel 2012, 439; Sacchi 1990, 231; Bamberger 2006, 42, 43; Hogan 2008; 119; Emmel 2013, 127; Di Lella 2003, 254; Helyer 2002, 424; Sacchi 2000, 351; Capelli 2005, 142; Boccacini 2008, 36; Forsyth 1989, 216-217.

<sup>104</sup> Löfstedt 2009, 54.

<sup>105</sup> Löfstedt 2009, 58.

<sup>106</sup> Thomas 1998, 162.

<sup>107</sup> Thomas 1998, 301.

<sup>108</sup> McKnight 2011.

determine how far the New Testament writers took their language literally”,<sup>109</sup> and proposes satan may have been a personification to some in the early church (including Paul), rather than a person.<sup>110</sup>

Internal evidence from the New Testament supports these conclusions. The description in Matthew and Luke is *sui generis*; there is no analogous account in the entire New Testament. If the reader is intended to understand the temptation periscope as normative of experiences with satan, it is necessary to explain why no such encounter is described anywhere else in the New Testament. It is also necessary to explain why the rest of the New Testament contains no passages in which satan speaks to anyone, or is ever seen by anyone tempted by satan. Significantly, in Mark’s temptation periscope the satan is given neither voice nor visible appearance, and in John’s gospel there is no wilderness temptation periscope at all. Similarly, Acts 5:3-4, “satan filled your heart” is placed in parallel with “you thought up this deed in your heart”, which reads naturally as a description of the evil inclination (*yetzer ra*), being characterized as satan, rather than as Ananias being tempted by a supernatural evil being. Throughout the New Testament the normative experience of humans encountering satan (or “the devil”, or “the tempter”), is temptation by an unseen and voiceless agent, described only in the most general terms (1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor 11:5; 1 Thess. 3:5). Consequently, belief in a specific supernatural evil being should not be simply assumed when approaching the temptation periscope even in its final form in the Synoptics,

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<sup>109</sup> Caird 1995, 110.

<sup>110</sup> Caird 1995, 110.

especially since there is evidence even in Christian documents preceding the gospels that such a belief was by no means uniform in early Christianity.

Second Temple Period form criticism parallels to the temptation pericope have been found within haggadic midrash concerned with disputes over the interpretation of Scripture,<sup>111</sup> indicating the temptation pericope is a kind of dispute narrative. However, these parallels do not involve temptation by a satan figure. Second Temple Period stories describing testing of a righteous man also fall short of significant similarities, since they all record an obedient angelic servant of God testing a righteous man, rather than an evil supernatural opponent of God tempting a righteous man to sin. The fact that there are “no clear parallels to such an encounter with Satan in the Old Testament or Judaism”,<sup>112</sup> further supports this study’s conclusion that the temptation pericope’s satanological terminology (at least in its original form), does not refer to a supernatural evil being.

A story of a young man tempted by the evil inclination, attributed to the pre-Christian rabbi Simeon the Righteous (also known as Simeon the Just),<sup>113</sup> has several points of contact with the Synoptic temptation pericope. The young man is tempted (as Jesus was), is spoken to by his evil inclination (as Jesus was spoken to by his tempter), speaks to his evil inclination (as Jesus spoke to his tempter), and addresses his evil inclination as “evil one”.<sup>114</sup> An additional parallel is found

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<sup>111</sup> Donaldson 1987, 90.

<sup>112</sup> Strauss 2011.

<sup>113</sup> Lasor, 1979–1988, 118.

<sup>114</sup> “He said to me, ‘Rabbi, I was a shepherd in my town, and I came to draw water from the river. I looked at my reflection, and my evil impulse grew proud within me and besought thereby to remove me from the world. I said to it, ‘Evil one, Have you a right to be jealous of a thing which really is not yours, of something which is destined to turn into dust, worms, and maggots? Lo, it is incumbent on me to shave

in Sifre Numbers (dating to the Amoraite period). Boaz is tempted in a conversation with his evil inclination, which challenges him with a sophisticated legal argument; “It speaks in the voice of a Torah scholar and sets forth a halakhic claim”.<sup>115</sup> Talmudic commentary contains several additional parallels, in the form of the evil inclination conversing with individuals to tempt them,<sup>116</sup> or being personified as a man.<sup>117</sup> Although all these parallels post-date the first century, their strong continuity with Second Temple Period commentary on the evil inclination from the pre-Christian era to the first century suggests they present a depiction of the evil inclination which would have been accessible to a first century audience.

Psychological dualism is present in the Wisdom of Sirach,<sup>118</sup> 4 Ezra,<sup>119</sup> Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,<sup>120</sup> Philo of Alexandria,<sup>121</sup> Qumran text 4Q Barkhi Nafshi,<sup>122</sup> and the early

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you off for the sake of Heaven’ [and that constituted the vow of a Nazir].”, Talmud Babylon, y. Ned. 1:1, V.2.D, Neusner 2011; also Talmud Jerusalem, y. Naz. 1:5, II.1.P, Neusner 2008.

<sup>115</sup> Rosen-Zvi 2009, 120.

<sup>116</sup> “R. Judah son of R. Nahmani, the speaker of Resh Lakish, expounded: “What is the meaning of the verse: Trust not in a friend, Rely not on an intimate (Mic 7:5)? If the evil *yetzer* tells you: Sin and the Holy One, blessed be he, will pardon—do not believe it, for it is said: Trust not in a friend, and friend [ רע ] means none other than one’s evil *yetzer*, for it is said: For the *yetzer* of man’s heart is evil [ רע ] (Gen 8:21).”, Rosen-Zvi 2009, 120.

<sup>117</sup> “Rava said, First it is called a passer-by, then it is called a guest, and finally it is called a man, for it is said, And there came a passer-by to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the guest, but took the poor man’s lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him (2 Sam. 2:12).”, Rosen-Zvi 2009, 272.

<sup>118</sup> Boccaccini 2008, 36; Mattila 2000, 483.

<sup>119</sup> Rosen-Zvi 2011, 8.

<sup>120</sup> Mattila 2000, 483.

<sup>121</sup> Leonhardt-Balzer 2010, 556.

<sup>122</sup> Brand 2013, 48.

rabbinic literature;<sup>123</sup> the Qumran Two Spirits Treatise may also include psychological dualism.<sup>124</sup> The combined weight of this data provides a distinct continuity of psychological dualism from the pre-Christian Second Temple Period through to the date of the gospels, supporting a reading of psychological dualism in the Synoptic temptation pericope; Jesus was struggling against his personal desires. The fact that the very first temptation is depicted as prompted by the internal pangs of Jesus' own hunger lends weight to this conclusion.

This view has some support within the literature. Although scholarly interpretations of the Synoptic temptation pericope typically identify the adversary as a supernatural evil being (cosmological dualism), alternative understandings are well represented. Harrington and Kelly refer to scholars who read the accounts as dramatizations of Jesus' struggle with either personal desires (psychological dualism), or human opponents of his messianic mission throughout his life (ethical dualism),<sup>125</sup> which is a view found in some leading commentaries,<sup>126</sup> while Grelot,<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Rosen-Zvi 2011, 53-54; de Boer 2011, 338; Russell 1992, 51.

<sup>124</sup> Popović 2010, 153.

<sup>125</sup> "Some scholars have suggested that the various "temptations" may be issues with which Jesus dealt with throughout his public life (desire for physical pleasure, celebrity, and power), and that the biblical accounts represent an imaginative portrayal or dramatization of his longstanding and recurrent experiences.", Harrington 2010, 158; "And it has been suggested that since the temptation in the desert was not a witnessed event, as the gospel episodes purport to be, the accounts of Matthew and Luke are a dramatic theological expansion of events recorded elsewhere in the gospels, especially three closely related episodes in John (Jn. 6-7). We read there that Jesus fled an offered kingship, that on the next day he rebuked the people's implicit desire for more bread, and that his relatives urged him to go to Judea for the feast of tabernacles to manifest his work. The hypothesis of the non-historical, or meta-historical, character of the temptation in the desert is further strengthened by the presence of formal elements and literary conventions in the account, some of which we have just seen.", Kelly 2004, 16.

<sup>126</sup> Dunn 2003, 381; Lieu 2005, 93; Marshall 1978, 168.

<sup>127</sup> "Pierre Grelot, "Les tentations de Jésus," *NRTh* 117 (1995): 501-16, argues that the historical temptation was entirely an internal experience on the part of Jesus.", Osborne 2010, 129.

Lachs,<sup>128</sup> and Kesich<sup>129</sup> read the accounts as descriptions of Jesus tempted by his own desires (psychological dualism).

## **Conclusion**

Supportive of the observation that Second Temple Period Judaism lacked standardized terminology for a specific satan figure,<sup>130</sup> this study contributes a lexicographical review demonstrating there is no evidence that the satanological terminology used in the Synoptic temptation pericope normatively referred to a specific supernatural evil being in Second Temple Period literature, casting doubt on the common assumption that this term identifies such a being in the temptation pericope. This conclusion could be tested and informed by future research on related topics.

In addition to pre-Christian witnesses, Christian literature proximate to the Synoptics would also inform an understanding of their satanological terminology. Under the Two-source hypothesis of Synoptic composition (currently the most widely supported), Mark and Q served as independent sources for the temptation pericopes of Matthew and Luke (which are independent of each other), with Q being the earliest independent source. The temptation in Q is typically dated between 40 and 50 CE, with Thiessen and Taylor dating the earliest written source to 40-42. CE.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Lachs 1987, 50.

<sup>129</sup> Kesich 2007, 12.

<sup>130</sup> Williams 2009, 88.

<sup>131</sup> Taylor 2001, 27.

Consequently, the Synoptic temptation pericope originated in a source which predated even the generally accepted authentic Pauline corpus, so there are very few proximate Christian texts with which the original temptation pericope can be compared, and no extant Christian texts which predate it. Detailed comparison of satanological terminology in the earliest genuine Pauline texts with the terminology used in the temptation pericope is beyond the scope of this article, but would be a valuable topic for future research and could inform the exegetical conclusions of this study despite these texts dating later than the temptation pericope.

Examination of dualism in the Synoptics could also test this study's exegetical conclusions, by providing a broader context within which to interpret the satanological terminology in the temptation pericope. If strong and sustained cosmological dualism is exhibited throughout a Synoptic gospel, it would lend weight to the argument that the gospel's satanological terminology in the temptation pericope in its final post-Q form was likewise intended to be cosmological. This would still leave open the question of how the satanological terminology was intended to be understood in the original Q source, and the extent to which it was reworked by gospel writers who may have held a different satanology. Conversely, if cosmological dualism is weak or absent, or if ethical or psychological dualism is dominant, it would support this study's conclusion that the satanological terminology in the final form of the temptation pericope is not intended to be cosmological.

Aside from the exegetical conclusions of this study, the lexical data surveyed here is of value to researchers of Second Temple Judaism and first century Christianity. This review and summary of relevant primary and secondary literature for the four satanological terms used in the Synoptic temptation pericope should prove to be a useful reference for scholars in this field.

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