

**THE PERCEIVED SATAN: THE ROLE OF THE ENEMY
IN BIBLICAL AND CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS CULTURE**

An Honors Project submitted by
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IN BIBLICAL AND CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS CULTURE

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The Perceived Satan:
The Role of the Enemy in Biblical and Contemporary Religious Culture

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PREFACE

In my time as a student at Carson-Newman College, the theology I encountered in my religion courses blatantly challenged what many churches and contemporary spiritual leaders in my experiences have communicated. For many of my fellow students, college was the first time they were confronted with the historical and cultural contexts behind the Biblical text. Why are so many Christians uninformed about the nature of that which they claim to be their sacred text, the “light unto [their] path”? At age 20, when presented with evidence that Satan is not the serpent in the Genesis account of the Garden of Eden, and that in Job, Satan was called one of the “sons of God,” a member of the divine council, why was this new to me? Why do churches often neglect this information? Do they find that people are more likely to be active in their church and their faith with the threat of Satan and his Hell looming? Or is it a merely a cycle of ignorance? As a student of religion, I was disturbed that seemingly more indoctrinating than teaching goes on in many churches, and wanted to discover the logic behind that trend.

The issue of evil is one of the most frequented in philosophy and theology courses. Undeniably, bad things happen. A man rapes and murders a young mother and drowns her children in the lake; a student unleashes his despair in the form of bullets aimed at his fellow classmates and teachers; a government seeks to exterminate an entire race of people. Many Christians cite these occurrences as the work of Satan, or the hand of the Devil. Should such an answer so easily satisfy? Is Satan really the one behind all of our problems?

Once confronted with the notion that Satan was probably more of a historical and cultural development than a constant through Jewish and then Christian history, I was intrigued to see how such a development may have occurred. Moreover, I was interested to see what impact, if any, said development has had on the faith of Christian individuals. Is there any correlation

between an individual's perception of Satan and his or her commitment to faith? This study came out of an attempt to address those issues, for my own curiosity as well as for others preparing for Christian ministry or those interested in the psychology and/or sociology of religion. Studies exist in the cultural and Biblical developments of the Christian Satan, or the Devil. Research has also shown different understandings of Satan that exist in the general population. However, I have yet to find a study that tracks the impact of those various perceptions on the individual. It is my hope that this study will begin to shine a light in the obscurity surrounding that one who has become the Dark Prince, however small that light may be.

INTRODUCTION

The Satan on the American religious scene today would be a foreign entity to the ancient Hebrew society where Christianity is rooted. Many churches teach their members from childhood that Satan has been present since before the creation of mankind, making his first appearance as the serpent in the Genesis 2 account of the fall of humanity. A deeper glance at the text will show that it was indeed a serpent that challenged Eve's obedience, and not, as commonly believed by religious people everywhere, the Devil in serpent's skin.

The story of Job and his testing is a favorite for teaching about faithfulness in suffering. As unafraid as Sunday School classes are to engage the tale of the faithful servant Job, what do they make of the role of Satan in this story? If God is who Christians claim, too holy to be in the presence of evil and sin, what is Satan doing in His very courts, giving Him suggestions? Perhaps Satan in this story is not the same Devil imagined by many Christians today.

What impressions of Satan do people have today? Why do they have such impressions? What is the impact on their faith? A survey of the Bible leads its students to see that there is a history behind the twenty-first century conception, "Satan." It is a history that may help to form the basis of understanding necessary to seek out answers to such questions, and the big question: How does an individual's understanding of Satan affect his or her religious commitment?

Goals of the Study

This study seeks to examine implications of perceptions of Satan. Through various means, it will seek to meet more specified goals necessary to achieving this broad objective. In

the process of discovering the impact of various understandings of Satan, meeting these smaller and more immediate goals will insure cogency of the project. They will also create standards by which the reader can measure the success of the project in its main objective. These standards follow.

In its first two chapters, this study will provide a basic overview of a Biblical theology of Satan. It will provide exegetical insight into the notion of Satan across the Bible, giving sufficient theological background to inform the sociological research.

The concepts of “understanding of Satan” and “religious commitment” upon which this study focuses are broad and vague. For the purposes of sociological study and analysis, these concepts must be broken down into more concrete, measurable variables. This study will develop measures of these concepts that facilitate direct and conclusive questioning and results.

In order to test these operationalized variables, a survey was developed and administered to a population sample. The survey contained questions that address the key variables of religious commitment and understanding of Satan, as well as other variables of demographics, religious environment, etc., that may have a potential influence on either of the central variables. The survey will be the instrumental tool in the sociological study and the basis for the conclusions drawn.

In order to complete the study, we had to obtain responses to the survey from a sample of Carson-Newman students for data analysis. This study needed to select a sample that is both sufficiently random and sufficiently representative to provide results that are accurate and conclusive. This sample of students will provide the data necessary to draw conclusions for the body of Carson-Newman students as a whole.

After the surveys had been completed and returned, we analyzed the responses seeking correlations between variables. This analysis, utilizing Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 16.0, will supply the vital information to see and describe relationships between central variables, and investigate other variables that prove to have an effect.

Using the statistical analysis, we will provide a synthesis of those data that shows and explains the relation, if any, between understanding of Satan and religious commitment. Both numerical support from tables and correlations as well as logical insight will give the necessary means of demonstrating the results of the study and what can be determined from those results.

Overview of the Study

This study worked to meet these goals in a project designed to span an approximate eight month time period. The first chapters are an introduction to a Biblical theology of Satan, using the historical-critical method. This section will draw largely from the research of other scholars, synthesizing those efforts into an abbreviated overview of the concept of Satan in the Bible, from Old to New Testament.

For the purposes of this project, this Biblical theology deals with Satan as portrayed in the Protestant Biblical Canon. The scope of this project does not involve extra-canonical literature, although some necessary notes on Satan in extra-Biblical material will be made. A study that seeks to synthesize such a vast amount of information would not only be of a length outside of the parameters of this particular project, but because of all the Near Eastern literature that would be dealt with, would also necessarily involve the religions of the cultures surrounding the Jewish and Christian people far beyond the acknowledgement given here.

More importantly, the interest of the research is in discovering the perceptions of Satan within mainstream Christianity; Christians who come from mainstream Christian churches, and mainstream protestant Christian churches in particular. Most of the respondents to the survey given as part of this study will come from this tradition, and any conclusions made will be primarily applicable to mainstream Christianity. Most Christians who are within what is considered “mainstream Christianity” would only be dealing with the literature that they would find in their pews or in their personal Bibles—the Protestant canon of 66 books. Only references within those 66 books will be addressed at any significant length. Since this is where our respondents most likely develop their perceptions, this project will also. Limiting the presented Biblical theology to canonized literature creates a more relevant backdrop for perceptions revealed by the survey.

The latter chapters are a sociological study in the form of survey research. An original survey, developed with the help of multiple advisors, was given to a sample of Carson-Newman students to assess their understandings of Satan and their religious commitment. The survey, included in the Appendix, takes into account past and present religious experiences and various demographics. The analyzed and synthesized results are reported in the “Findings” chapter, as well as patterns and trends that can lead to conclusions that will begin to answer the principle questions of the study.

This project has been an incredible journey for me, both as a student in religion and sociology and as a Christian individual seeking to know my God more. I invite you to journey with me, through Biblical past, through the spiritual present, and into the theological future as we seek to find the Perceived Satan, and the influence of that perception on our faith.

HEBREW SCRIPTURES AND SATAN

The crux of Christianity is obviously and admittedly in the New Testament. Within the record of the New Testament, we find the life and ministry of Jesus—the Jesus that Christians believe is the reconciliation to God for individuals and for the world. Beyond the Gospels, we see how His life and ministry continued to impact the world, and how they developed into the movement that is now Christianity. Some argue that all we need for an informed Christianity, then, would be in that New Testament text. In this study of the Satan of the Bible, the New Testament certainly has sufficient material for a diabolical character sketch.

Yet as Christians, we believe that the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, reveals the nature and character of God. Beginning with the account of His activity within Creation and through the visions of the prophets, we catch a glimpse of the spiritual realm beyond our direct experience. Although Christian faith hinges on the redemptive life and ministry of Jesus Christ as told by the New Testament, we must recognize that the Old Testament writings were the sacred writings in Jesus' life. This reveals the importance of knowing and beginning to understand those scriptures. For the purpose of this study, we will search the Hebrew Scriptures to see what they have to say about Satan. With a clearer understanding of their scriptural heritage, we can better investigate how Jesus and His followers arrived at *their* doctrine of Satan as recorded in the New Testament.

In this study, the Hebrew Scriptures are important because it is there that so many formulations of Satan begin. All too often, however, Christians apply a New Testament doctrine

of Satan to an Old Testament character with a role similar to Satan. It would appear in some instances that a Satanical doctrine was established, and then Scripture references were applied to back it up. A survey of allegedly Satanical references in the Old Testament will lead us to a development rather than a doctrine. Seeing and understanding this development is imperative in trying to paint a portrait of the Satan of the whole Bible. Studying the Old Testament will provide not only a framework for conceptualizing the role of Satan in the Hebrew and Jewish world and faith, but will also provide a necessary foundation for the New Testament construction. If we understand what the Hebrew Scriptures have to say, we can better recognize and analyze and shifts found in the New Testament, and beyond.

If the Bible is to be taken as inspired by God, as most Christians would agree, it would seem to be more beneficial that Christian doctrine be developed from the inspired material and then incorporated into human understanding. Especially within the mainstream Protestant denominations, Christians hold to the *sola scriptura* flagship of Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Unfortunately, even in spite of a verbalized doctrine of *sola scriptura* and the infallibility of scripture, Christians sometimes subconsciously start with human assumptions and then apply the approval of God via out-of-context Bible verses.

Believing in an inspired text, however, requires that the text receives priority in formation of doctrine. Whether inspired means that God delivered the words to men to record, or that men in their own prerogative wrote about the inspiring work of God in the world, the advantage goes to Scripture. It was either God or men—much closer to being eye-witnesses than we are—who are responsible for the composition of the “sacred book.” Accordingly, we begin with the text in this project. We’ll begin at the beginning, where “Satan,” according to many well-meaning Christians, makes his first appearance on earth.

Genesis 3: Serpent as Satan?

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other *wild animal* that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden’?” (Emphasis added)¹

Popular opinion, backed by popular Christian literature, contends that the serpent in the story was indeed Satan, who had taken the form of the serpent.² Several reasons do in fact exist that would support such an allegation. In Revelation chapters 12 and 20, Satan is given the title, “that ancient serpent” as the author describes his ultimate doom in the lake of fire. It contains the same definite article found in the Septuagint text of Genesis 3:1, leading some scholars like Francis Schaeffer to believe that the serpent here is really ‘The Serpent’ found in the apocalyptic literature of Revelation.³

More significantly, the serpent in the story of the fall of man takes the role that comes to be identified with Satan in Job and other books in the Hebrew Bible. As will be later demonstrated, the role of Satan in those accounts is as an accuser. The story of Job reveals Satan as a tester of humanity, one who tries man’s loyalty to God in the face of difficulty and instilled doubt. What else could his role in this particular story be, if not challenging the first man and woman to question the explicit instructions they had received from God, their creator? Perhaps it could even be cited as the birth of Satan’s opposition to mankind. When the first people, formed

¹ Gen. 3:1 NRSV (Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references will be from the New Revised Standard Version).

² Evidenced by the study material in the Zondervan NIV Study Bible, “The great deceiver clothed himself as a serpent, one of God’s good creatures...by causing the woman to doubt God’s word, Satan brought evil into the world.” Kenneth L. Barker, ed, *NIV Study Bible*, fully revised (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 9.

³ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 78.

by the hands of God, could not stand up to the test, perhaps it was then that Satan made it his objective to prove the inadequacy of human beings; to demonstrate their insufficiency, to separate unworthy people from an inheritance of God that they did not deserve. It would fit perfectly in the schema that has been created for Satan much of the later Biblical account.

Another line of reasoning might suggest that as early as Genesis, Satan as serpent demonstrates his opposition to the kingdom of God. The New Testament best depicts Satan as the destroyer of the creative and redemptive activity of God. Here too, in Genesis, the serpent demonstrates its cunning ability to botch God's design for Creation. The serpent, with a few persuasive words, succeeds in breaking the fellowship between God and humanity so central to life in the Garden of Eden.

And yet, none of these reasons suffice for this study. If we are truly to start with the text, each of these supports fails the test of chronological logic. It is true that acting as a "tempter, calumniator, and hinderer," the serpent fits the mold cast for Satan.⁴ The serpent does act out functions ascribed to Satan, but they are functions *later* ascribed to Satan. Functional similarities are likely the reason for the Revelation description of Satan as "the ancient serpent." Examining the role of the serpent in the account of the fall of humanity and the role of Satan in the New Testament account of human history, the symbol makes sense. However, at the point in Hebrew history when Genesis was being composed, well before the exile, the Hebrews had no concept of a personal Satan.

Again, a character called 'the satan' does appear later in the Hebrew writings, although such a character is not the personal Satan that we recognize today. As will later be described in greater detail, these appearances of the noun *satan* in the Hebrew scriptures largely refer to a

⁴William Caldwell, "The Doctrine of Satan: I. In the Old Testament," *The Biblical World* 41, no. 1 (January 1913): 30, <http://www.jstor.org>.

human who serves as an accuser or adversary to Israel or to one of Israel's representatives. Other times, the noun *satan* refers to the Hebrew *mal'ak*, a messenger or angel of God, who serves in an adversarial capacity. The serpent of Genesis does not fit into either of those *satan* categories. Given that these categories revealed in Numbers, I Samuel, I Kings, I Chronicles, Job, Psalms, and Zechariah are developed after the composition of Genesis, it appears that those later writers were not concerned with making sure that the serpent could be understood as a *satan*. Later *satans* in the Old Testament share little in common with the serpent.

The idea of the Satan in the skin of a serpent was not so widely propagated among the masses until medieval Christianity. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the work of Luther and Bunyan are probably more responsible for the idea of Satan as serpent than is the Bible itself.⁵ As the serpent fits better our contemporary mold of Satan than it does the Hebrew mold of 'satan,' we are confronted with the necessity of re-examining the Genesis account of the fall of man to see if Satan really is there in the Garden. As the Genesis account is examined, it reveals a need to adjust not only a popular conception of Satan, but the contemporary Christian worldview toward Genesis as a whole.

A Second Look at Creation

When science began to theorize about the beginning of the universe, Christians have often felt threatened, especially by the idea of the Big Bang and evolution. Many contend that the idea of evolution is preposterous, considering we have an account of the creation event at our fingertips in Genesis 1-2. Protesting school curriculum and popular media for teaching and promoting the 'science' of evolution, a case for Intelligent Design often morphs into a case for a

⁵ Ibid.

literal seven day creation. Many Christians see the acceptance of any theory other than a single week of creative activity by God as an abandonment of the very foundation of religious belief. This is a prime example of a doctrine of scriptural infallibility applied to a lacking understanding of the text. Christians often bring this literalism to a text without having the background or message behind it.

In her book *Doing without Adam and Eve*, Patricia Williams explains that Christians are threatened by these otherwise accepted scientific theories centering on evolution for two reasons. First, it seems to remove God from the universe. Secondly, it undermines the infallibility of Scripture. As a sociobiologist, philosopher, and Christian, she disagrees with both reasons. To the first, she argues that if God is not an object within the universe, He cannot be removed in the sense of an object being removed. She points out that theologically, God is both outside of and within the universe. Accepting the theory of evolution does not discredit God's presence either beyond the universe or His immanence in it. Secondly, she argues that infallibility in the sense of unwavering literalism cannot be achieved by Scriptures which have internal irreconcilable differences.⁶ Multiple accounts of the same event, creation included, differ to the extent that while attesting to the same event, the details cannot always be confirmed. If the Scriptures are the words of God verbatim, why would He dictate different details to different people?

The belief in a literal seven days hinges on the presupposition that Genesis is a direct account of the creation of the universe. But which account? Unless directly confronted with the idea that the order of creation differs between Genesis 1 and 2, it is a reality often overlooked in personal biblical study. When noticed, it is easy to logically excuse it as Schaeffer has, saying that Genesis 1 views humanity at a cosmic distance, where Genesis 2 places people at the

⁶ Patricia A. Williams, *Doing without Adam and Eve* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 78.

center.⁷ This unity is only arguable with a shallow examination of the accounts. The two accounts “were written by different authors at different times and with different theological purposes; even their conceptions of Yahweh were very different.”⁸

The Documentary hypothesis, a Biblical theory challenged but never discounted, stands as the past century’s most cogent theory of the origin of much of the Torah , especially the Pentateuch. The hypothesis considers Genesis 1 a Priestly document from the Babylonian exile (587-539 B.C.E.) or years directly following it. It reveals itself by its strong adherence to order, structure, and logic, and a theology of an all-powerful yet distanced and unanthropomorphic God.⁹ Genesis 2 and 3 fall in the category of Yahwistic material ascribed the letter “J.” This counts it among the early tradition of the southern kingdom of Israel. The Yahwist, as compared to the structured priestly writers, is a gifted storyteller. His description of God is more personal and anthropomorphic, evidenced even in the name used for God. As suggested by his designation, the Yahwist uses ‘Yahweh’ as the name of God, translated LORD in most English texts. The Priestly authors instead used ‘Elohim,’ a vaguer name for God in their account. The singular ‘Yahweh Elohim,” (the LORD God) found in Genesis 2 is probably a later Priestly attempt to bind the two accounts together and provide the semblance of unity between the accounts that many Christians perceive.

In Genesis 1, male and female are created last, and created together. In Genesis 2, man is formed from the clay, then realizing man should not be alone, God creates plant and wildlife.

⁷ Schaeffer, 41.

⁸ Joan O’Brien and Wilfred Major, *In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel and Greece*, no. 11, *Aids for the Study of Religion Series*, ed. Charles Hardwick (Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1982), 158.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

Only when a suitable helper cannot be found is woman formed from man. Recognizing that the seven-day creation is not a compelling theory even within the biblical text is the first step toward understanding those creation accounts. Although inspired by the activity of God, it is not likely that they were dictated directly by God. The process of composing Genesis, indeed the Bible as a whole, was much more of a human process. Better understanding this human process will lend itself to a better understanding of Genesis and the Scriptures as a whole, in turn helping to reveal a Biblical theology of Satan.

Obviously no human witness could exist when the world was brought into existence. No being other than God himself would be capable of keeping record of the events that occurred “in the beginning.” Even with some special divine revelation, the first person that lived could not fully account for the existence of the entire world around him, not having witnessed anything previous to his own existence. Additionally, the first people would be unlikely at best to have developed a system of written language that could preserve such knowledge. Much later in human history, the Mesopotamian civilization took pride in their innovative and revolutionary system of writing that made it possible for their society to exist on a level considerably beyond many surrounding cultures. This was only about 2900 years before Christ.¹⁰ Archaeologists and historians alike agree that written language is a sophisticated form of communication that takes thousands of years to develop. The possibility of an *oral* tradition being retained perfectly intact from the beginning of time, although more likely than a written tradition, is also essentially slim enough to discount. A more probable explanation of the origin of the Genesis account of creation follows.

¹⁰ Ibid., 126.

As people groups emerged and our earliest ancestors took in all that was in the earth, they imagined how it came to be. Imagination led to ideas, ideas to stories, stories to myths and epics. From these myths and epics came some of the earliest religious literature. Creation serves as a primary reason for religion, as it points humanity to something bigger than themselves. Most civilizations have some sort of creation account that attempts to reconnect humanity with that larger reality.¹¹ In ancient Mexican civilizations, the people believed that they had been created from the corn. The Native American tribes had their own unique beliefs about the beginnings of the earth and of humanity. In the ancient Near East, too, creation myths were central to the cultures' religious beliefs. The Gilgamesh epic, the Babylonian Enuma Elish, and the Akkadian traditions, in some regards strikingly similar to the creation accounts of Israel, reveal certain patterns in their foundational religious lore.¹² In each of these civilizations, these accounts were held as truth, religious truth. In a similar fashion, the early Hebrews would have held the Genesis account of creation as religious truth. It is important to distinguish, however, this epic religious truth from the truth of the modern Western world.

In today's western society, "myth" is almost a term of contempt for a tale that did not factually happen. "It's a myth" is almost synonymous with "It's not true," or "it didn't really happen." Interestingly enough, the word, "myth" does not have its roots in falsehood at all. "Myth" comes from the Greek *muthos*, meaning "mouth." The term myth simply designates that a story has been passed down primarily orally. It is a story 'from the mouth' that holds significance for a certain people. It is an inheritance to be received, not a case to be tried by

¹¹ *Religion* from the Latin *religio*. *Ligio* = connect, *re* = again

¹² H. Ringgren, "Israel's Place Among the Religions of the Ancient Near East," *Studies in the Religion of Israel*, vol. 23, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, ed. The Board of the Quarterly (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1972), 6.

evidence. The importance was not whether the story actually happened, but the fact that it revealed something about nature, about the world, about the collective life of the people. Ricoeur explains:

Myth will here be taken to mean what the history of religions now finds in it: not a false explanation by means of images and fables, but a traditional narration which relates to events that happened at the beginning of time and which has the purpose of providing grounds for the ritual actions of men of today and, in a general manner, establishing all the forms of action and thought by which man understands himself in his world.¹³

With this interpretation of ‘myth’ in mind, myths functionally provide a “universalization of experience” as well as an “investigation of the relations between the primordial and the historical.”¹⁴

Are not these mythical truths exactly what the parables of Jesus are? Was there an actual lost coin, or were there actually ten virgins, or a prodigal son that Jesus knew and got the facts of the story from? Probably not, but that actuality is irrelevant. These parables serve as truths of the kingdom of God; communicating deeper truth when events and observations happening in human perception fall short. Most Christians are comfortable with the idea of parables, and are comfortable with classifying other civilizations’ creation stories as myths, evaluating them for what they reveal about the audience of that time and their experiences.

Interestingly enough, put in the same situation with the earliest stories of the Jewish and Christian faith, it somehow becomes essential that those stories actually happened as events in space and time. If understood otherwise as religious allegory, some feel as though they doubt the tenets of their faith. This literal reading of the text, although common today, is a relatively recent development, with roots in the Protestant Reformation. When arguing that the common man was

¹³ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, (Boston: Beacon Press), 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

capable of reading Biblical text for himself, Reformation leaders like Martin Luther paved the way for the end of “esoteric, cryptic, and allegorical readings of the text, making the task of interpreting scripture less exciting and more difficult.”¹⁵ Williams argues in her *Doing Without Adam and Eve* that the real value of much of the scriptural text has been lost as a result.

Does the value of the story of Genesis reside in having a literal seven-day account of the beginning? This study submits that the value of the creation story, and many stories of the faith, are not in their factuality, but in the truths that they communicate about life and faith. For modern Christians, as uncomfortable as it may be, it will be beneficial to suspend the uncompromising need for factual truth from these accounts, including the Genesis account now at hand. On the quest for a Biblical theology of Satan, the reader will greatly benefit from an ability to look at what the mythical truth has to say beyond the words on the page.

Assuming that the Genesis creation story is the result of a process similar to those in other civilizations, the story described in Genesis 3 is an oral tradition revered for generations, and eventually recorded in written form. This story in particular is only a small part of the epic tradition; it is the opening of the epic of the history of Israel spanning from God’s call to Abraham through the Israelite arrival in the land of Canaan. As the opening, the story of Adam and Eve “played a very minor role in the culture of the ancient Israelites,” but did thematically and theologically fit into the rest of the epic of Israel’s history.¹⁶ This understanding takes us to a place where we see Adam and Eve not necessarily as the actual first people created, but as the representation of created humanity. The story reveals that followers of Yahweh understood humans to be intentionally and personally formed by Yahweh, the creator of all things seen and

¹⁵Patricia A. Williams, 82.

¹⁶ O’Brien and Major, 90.

unseen. He deemed them “good,” and walked in fellowship with them in the Garden. The Hebrew people believed that they had been made to walk with God, a phrase that persists throughout the Old Testament to characterize righteous persons. They also recognized that, as the tale of the fall shows, something had occurred that obstructed this fellowship.

The Serpent in the Created Order

The creation story continues to explain the events causing the relational separation of God and man. The serpent, the craftiest of the wild animals that God had created, spoke to the woman. Within that first verse of the chapter, a couple of points deserve recognition. Primarily, the serpent is classified in the group of wild animals created by the LORD God. Schaeffer explains that humans were separate from the rest of creation by being made in the *Imago Dei*, the Image of God. With that image in them, people were to care for the rest of creation with the care of God.¹⁷ The wild animals of which the serpent was a member were part of the creation in that dominion, as told in Genesis 1:26 and 2:19-20. Adam was not being pulled in one direction by the Creator, and then in another by an arch-enemy of that Creator, represented by the serpent. A serpent, however crafty it may be, was under the authority of humans. Adam and Eve were under no obligation to listen or consider any proposition made by an animal.

For this reason, Augustine and Chrysostom in the fourth century saw the fall of humanity not as a breaking in of evil, but as a person’s free choice for liberty and autonomy over a relationship of protective guidance with God. In her comparison of the insight of Augustine and Chrysostom into Genesis 1-2, Elaine Pagels explains that these Christian fathers were not alone in their understanding. In early Christianity, she explains, most people understood the point of

¹⁷ Schaeffer, 48.

the account of the fall of humanity as a warning, “not to misuse that divinely given capacity for free choice.”¹⁸ In his early 20th century synopsis of the Doctrine of Satan, William Caldwell asserts that although the serpent acts as the “medium of the power of temptation,” the actual fall was still the “free choice of the soul,” regardless of the influence that the environment may have had.¹⁹ O’Brien and Majors agree, contending that similar to other myths, animals “are often used as external symbols of internal states of mind,”²⁰ and interpreting the Yahwist’s message in Adam and Eve to adhere to the free-will theology of the time of Solomon’s reign, during which the epic was probably composed.²¹

The serpent has taken a lot of blame over the years. Does an animal deserve the blame when man and woman had authority over him? They chose to listen to the voice of a creature created to be subjected to them. Not only did they defy God when they ate from the tree, they defied God’s intention for them to exercise authority over that which he had given them. When choosing to hear the voice of a lesser creature instead of their creator God, how can it be other than the free choice of the soul of the individual?

Also noteworthy is that the serpent was, again, *within* the created order. This was not an attack from without, of a foreign evil outside of the realm and will of God. The presented temptation was within creation, as was the capacity to choose rebellion, to choose self, over God. Often the Genesis account is seen as the first battle between good and evil to take place on the

¹⁸Elaine Pagels, “The Politics of Paradise: Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis 1-3 versus That of John Chrysostom., *The Harvard Theological Review* 78, no. 1/2 (Jan-Apr. 1985): 67-99, <http://www.jstor.org>.

¹⁹ Caldwell, “Doctrine of Satan I,” 31.

²⁰ O’Brien and Major, 103.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

earthly soil. Adam and Eve are caught in the middle between God's perfect intent and Satan's jealous deceptiveness. Such an understanding is bigger than the Garden: it is a cosmic battle being played out on the newly created earthly soil. This is neither biblical in the sense of being textually founded, nor coherent with the strict monotheism of the Hebrew people responsible for this account.

The Serpent in the Ancient Near East

To this point, Genesis has been interpreted from the perspective of Christians looking back into Scripture at the Fall. Taking a step back from the Christian era and into the Hebrew world from where this account developed, the serpent as Satan seems less likely still. Genesis 3 was not considered the fall of man until the first century; until Christianity. Looking at the beliefs of the first founders of the faith that Christians have transformed and adopted, and how those have been communicated in Genesis, the results may be even more surprising.

If one thing did separate the religion of Israel from the religions of surrounding cultures, it was their monotheism. The creator God is God and the *only* God. Although in Job, Isaiah, and other later prophetic works there is evidence of a heavenly council, arguably of demi-gods, this Genesis 2 and 3 text seems to be among the earliest biblical material. Consistent with other early writings, it understands *one* God to the point that He shows ambivalence in His nature. What we consider to be the "problem" of evil was not a problem for Israel. Evil and suffering, if they exist in the world, must be a part of God. Why can't He be simultaneously good and evil? He is God, after all. Any dualism is not a good/evil or God/anti-God dualism, but as Caldwell explains, a "dualism in experience."²² An individual or the nation as a whole might at one point experience

²² Caldwell, "Doctrine of Satan I," 29.

the goodness, love, and grace of God, and at another meet His “severe, trying, testing providence.”²³

Patricia Williams sees God’s punishment in the Garden as this strict and severe side. For an act of disobedience, God *curses* His creation. Man is bound to the land, woman is bound to man, and the serpent is forever to crawl on its belly and eat dirt.²⁴ Considering the grace that God other times affords, God is quick to take paradise and immortality from the creatures into which He breathed His own breath.

In this modern age when Christianity primarily defines God as the One who is devoid of evil, this notion of dualism within God is almost unfathomable. As a result, Christians are left with evil as a problem. Most mainstream attempts to solve this problem call forward what ancient Biblical authors would certainly understand as polytheism: a dualism outside of God. Since God cannot be responsible for evil in this contemporary understanding of who He is, Christians, “[locate] evil in Satan and [emphasize] Satan as God’s opponent.”²⁵

With Satan responsible for the evil in the world, what better place to put him than in the Garden, when humans first chose to go against God? While it does not clear humanity of the responsibility for a wrong choice, it does provide an explanation of where the capacity for this wrong choice arose. Satan as the serpent gives us a clue in the problem of evil on earth by demonstrating, if nothing else, where it began. It is possible that Christianity placed Satan in the

²³ Ibid, 33.

²⁴ Noteworthy is the fact that it is *the serpent* who is cursed. God’s retribution is directed at a wild creature. Such an act would seem logically unfounded with the understanding that Satan is the party responsible for the temptation. If using the serpent only as a disguise, which surely God would have seen if He is any God at all, the curse would have been saved for the guilty party.

²⁵ Patricia A. Williams, 168.

serpent for this purpose: to help explain the Fall of humanity. What if this weren't an account of the Fall? What if the origin of evil is not written in the Garden?

When freed from the necessity of understanding Genesis 2-3 as history, these viable possibilities can be better considered. As previously posed, Genesis 2-3 may be a tradition that was meant to communicate truth about the life of the Hebrew people instead of a factually historical account of the beginning of creation and of humanity. What these chapters would have to say to its audience in that case would change the perceived significance of this first part of Genesis. As Westermann explains, "the original narrative [of Genesis 2 and 3] was never intended to be historical. It is not about history, not about heredity, and not about the abstract notion of sin. Rather, it is about the condition of human beings when the J document was edited."²⁶

The condition Westerman refers to, accounted for in the cursing of humankind and the serpent, was the agricultural life of striving: man bound to the land, with unending toils; woman bound to man and the pain of childbearing, from which her life gained its value in this patristic society; the never ending cycle of dust to dust, a coming from and returning to the land.²⁷

Genesis 2-3 was not composed for the purpose of citing the Fall of humanity, or Original Sin, a doctrine not tied to Adam and Eve until the first century C.E. Instead, Genesis 2-3 was the Hebrew explanation of why life was so hard: God made it that way.

Once the immense theological significance of the Fall and Original Sin is removed from this Genesis story, the serpent is more easily the serpent. Once Satan does not have to be there, maybe it is easier to see that in the minds of the Hebrew fathers, he probably never was. Harold

²⁶ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, Trans. John J. Sullivan (London: SPCK, 1984), 192, quoted in Patricia A. Williams, 86.

²⁷ Patricia A. Williams, 89.

Bloom breaks through the walls of many preconceived notions of the serpent as Satan. Where Christians see “crafty” as an indication of a conniving, deceptive nature characteristic of the Satan we know and hate, Bloom points out that the word “crafty” appears to be more of a Hebrew pun on the word used to describe the nakedness of Adam and Eve. The “smoothness” of the nakedness of Adam and Eve is echoed in the “smooth character” of the serpent.²⁸

Additionally, the serpent seems to be lacking in the deception that we first attributed to him. Is the serpent lying when he tells Eve that she will not surely die from eating of the tree? He is right: eating the fruit from the tree did not kill them in the sense of a physically hazardous fruit, or an immediate judgment from God. Their punishment for being disobedient included the end of immortality, but the tree in and of itself did not bring the swift death that seemed to be implied in God’s decree.

Finally, Bloom points out that the serpent is not written in as a malevolent character.²⁹ In his discussion of the serpent having the ability to speak, and having wisdom beyond his experience, Caldwell argues that “the ascription of wisdom to the serpent rests not on observation but on inference.”³⁰ That is to say, the Hebrew people did not see the serpent talking or see that he had knowledge beyond other animals.³¹ The sleekness of his body and his slinking movements, his angled head and piercing eyes, his sly mouth and pervasive tongue are suggestive of a character like the one portrayed in the tale. The serpent was designed perfectly

²⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Caldwell, “Doctrine of Satan I,” 31.

³¹ Neither does this ability to speak with knowledge render the serpent a supernatural being. This is a common scene in mythical and epic stories. O’Brien and Major, 103.

for the role. In a similar way, it is possible that we infer malevolence in the characterization of the serpent.

The enmity between serpent and man as described in the curse is certainly evident today. Snakes are feared, revered, occasionally admired, but rarely seen as something to trifle with. Consider, for example, what connotations the story would have were it a rabbit, or other typically “friendly” mammal talking to Eve in the Garden. Perhaps a similar jump would have occurred, assuming that Satan inhabited this rabbit. However, an honest emotional examination would probably reveal less personal repulsion and more difficulty believing the rabbit to be the incarnation of a Satanic evil.

For the ancient audience, the serpent was additionally perfectly fit for the role of tempter. Serpents were a common icon of Canaanite fertility cults, and would therefore have represented both Israel’s opponents as well as prohibited religious practices for followers of Yahweh.³² The serpent, then, is perhaps the most logical creature to play this role.

From a literary standpoint, the serpent appears to be symbolic. In his understanding of the book of Genesis, Friedman sees a theme of “deception and revenge” appearing again and again. It begins with the serpent, but then reappears time after time in the story of Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Laban, Joseph and his brothers, even Abraham and the king.³³

Time and time again, the serpent is put on trial for housing Satan in its skin and comes up wanting. Above all of this evidence, however, stands the simple reality that Satan was not an entity in Hebrew life and faith at this point. A survey of other Hebrew scriptures will unearth some of his roots. They do not, however, reside in Genesis 3.

³² Ibid.

³³ Patricia A. Williams, 87.

Watcher Angels and the Fall from Heaven

Before Christians saw Satan in the Garden, some Jewish interpretations saw the birth of the demonic in Genesis 6:1-4. This short and obscure passage preceding the account of Noah and the Flood tells of ‘sons of God’ who looked upon the ‘daughters of men,’ found them to be beautiful, and married them. Their looking upon these earthly women earned them the name ‘watcher angels,’ especially in later, extra-biblical literature dealing more directly with angelology and demonology than any of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures.

Although the phrase ‘sons of God’ proves enigmatic and difficult to decipher, the intertestamental Jewish sectarian literature seems to universally understand this phrase as an epithet for the heavenly angels. The Books of Enoch and Jubilees both take the few verses in Genesis that merely suggest a story and make them into a more complete and explanatory tale. In these stories, the leader and worst of the watchers is a character named Azazel.³⁴ He led the other angels in this abhorrence of the created order by procreating with human women. Enoch says that the children of these angelic fathers and human mothers are the giants, the Nephilim of verse 4, and their spirits are the demons.³⁵ Jubilees explains that the angels joined the demonic children and used their supernatural powers as angels to cause humans to worship them as gods.³⁶

Although it is a story lesser known to Christianity today, this explanation of the fall of angels satisfied the Jews of the Hellenistic period. An honest evaluation of the Genesis 3 and Genesis 6 accounts will show that the fall of angels in chapter 6 does seem to be a more plausible

³⁴ The astute Biblical reader might recognize this name from that of a god/demon of the desert from Leviticus 16.

³⁵ William Caldwell, “The Doctrine of Satan: II. Satan in Extra-Biblical Apocalyptic Literature,” *The Biblical World* 41, no. 2 (February 1913): 100, <http://www.jstor.org>.

³⁶ Elaine Pagels, “Christian Apologists and the ‘Fall of the Angels’: An Attack on Roman Imperial Power?” *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 303.

place to find Satan, and more true to the fall of Lucifer that Christians believe is in the Bible, addressed later in further detail. Interestingly enough, it a passage that goes untouched in many Christian circles.

As would be expected, the life of differing people groups in the ancient Near East overlapped in places. It should not be surprising, then, that their mythology often does as well.³⁷ The vocabulary and subject matter of this story is strikingly similar to other mythological tales of the era and region, reminiscent of Greek, Babylonian, and Canaanite tales of heroes with one parent god and the other mortal.³⁸ As with Adam and Eve in Genesis, this probably indicates that the story is less history than literature, with cultural and religious significance. Although it better fits the mold of the Christian understanding of Satan as the fallen Lucifer, Genesis 6 also seems to fall short of containing today's Satan.

An Earthly Adversary

Seeing where Satan is not, we are now ready to examine the contexts in which the noun *satan* does appear, although it may not be the Satan of popular Christian theology.³⁹ Among the greatest misconceptions in contemporary Christian theology of Satan is that *satan* is used in the Bible of a static and consistent character. In fact, "no single interpretation" fits all uses of *satan*

³⁷ As explained by Ringgren, 4, we find a motif of masculine dominance and female moral inferiority in both the Gilgamesh epics depiction of fallen man and the Genesis account. This is not surprising considering the patristic nature of the cultures. More significantly, the conflict motif, what Neil Forsyth terms the combat myth, is pervasive in each text.

³⁸ Bernard J. Bamberger, *Fallen Angels: Soldiers of Satan's Realm*. (Philadelphia, Pa: Jewish Publication Society, 1952), 8.

³⁹ This study on the noun *satan* in the New Testament draws from the Hebrew scholarship of Peggy L. Day, best evidenced in her *An Adversary in Heaven: satan in the Hebrew Bible*, Harvard Semitic Monographs, Ed. Frank Moore Cross, no. 43 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

in the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁰ Of the nine uses, five of them are not used of a celestial being at all, but of an earthly, if not human, character.

The word *satan* serves as more of an identifying noun than a title in most Old Testament instances. Biblical scholars generally recognize *satan* to mean an adversary, an opponent, or an accuser. To Christians, this often becomes The Adversary, The Opponent, The Accuser. However, context demonstrates that the word is usually much more general and can be applied to various characters in diverse situations. In some cases, *satan* is the term for one simply rising against the protagonist, especially militarily. Another instance uses *satan* in the sense of a legal accuser, or a court prosecutor.⁴¹ Of great interest here is that these instances and others do not indicate that this one ‘rising against’ is of any divine nature, has any divine power, or is working at a deeper cosmic level, as the familiar Satan does.

In 2 Samuel 19.22, David accuses another man of being a ‘satan,’ in a manner with legal undertones. Shimei son of Gera asks for a legal pardon from the king, met by a harsh suggestion from Abishai advising that Shimei be put to death. David asks:

What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruihah, that you should today become an adversary [satan] to me? Do we agree on anything?⁴²

Day illustrates that the forensic nature of the discussion and Abishai’s role render this translation inaccurate. Abishai is acting as a legal accuser, but not against David as verse 22 seems to imply.

⁴⁰ A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Eyes of the Lord,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 176.

⁴¹ Peggy Day, “Abishai the satan in 2 Sam 19:17-24,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 543.

⁴² Day suggests in “Abishai,” 545, that a more correct interpretation would be, “have you become an accuser on my behalf?” Not only does this better indicate the legal nature of the discussion, but also better expresses that Abishai was, in fact, Shimei’s ‘satan,’ and not David’s.

Abishai is instead taking the side of the king against Shimei, as the legal accuser—the satan—of Shimei.

Psalm 109.6 also lends itself to interpretations with legal undertones. In itself, the verse does not communicate much about the accuser (i.e. satan) to which it refers. Verses 7-11 make it clearer, placing the accuser into a well-described court scene. The passage reads:

They say, “Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser [satan] stand on his right. When he is tried, let him be found guilty; let his prayer be counted as sin. May his days be few; may another seize his position. May his children be orphans, and his wife a widow. May his children wander about and beg; may they be driven out of the ruins they inhabit. May the creditor seize all that he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil.”⁴³

Each of these misfortunes presented by the psalmist read as sentences issued to an individual found guilty. Although unlikely that the psalmist intended for this passage to resemble an official trial, it does appear that the use of the word accuser in verse 6 is best interpreted with connotations of a prosecutor, working to demonstrate the guilt and ensure punishment of the psalmist’s enemy.

1 Samuel 29.4 uses the term *satan* in a different manner. Here, the word is used to describe a potential military opponent to the Philistines. Interestingly enough, that opponent in this case is David. It reads:

But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with [Achish]; and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, “Send the man back, so that he may return to the place that you have assigned to him; [David] shall not go down with us to battle, or else he may become an adversary [satan] to us in the battle. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord?”

1 Kings 5:3-4 tells of David’s son and future king Solomon sending a message to the king of Tyre that read:

⁴³ Psalm 109.6-11.

You know that my father David could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune.

In this instance, the use of *satan* in verse 4 follows a reference to the war and military enemies faced by David. As a contrast to such a militaristic reign, Solomon explains that he is able to build the temple of the LORD because of the peace in his. His comparison sees the military enemy of one, and the lack of such an enemy in the other. For this reason, it appears that the best interpretation of this *satan* would also be as a military opponent.

Solomon does not remain so fortunate later in his reign. A man named Rezon functions as a *satan* against Solomon and the kingdom of Israel. 1 Kings 11.23-25 explains:

God raised up another adversary against Solomon, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. He gathered followers around him and became leader of a marauding band, after the slaughter by David; he went to Damascus, settled there, and made himself king in Damascus. He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, making trouble as Hadad did; he despised Israel and reigned over Aram.

Rezon, a traitor to his own homeland, gains support and becomes a force that Solomon must reckon with. In terms of territorial control, power, and sheer personal competition, Rezon is contrary to Solomon. Once again, we see a *satan* in the sense of a military opponent.

In each instance where *satan* is used to name an earthly adversary or opponent, the Hebrew writers used the word to communicate one of several functions that a person considered a *satan* would perform. Whether legal accuser or military opponent, these functions are not inherently evil or bad, nor are the people performing those functions. Especially considering a *satan* as a military opponent, it would be accurate to say that to Rezon, Solomon may have been acting as a *satan*. Any perceptions that the use of *satan* in terrestrial circumstances is used across the board of evil or bad people have fallen victim to the bias of the Hebrew writers coming from the side of the Israelites. The *satans* were not evil, they were merely contrary.

For many Christians in today's age, it may be surprising that in over half of the uses of the word *satan* in their Old Testament, we have yet to find Satan, or even much that resembles Satan. The uses cited thus far were obvious references to earthly adversaries. Looking to uses of *satan* in the context of a more heavenly realm or a divine being may point us to places where Satan does appear in the biblical text.

In the previously discussed instances of the Hebrew word *satan*, English translations make it clear that these verses are not referencing Satan, a fallen angel of God. Without knowing the Hebrew text, it would be difficult at best to know that behind the English 'enemy', 'adversary', or 'accuser', is the Hebrew word *satan* that has now become the title of the principle of evil in Christianity. In the following discussion, however, the English does in fact translate the Hebrew *satan* to *Satan*. Some point to the definite article or lack of one as the key to translation of the Hebrew text. In general, *satan* with the article translates best as 'enemy' or another generic function, while *satan* without the article leads some to conclude that it was being used as a proper noun—one who is not merely performing a function, but who embodies that function, i.e. The Adversary, The Enemy, etc. This is largely what separates the earthly satans from the ones of an apparently more celestial nature. Translators try to stay true to the meaning of the text in differentiating these two. However, translating the heavenly *satan* as *Satan* can still lead to confusion, as the heavenly *satan* still falls short of what most Christians understand as *Satan*.

Satan of the Heavens

Numbers 22.22 begins the account where we find the first instance of the Hebrew word *satan* with celestial implications. The record tells of how the Angel of the LORD blocked the path of a man named Balaam who had angered him. Although Balaam could not see the Angel,

sword drawn, his donkey could and would not cross. Balaam became angry and beat the donkey several times, but she would not move. After the third beating, the LORD enabled the donkey to speak, and she asked why she had received such treatment. Eventually, Balaam was able to see the Angel and was humbled into obedience. Where is the satan? The Angel of the LORD acts as the satan of the story, standing in the path of Balaam, obstructing his way.

This story is key in understanding this early Hebrew satan. Significantly, this Hebrew author had no reserves about ascribing the function of satan to the Angel of the LORD.⁴⁴ Some note has already been made regarding the strict monotheism of the faith tradition of the Hebrew people. Just as the severity and the gentle love of God were seen as two expressions of the one God, so could a functioning as satan and a functioning as a helper be two manifestations of the one God's behavior. This monotheistic understanding helps to explain how the messenger of God and a satan can be one and the same, but it does not address another crucial point.

The Balaam account presents the satan as good and upright, encouraging values of obedience and humility in Balaam. Additionally, the actions of this satan are nonviolent, and are not the actions of an enemy or an adversary against his opponent. The Angel of the LORD is only a satan on account of obstructing the path that Balaam intended to take. Once again, the function (and/or person) of Satan does not necessarily correlate with evil. The Angel of the LORD acts as a satan to Balaam because of Balaam's disobedience, and not from any malice or ill intent. He acts as a satan—an obstructor—in *response to* the evil committed by Balaam. Verse 32 reads, "The Angel of the LORD asked him, 'Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to oppose you, because what you are doing is evil in My sight.'" If the use of *satan* for human characters remains unconvincing, the Angel of the LORD acting as a

⁴⁴ Some contend that this epithet, "Angel of the LORD" may in fact be speaking of the spirit LORD Himself.

satan in Numbers 22 should sufficiently demonstrate that *satan* serves as a functional title, and not as a name. These early satans are not who we thought they would be, nor are they of the malicious nature we thought they would be.

Satan, in that form, first appears in English translations in 1 Chronicles 21.1. This narrative of David's census of Israel is reminiscent of an earlier account in 2 Samuel 24. Yet a striking difference appears in the first words of the two versions. 1 Chronicles reads, "Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel." The earlier passage in Samuel says that, "Again the anger of the LORD kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, 'Go, count the people of Israel and Judah.'" Where the version in Samuel communicates the 'dualism in experience' of God previously noted under Hebrew monotheism, the Chronicler's account seems to locate responsibility for David's census outside of the person of God, clearing God of the burning anger and ferocity previously attributed to him. Caldwell suggests that this development in the text suggests the underlying development of the Hebrew faith into Judaism.⁴⁵

In later post-Exilic times, Jewish priests were known to adopt terminology and literature that suggested a more gracious and less vengeful God. This may have been helped by an increasing interest in angelology and demonology during this same intertestamental period, as a more dualistic view of Deity would allow for stronger characterizations of angels and their roles. Such a trend of softening the image of God may be demonstrated in the text at hand, as priests were working to ensure that their theology was reflected in their literature—a theology on the verge of including an opposing force to God. This opposing force became more and more associated with the name that was previously just a function: Satan.

⁴⁵ Caldwell, "Doctrine of Satan I," 33.

Elaine Pagels argues that this 6th century B.C.E. text is the first place where Satan noticeably begins to transition into the enemy of God. She notes that simultaneously, intra-Jewish conflict is beginning to surface and submits that the groups within Judaism that spent time and effort developing the concept of Satan are those Jews who found themselves struggling against other Jews.⁴⁶ In particular, Satan was best developed by the sectarian Jewish groups that composed the minority. A Satan with power to sway the masses, including the legendary king of Israel and man after God's own heart, would serve as an ample explanation of the apostasy that sectarian Jews saw in the more dominant Jewish majority. It seems plausible, then, that Jewish texts show some ambivalence regarding the nature of Satan, or *satan* as it may be.

In any case, many scholars view this passage as the sole instance of Satan as a proper name, the most indicative of a reference to a specific and antagonistic being named Satan, in the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁷ As will subsequently be addressed, two additional uses of *satan* in a celestial sense remain, yet both of these characters seem to be at home in the presence of God, members of the celestial court and completely subjected to the control and command of the LORD. Not until the 2nd century B.C.E. and the composition of apocryphal/sectarian literature such as the Book of Enoch and the Book of Jubilees is a *satan* presented as closely to the Satan of Christianity as it is here in 1 Chronicles.

⁴⁶ Elaine Pagels, "The Social History of Satan, the 'Intimate Enemy': A Preliminary Sketch," *Harvard Theological Review* 84, no. 2 (1991): 108.

⁴⁷ The *satan* in 1 Chronicles 21 is *not* preceded by the definite article, unlike any other Old Testament reference. This leads scholars to conclude that if Satan is a proper name anywhere in the Hebrew Bible, it is here.

The most famous use of *satan* in the Old Testament is in the first two chapters, or the prologue, of Job. In it, the sons of God⁴⁸ present themselves before the LORD, and the accuser comes with them. This is not necessarily to say that the sons of God came and then the accuser, a separate category of being, tagged along behind them. The sons of God came, and among them was the accusing one. Caldwell suggests that this does not denote a specific personality within the court of the LORD, as “the function of an angel so overshadows his personality that the Old Testament does not ask who or what the angel is, but what he does.”⁴⁹

Reading the first cycle of Job’s testing, the LORD’s knowledge of this angel’s function seems apparent as he asks, “Where have you come from?” The accuser responds that he has been roaming the earth, to which God asks if he has considered His servant Job. The accuser had come to report on what he has been doing; the “fulfillment of his duties”⁵⁰ as he keeps his eye on man and all he does. Interestingly enough, this is a function attributed to God Himself in other instances, as one who searches the hearts and minds of men. Caldwell makes the case that in this, angels such as the satan in Job are not only subjected to God as members of the divine council, but are “only functionally separate from God.”⁵¹ Taken to the extreme, this statement and idea can be misinterpreted and morphed into a form of pantheism. In the account of Job, however, it

⁴⁸ This phrase is one English translation of the Hebrew phrase ‘bene elohim.’ Many suggest that this is more probably a reference to the members of the Divine Council of Yahweh of which the satan is a part. See Frank M. Cross, “The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 1953): 274-277, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁴⁹ Caldwell, “Doctrine of Satan I,” 32.

⁵⁰ Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1973), 10.

⁵¹ Caldwell, “Doctrine of Satan I,” 32.

is clear that the satan does embody that more severe and judgmental testing that is a part of the nature of the One God of Hebrew monotheism.

The duty and the person of satan in Job is reminiscent of the Persian Secret Service, who served as the “eyes and ears of the king,”⁵² going where he could not go, seeing what he could not see. The verb used to describe the actions of the satan on the earth further communicate the idea of the roaming eye, possibly made familiar by the Persians or another surrounding culture. The Hebrew verb *sut* translated “roam” or “rove” is the same verb that would be used of the roaming eyes.⁵³ This satan, then, is a character that could easily be linked in the minds of the Israelites with an ancient intelligence agent working for the LORD.

The dialogue between God and the satan is largely replicated in the second chapter, the second testing of Job. Once again, the accuser has come from roaming the earth and the LORD asks him once again if he has considered His servant Job. After some discussion, the satan is permitted to inflict great physical discomfort upon Job to see if he will curse God. The accuser leaves God’s presence, afflicts Job, and then disappears for the remainder of the book of Job. Caldwell asserts that the satan here demonstrates that “he is a servant who knows how to disappear when his work is done.”⁵⁴

Similar accounts of the suffering servant in other cultures combined with the mythological and symbolic elements of the account render Job unlikely to be a historical account. The message behind it, however, was no less significant to the audience of the day for its historicity, or lack thereof. As a tradition important enough to preserve, it communicates the

⁵² N. H Tur-Sinai, “How Satan Came into the World,” *Expository Times*, (1936/7): 41, quoted in Pope, 10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Caldwell, “Doctrine of Satan I,” 32.

values and theological understandings of the author and his culture. In terms of this particular study on Satan, we find elements in the accuser that would later be transformed into the more independent Satan of Christianity, but by and large, the Jewish culture saw the accuser as a member of God's entourage, with a specific duty that he performed within the body of the 'sons of God.' The satan is like a heavenly prosecutor, pushing the defense to his limits to prove his guilt. He is tough, but to call him evil would be beyond what the Joban author presents.

The last instance of the Hebrew word *satan* in the Old Testament occurs in Zechariah 3.1-2, as the prophet has a vision of the High Priest Joshua, standing before the LORD after the exile.

Then he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not his man a brand plucked from the fire?"

Pagels explains that the two sides standing before the high priest correlate with two factions existing within Israel. The group of Jews recently released from exile was ready to return to their land as rulers and leaders, taking up the worship of the LORD where they had left off. The group that was already in the land resented the attitudes and plans of these returners, seeing them largely as instruments of the foreigners they had been under during the exile. Zechariah was sympathetic to the returning group. The dissident voices of those already living in the land find their voice in the accuser, the satan. Zechariah's vision helps bolster Pagel's position that as factions arose with Judaism, Satan began to characterize the opposing group.

It is important to note that both of these groups were Israelites—part of the people of the LORD. This is not Israel versus the nations as had been the case historically, but Israel against Israel, a trend that would continue into the New Testament, and a trend that Pagels asserts having an influence on the development of the concept of Satan. Whereas opposing nations had been

characterized as the mythological dragon, Rahab, or Leviathan, creatures of foreign origin to the Israelite people, Jewish groups characterized other opposing Jewish groups as ‘satan,’ a function/character within Hebrew tradition, and with overtones as an enemy within the court and kingdom of God. Later stories would make the Satan-in-progress more of an intimate enemy still, with tales of his rebellion and fall. It was the perfect character for the creation of a rebel.

Fallen from Heaven

In many Christians’ beliefs about Satan, he began as one of God’s angels but fell from Heaven because in his pride, he wanted to be like God. It is commonly said that he took one-third of Heaven’s angels with him, and they became Satan’s demons. Satan was called Lucifer, and was the highest of the angels; yet fell to the lowest depths when he rebelled. These ideas are particularly founded in the prophetic writings of Isaiah 14.12-14 and Ezekiel 28. Still, Bamberger says of the fall of Satan, with confidence, that there is “no hint of it in the Hebrew Bible.”⁵⁵

The name Lucifer ascribed to Satan’s former self comes from the passage in Isaiah 14. The English uses “morning star” to translate the Hebrew phrasing, where the Latin Vulgate used Lucifer (light-bearer). The passage reads:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon; I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.”

Taken out of context, it sounds like a perfect description of a rebel angel. In context, however, it is clearly a “taunt against the king of Babylon,” as it says in verse 4 of the same chapter. The

⁵⁵ Bamberger, 12.

verses that precede and follow the verses in question make it clear that this is describing a man who was a strong world leader, whose life's work will amount to nothing in his death. "The man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home" will now be "brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit."⁵⁶

The reasons for the adaptation of verses 12-14 to the fall of Satan are obvious. As an enemy from within the ranks of God, Satan becomes that much more evil, as the epitome of pride, deception, rebellion, and selfishness. Beyond the appeal of blackening the name of the devil to an even greater extent, the establishment of a devil so personal that he used to be in the company of God is, as Rudwin contends, "a lot more interesting than an abstraction."⁵⁷

Native to the Latin Vulgate, the term 'lucifer' dates from the age of the Church Fathers in the centuries after the life of Christ. However, 'Lucifer' as the celestial character who falls from Heaven to become Satan is a tradition not largely popular until the time of St. Anselm in the 11th century.⁵⁸ As with the case of Genesis, it is an interpretation of the text that begins with doctrine and then makes the text fit. In this instance, we have the doctrine of Satan, the rebel angel, and find a piece of text to fit that doctrine. Here, the Babylonian king and the Satan of the Christian imagination share a great deal in common, and are awarded the same taunt against them.

Ezekiel 28 addresses the King of Tyre in a similar way, accusing him of great pride, aspiring to be like God. He, like the King of Babylon, has been brought down on account of his pride. The imagery in this passage is especially tempting to apply to the Satan that fits this same mold. With reference to creation and the Garden of Eden, it even supports the notion of the

⁵⁶ Isaiah 14.17, 14.15.

⁵⁷ Maximilian J. Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature*, (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 12.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

serpent as Satan, reading, “You were in Eden, the garden of God...”⁵⁹ Ezekiel is not, however, using the King of Tyre as an epithet for Satan and addressing this speech at him. He uses the image of the Garden of Eden to compare the King of Tyre to Adam, as they both seemed to be, “the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,” “blameless in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you.”⁶⁰

Ezekiel describes the sins of Tyre, again rooted in pride, and personalizes his prophecy against Tyre so that it could not be intended for another, including a fallen Lucifer. From describing the location of Tyre as “in the heart of the seas” in verse 2, to revealing the violence that characterized Tyre’s trade with the nations in verse 16, this is not the falling of an angel from Heaven, but the falling of a king and a nation from power.

As the name Lucifer is merely a misinterpretation of the first of these widely misunderstood passages, and the fall of such an angel is not in either passage, the belief that Satan is fallen from Heaven must be suspended for lack of Biblical support, at least temporarily. On the quest for a Biblical theology of Satan, the Hebrew Bible has not taken us on the journey that Christians might expect, leaving us without a fallen angel; really without a personal Satan at all.

Conclusions

At the close of the Hebrew Bible, with nine references to the Hebrew noun *satan*, there are nine different circumstances each requiring a unique interpretation of the word. With some *satans* referring to men and others to a celestial being, with some having legal connotations and others political or military, once with the definite article and the rest lacking it, the use of *satan*

⁵⁹ Ezekiel 28.13.

⁶⁰ Ezekiel 28.12, 15.

in the Hebrew text is far from consistent and far from universal. However, tracing the different usages across the span of the composition of the texts *does* indicate some development in the overall concept of satan, as well as what constitutes a satan.

The research does seem to indicate that this development is directly related to the developing and transitioning culture in which the faith of the Israelites finds its context. Obvious overlapping in the religious literatures of several Ancient Near Eastern societies demonstrates the influence of surrounding nations and their mythological traditions. The Babylonian exile called into question the theologies of old, especially the idea of retributive justice and understandings of evil. The development of factions within Judaism is reflected in the literature, as it expedited exponentially the citation of Satan and his power at fault for Israel's opposition to the LORD. Especially as the stories of a "Satan" who was the leader of a sectarian group in heaven began to circulate and grow, it made that much more sense to attribute another faction's presumed antagonistic behavior to that rebellious son of God and the dominion he had begun to create.

The aforementioned cultural developments are more likely behind this growing Satan phenomenon, coming to full force in the New Testament, than an actual battle in heaven between God and Satan being echoed in the text. Satan has, as now demonstrated, an ambiguous beginning that indicates either a lack of concern or uncertainty on the part of the authors, most likely the former. It will be the position of this study that Satan is not a historical entity in the Hebrew Bible, nor a single coherent concept. Not until the sectarian literature of the intertestamental period does Satan become cohesive and pervasive in the faith that will give birth to Christianity.

NEW TESTAMENT AND SATAN

No discussion on Satan's presence in the New Testament can begin before dealing, at least briefly, with the development of the concept of Satan during the intertestamental period. Although this study is primarily concerned with a Biblical theology of Satan born out of the 66 books composing the canonized Bible of Protestant Christianity, our attention must briefly be turned elsewhere. A significant leap in the concept of Satan occurs between Testaments, and such a dramatic transformation is impossible to comprehend without some background in the Jewish religious scene in the centuries immediately preceding the life of Christ.

As has been noted, the Satan of Christianity does not exist in the Hebrew Bible. With the possible exception of 1 Chronicles 21:1 "Satan" is not used as a proper name until the 2nd century B.C.E., several hundred years after the composition of the books that comprise the Old Testament. Somewhere between that 2nd century B.C.E. declaration of "Satan" and the composition of the New Testament, Satan becomes quite familiar and prevalent, at least to the religious communities where the New Testament writers originate. He becomes so familiar, in fact, that the New Testament presents a relatively strong and unified perspective of Satan from which many modern understandings developed.⁶¹

⁶¹ H.A. Kelly comments that there was no consensus concerning Satan's character during the period of the New Testament. However, coming from the uses of Satan in the Hebrew Bible and during the intertestamental period, there is a comparatively significant uniformity among New Testament writers of the role and the nature of Satan—he is opposed to the kingdom of God in both behavior and character. Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Devil in the Desert," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (April 1964): 202.

A character sketch of Satan in the Old Testament is impossible to create, with such vague and varied uses of the noun *satan*. During the period of the intertestamental literature, however, Satan begins to come more into focus. The figure of Satan is yet “manifold and confused,”⁶² but he does become more consistently present, more consistently the responsible party behind misfortunes and evils, and more consistently a character with a personality instead of an ethereal being with a particular function. Additionally, Satan is more commonly in opposition to God, rather than working for or at His side. Coming from the Old Testament where the only Satan to be known is a satan, usually one of God’s servants, to the New Testament Satan who is indeed diabolical, the rift between God and Satan must have widened during the intertestamental period.⁶³

The difficulties that the Jews faced during the exile made them reconsider their retributive justice doctrine, as their experiences at the hand of the Babylonians seemed unwarranted and immoral. After returning from the exile, Jewish literature attempted to explain the evil they experienced. This post-exilic period is the first time that the origin of evil is dealt with, as authors begin elaborating on tales of old and forging stronger connections between antiquated Hebrew stories and the source of evil in the universe. As previously discussed, Adam and Eve as the original sinners is a Christian notion not popular until centuries after Christ, where the tale of the watcher angels was more commonly cited as the explanation of evil in the world. Yet even this interpretation of Genesis 6 was a later development, popularized during this

⁶² William Caldwell, “The Doctrine of Satan: III. In the New Testament,” *The Biblical World* 41, no. 3 (March 1913): 167, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁶³ Andrew C. Zenos, “Satan,” *Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary*, 3rd Rev. Ed. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1936), 812.

intertestamental period. The Books of I Enoch and Jubilees were especially influential in propagating the fall of angels as the origin of evil.⁶⁴

Within the story of the fall of angels (i.e. the watcher angels) is the explanation of the origin of demonic forces as well as the commander-in-chief. In the Book of Enoch, an angel by the name of Semihazah led 199 other angels to intermarry with human women and to have children. The giants who were the result of these divine-human pairings had spirits who became Satan's demons.⁶⁵ The character of Azazel also appears in this extra-biblical literature, this time as a more diabolical character, instigating evil on the earth when he discloses the secrets of metallurgy to humans, and they use the knowledge to feed their greed and violence.⁶⁶ In these violations of the divine design for the universe and for the world, these rebel angels were the source of evil. The fascination with angelology and demonology was not limited to this account of fallen angels.

The Book of Jubilees, written by a revisionist Pharisee author, attempts to release God and His servants from any morally questionable acts. No longer is God the God of tough love, as the hardening of hearts, destruction of peoples and nations, and the tempting of His own are here attributed to Mastema, a powerful demon. Instances such as the testing of Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac are attributed to this fallen angel.⁶⁷ As the arguably "evil" nature is removed from God, it begins to be located in other beings, namely Satan and his demons. Although the names of the demonic powers are many and varied, the developing dualism revealed by this literature is

⁶⁴ Bamberger, 20.

⁶⁵ Caldwell, "The Doctrine of Satan II," 101.

⁶⁶ Pagels, *Intimate Enemy*, 117

⁶⁷ Caldwell, "Doctrine of Satan II," 100.

of tremendous importance to the theology of the New Testament. The Jewish groups responsible for this literature communicate in it that they were more concerned with God being good than God being “One” in the strict sense of the monotheistic Hebrew faith. This trend persisted into the New Testament, as religious people read and esteemed these works to the extent that the theology largely reappears in the writings of New Testament authors.

Pagels offers an explanation for this development. Alluded to in the discussion of 1 Chronicles and Zechariah, her thesis essentially says that the rising up of the “intimate enemy” (competing factions) within Judaism is responsible for the development and propagation of Satan beyond the satan of the Old Testament. After the exile and the division of Jews, the Jewish people continued to splinter to the point that they found themselves pitted against each other instead of against foreign nations. Where so much of the Old Testament saw Israel against the nations and saw God as fighting for Israel against the rest of the world, the intertestamental period saw segments of Israel against each other. The literature of the period is not the literature of the Jews as a whole, but comes from various groups of Jews. For this reason, the intertestamental literature is also known as sectarian literature.⁶⁸

Although their estranged Jewish brothers had been worshippers of the true God, they had been seduced by the devil, by Satan. Satan was the logical choice for the role, as he was the portrait of an enemy from within. According to the sectarian stories, he was formerly an angel and agent of God but rebelled and went astray—just as these Jews believed the opposing Jewish groups had. After Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in 168 B.C.E., the Maccabean revolt split the Jews into the separatists and the assimilators, a division reflected in the books of

⁶⁸ Pagels, *Intimate Enemy*, 107.

Maccabees.⁶⁹ More important than the obvious divisions occurring was the trend of characterizing the opposing Jews as followers of Satan. Pagels notes that the Jews who still saw the nation as Israel as united against the other nations, as in the earlier days of the faith, did not deal with Satan. Satan was instead elaborated on by those groups who were struggling against other Jews, especially if they were struggling against the majority.⁷⁰ As the battle between opposing Jewish groups grew, so did the scale of the cosmic battle depicted in sectarian Jewish theology. Pagels explains:

During the first century B.C.E. and afterwards, certain radically sectarian Jewish groups, especially, for example, the Essene communities and the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, placed this cosmic battle between angels and demons, God and Satan, at the very center of their cosmology. In so doing, they expressed how central to their experience was the conflict they experienced between themselves and the majority of their fellow Jews.⁷¹

This thesis is not limited to the sectarian literature, but extends into the body of literature that is the New Testament. Although this study does not base its biblical theology of Satan on this premise, it is insightful, well-researched, and provides an extensively delineated schema for viewing the character of Satan in the Bible.

Regardless of the causes for the shifts in the Jewish faith between the testaments, undeniable changes in theology during the intertestamental period are revealed by the extra-Biblical literature from the period; both God and Satan underwent character adjustments that carried into the New Testament. This discussion is admittedly limited, but will suffice to bring the reader to an understanding that cultural and religious developments outside of the record of

⁶⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 108.

⁷¹ Ibid., 124.

the Christian canonical Bible cannot be ignored if we are to truly grasp the character of Satan in Biblical history.

Combating the Kingdom of Satan in the Gospels

The dualism beginning to surface during the intertestamental period develops by the New Testament into what *The Anthropology of Evil* terms a “secondary dualism.” God and Satan are opposing forces, but the battle is really waged between Jesus and Satan rather than God and Satan.⁷² A prolific writer on the history of Satan, Jeffrey Burton Russell agrees that “Satan in the New Testament is comprehensible only when it is seen as the counter-principle of Christ,” and that “the saving mission of Christ can be fully understood only in terms of opposition to the Devil.”⁷³

This dualism appears throughout the New Testament in its entirety, regardless of the variation of doctrines and themes in individual books. It is a dualism rooted in Jewish apocalyptic literature, but on a greater scale than the Jewish faith had previously known.⁷⁴ In the synoptic Gospels, two major themes indicative of the New Testament dualistic view are the existence of a united kingdom of Satan—a kingdom with authority and control in the world—and the destruction of this kingdom through exorcism.

⁷² Donald Taylor, “Theological Thoughts about Evil,” *The Anthropology of Evil*, ed. David Parkin (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1985), 35.

⁷³ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 222, and Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 51.

⁷⁴ Bamberger, 72.

The three synoptic Gospels each include the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. The Marcan account only briefly mentions the desert encounter of Jesus and Satan, whereas the Matthew and Luke both include specifics of Satan tempting Jesus three times. Some scholars suggest that, assuming Marcan priority, Matthew and Luke filled in where Mark said little, using temptations that would confront Jesus through His life and ministry. Regardless, Satan was responsible for the temptation, as the authors believed he was the one with the authority to offer Jesus what he promised: physical comfort, wealth, and power—things of this world. Early in the first three Gospels, Satan is already the powerful ruler of the world.⁷⁵

The synoptic authors believed Satan, as ruler of the world, to be evident in the realities of daily life. Demon possession was a strong indication of Satan's power. Although contemporary western culture has done its best to explain away such experiences, possessed people were a literal reality to people in the first century world. Similarly for the author of Mark, exorcisms were literal truths and must be seen as such for an accurate evaluation of Mark's presentation of who Jesus was and what he faced in opposition. To attribute the Satanic, demonic presence to mere literary symbolism is to miss Mark's understanding of Jesus as Messiah, and therefore misread the entire theology of the author's message.

Jesus himself validates the literal existence of demon inhabitants of human bodies by speaking and relating to them. The argument that demon possession was a symbol of physical or mental sickness, and the exorcism an act like any other healing does not suffice. He treats exorcisms in a manner unlike the healings and restorations of the physical body—the demoniac is distinguished from the paralyzed, crippled, and blind. Take away exorcisms, take away spiritual warfare, and the Jesus that remains would be incomplete in the eyes and mind of Mark.

⁷⁵ H.A. Kelly, 208.

As powerful as the healings, the Passion, and the Resurrection may be, a Jesus who does not recognize the presence and power of evil, or who refuses to take action against it is lacking as Messiah, especially in the Gospel of Mark.

Generally believed to be the earliest of the Gospels, appearing to hold much of the raw material found in Matthew and Luke, Mark has less of the thematic expansion and symbolism common to the other two. Mark is a Gospel with great activity, a Gospel that does not pause for theological or personal interpretation. His book is known for its abundance of the miraculous, of healings and exorcisms, and the hand of Jesus at work. Mark does not interject to preach on the identity of Christ, but allows Jesus' ministry of restoration for the people and His combat with the Devil to speak for itself.⁷⁶ Instead of trying to comprehend and describe the unknowable origins or basis of the occult, the author of Mark chose to focus on the observable—the visible signs and activity of the God-opposers, especially possession and exorcism. For these reasons, and because exorcism accounts are portrayed similarly in all of the synoptic Gospels, we will center the discussion of exorcism on the Gospel of Mark.

Mark emphasizes the confrontation between the forces of evil and the godly perfection that is Christ Jesus as central to the life and ministry of the Messiah. As mentioned, the Marcan account of the temptation of Jesus in the desert is markedly brief compared to Matthew and Luke. It stresses not the natural scene or environmental pressures found in the other synoptics, but the idea of confrontation. Mark made it clear, even then, that the struggle to overcome and defeat demonic powers is an unavoidable reality in life under God.⁷⁷ In submitting to God's will,

⁷⁶ W. N. Clarke, *Commentary of the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881), 14.

⁷⁷ Stephen C. Barton, *The Spirituality of the Gospels* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 57.

Jesus entered Himself into battle with the God-opposing powers, thus showing that accepting God's will is to wage war. One of the most effective means of warring against the powers of Satan in the world was through exorcism.

Although the demons are many and varied in Mark, as well as Matthew and Luke, they were all part of one whole, evil body controlled by Satan. Jesus' exorcisms were not arbitrary acts of kindness mercifully extended to one individual under the power of evil. Remarkable as it was for those individuals to be restored to themselves, exorcisms were part of something much bigger than any single person. Just as individual demons were part of one kingdom of Satan, so were individual exorcisms part of one kingdom of God, one ministry of conquering the power of evil in the world. Ferguson agrees that, "Jesus saw one kingdom of Satan... [and] his work as demonstrating that the whole dominion of evil was being conquered."⁷⁸

The Marcan story is hinged on the principle of exorcism and restoration. And restoration in Mark is never independent of the breaking of demonic bonds through exorcism. As Mark progresses through the accounts of exorcisms, it becomes increasingly apparent that "the Kingdom of God is present where the dominion of the adversary is overthrown."⁷⁹ Ultimately, the *Misio Dei*, the saving mission of Christ, can only be fully understood in terms of opposition to the power of the Devil in the world.⁸⁰ It was a mission of deliverance from evil, fought against evil personified in Satan and his kingdom of demonic forces.

⁷⁸ Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, Symposium Series, Vol. 12 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 20.

⁷⁹ Ethelbert Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, Trans. John Marsh (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 124.

⁸⁰ Russell, *The Devil*, 249.

Matthew and Luke present a similar understanding of the role of evil, Satan and his kingdom in particular, in the ministry of Jesus and in the world in general. Other verses throughout the synoptics that help to communicate that the Gospel writers understanding of Satan and his kingdom intricately relate to the ministry of exorcism as tied to the downfall of the kingdom of Satan. Jesus says in Matthew 12.28, “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” Not only does the kingdom of God involve casting out demons, exorcism is one of the indicators that it has come—the two are inseparable.

The parable of the strong man, found in each of the synoptics, is Jesus’ response to the accusation of casting out demons by the power of Satan. It is commonly understood that Satan is the strong man, but Jesus is the stronger who comes in as a conqueror that ties him up and clears him out. Jesus is able to tie him up by binding his forces, the demons. More vulnerable without his forces, Satan loses power through exorcisms so that Jesus can overcome him, releasing whatever is under his control: worldly kingdoms, institutions, and humanity.⁸¹

When Jesus sees Satan fall from heaven in Luke 10.18, it is often misinterpreted as evidence for the fall of Lucifer from heaven, occurring in ancient religious history. This assumption overlooks the intricate relationship between Jesus’ vision of Satan falling and the exorcisms that are rendering him powerless. The preceding verse has the seventy-two disciples returning with excitement that the demons would submit to them in the name of Jesus. Jesus responds in verse 18, saying “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.” Perhaps put in context, Jesus ‘watching’ should be interpreted as occurring simultaneously with the submission of the demons to the disciples. To Jesus, exorcisms were the strongest evidence of Satan’s loss of power, and the exorcisms of the seventy-two leave Satan with such losses that he

⁸¹ Ferguson, 23.

is almost ruined.⁸² The Synoptics⁸³ agree; “Satan’s opposition is strong but in its terminal stage.”⁸⁴

In Mark 8:33, Jesus rebukes Peter saying, “Get behind me, Satan!” This usage does not fit the model given in the instances of exorcism. For one scholar, this serves as evidence that “Satan to [Jesus] was mainly a symbol of things wicked or morally evil,”⁸⁵ and here Jesus uses the symbol of Satan to describe Peter’s behavior. Carus comes to this conclusion hastily, as it could instead be evidence of Satan’s activity in the world, and the extent of his involvement in humanity. According to Luke, Jesus tells the Peter at the Last Supper that Satan “demanded to sift [the disciples] like wheat.”⁸⁶ Jesus’ triumph over and resistance to the temptations presented by Satan in the wilderness encounter demonstrates that Satan is not to blame for one’s action in response to temptation, as the individual has the power to withstand. That same encounter also attests to the power and lure that Satan has, and that in one moment of weakness, a person may fall. Satan seems to be involved with Peter on several occasions, and Jesus’ rebuke may legitimize the presence of Satan there with Peter more than it dismisses Satan as a symbol in the mind of Christ.

While each of the synoptic Gospels emphasizes different areas of Jesus ministry, different theological points, and even differing views of the exact person of Satan, they all agree

⁸² Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come : the Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1993), 196.

⁸³ Considering Luke as the first part of Luke-Acts, the book of Acts communicates a similar view of Satan and Satan’s work in the world, as noted in Bamberger, 69.

⁸⁴ Barton, 46.

⁸⁵ Paul Carus, *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court Publishing Company, 1974), 159.

⁸⁶ Luke 22:31.

that Satan is a personal being. He is the head of an evil empire, with power in the world and over humanity through his demonic forces. The synoptics cannot see a Jesus who is separate from the ministry of exorcism, separate from destroying the kingdom of Satan.

John's Gospel demands comment apart from the synoptics, as in his account, Jesus performs no exorcisms. As previously mentioned, the kingdom of God and the exorcism of demons were intricately connected in the synoptic Gospels. In John, the kingdom of God theme is missing, and the exorcism of demons is missing accordingly. Satan, however, is not. Satan's presence in the world is an unquestionable reality to John. To the Jews who were questioning Him, Jesus says:

You are from your father, the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.⁸⁷

As Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane before his crucifixion, John records His prayer for the disciples not that God would remove them from the world, but that they would be kept from the evil one (who is in the world).⁸⁸ This Gospel writer's perspective is further revealed in later works. In the epistle of 1 John, he plainly says that "we know that...the whole world lies under the power of the evil one."⁸⁹

Moreover, Satan is still seen as a force to be crushed by the only one able—Jesus. John's first epistle explains that the Son of God came for that reason: to destroy the devil's work.⁹⁰ In

⁸⁷ John 8.44.

⁸⁸ John 17.15.

⁸⁹ 1 John 5.19.

⁹⁰ 1 John 3.8.

John, Jesus does this once and for all through His death on the cross.⁹¹ Although the Passion of Jesus is certainly central in the synoptic Gospels, there is also the continuous weakening and defeat of Satan's kingdom in Jesus' diminishing of Satan's hold on earth through freeing demon possessed persons.

Each of the Gospels does have eccentricities in their respective presentations of Satan, not to mention those of Jesus. Such idiosyncrasies are beyond the scope of this project, as we are seeking an understanding of Satan found in the text as a whole. We do find such a consensus in the Gospels, namely that Satan is the ruler of the world, and that Jesus came to save humanity *from the grip of the devil*.

The Gospels are not the earliest writings of the New Testament, but are a logical place to begin our New Testament survey of Satan, as they depict Satan in the context of Jesus' ministry, upon which the rest of the New Testament is composed. Additionally, their prime placement in the New Testament cannon reveals the weight given to these works by the early churches. They were foundational in building the doctrine and theology continuing to develop today. From this part, we investigate Satan in other New Testament writings, especially in the Pauline epistles, and the book of Revelation.

Pauline Interpretations of Satan

Paul's letters display a firm belief in the reality of Satan. Unlike the Gospels, it wasn't that his theology or doctrine necessitated the presence of such a being, but that he experienced

⁹¹ G.H Twelftree, "Demon, Devil, Satan," *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 171.

suffering that led him to believe in a personal devil called Satan.⁹² References to Satan are scattered through Paul's letters, more frequent in some places than others. As a whole, however, his literature communicates that there is a personal devil, that he is not only actively involved but has authority in the world and in the lives of humanity, and that he is often behind the suffering, trials, and separation from God of people both individually and collectively.

On a personal level, Paul believed Satan was behind his physical ailment that plagued him time and time again, as well as in his foiled travel plans.⁹³ Paul also saw Satan as a threat for humanity as a whole, with his primary aim to hinder fellowship between God and man, and as one with authority in the earth, he was often successful.⁹⁴ Paul didn't speak of exorcisms as did the synoptic Gospel writers, but he did believe in the presence of demonic forces in the world, masquerading as gods in pagan religions, or spirits who prove themselves deceitful.⁹⁵ Like the Gospel writers, Paul did understand those demonic forces as subordinate to the being of Satan, the orchestrator of all things opposed to the work of God in the universe.⁹⁶

Although Paul's ministry did not begin until several years after the Bible records the ascension of Christ into heaven, Paul's understanding of Satan is remarkably similar to the views presented in the Gospels. This may be due in part to the fact that the Gospels were written after Paul's letters, and the Gospel writers made a conscious effort to harmonize Christian writings. Elaine Pagel's thesis of the Intimate Enemy would suggest that the Christians, initially a

⁹² Bamberger, 65.

⁹³ 2 Corinthians 12.7, 1 Thessalonians 2.18, respectively.

⁹⁴ Ferguson, 147.

⁹⁵ 1 Corinthians 10.19, 1 Timothy 4.1, respectively.

⁹⁶ Ferguson, 146.

minority sect of Judaism, used Satan to demonize their Jewish opponents. Perhaps, and it is the stance of this investigation, that these similarities evidence the development of a uniquely Christian perspective of Satan, rooted in the ministry of Jesus and the spiritual opposition experienced within that ministry.

Other Common New Testament References to Satan

This section will address some of the remaining New Testament references to Satan commonly cited, excluding those in Revelation, which will be subsequently discussed. The authors responsible for these passages at hand are varied, but the differing presentations of Satan are once again largely in accord with each other and the other New Testament literature previously addressed.

Biblical scholarship cannot determine the authors of the books of Ephesians and Hebrews, although they were traditionally attributed to Paul, and in some instances retain that connection in the general population. When associated with this most prominent New Testament writer and apostle, as they were for centuries, their teachings are further legitimized. It is fitting, then, that some of the most familiar verses regarding the devil are found here. As widely believed as it is, the New Testament does not have a Satan who rules Hell, punishes people there, or is an inhabitant of it himself.⁹⁷ In fact, the book of Hebrews made the first connection between the devil and death at all.⁹⁸ Perhaps through the legitimizing of Hebrews through the association with Paul, this teaching expanded to incorporate Hell and gained popularity.

⁹⁷ Russell, *The Devil*, 240.

⁹⁸ Ferguson, 147. However, much of the imagery of Hell is found in Revelation with the final judgment seeing Satan and his followers thrown into the lake of fire.

Ephesians 6 discusses our battle against the powers and principalities of the world, terminology that would have been familiar to a Jewish audience familiar with Jewish literature that would incite those terms for an angelic, supernatural being.⁹⁹ Our struggle, says the author of Ephesians, is not against “blood and flesh,” but against the supernatural forces in control of the world.¹⁰⁰ By association, here we have a picture of Satan as he has come to be known: a supernatural force in control of the world.

In that same chapter, the recipients are charged to put on the armor of God to stand against the stratagems of the devil. In this supernatural war, it only makes sense to have supernatural protection. It is noteworthy, however, that Satan’s supernatural quality did not necessarily make him an omnipotent being. Bamberger contends that Ephesians 6.11 encourages believers to put on the armor of God because of the author’s certainty that the armor of God could protect them from Satan, and ultimately that God will conquer Satan.¹⁰¹

The pervasiveness of exhortations to withstand the attacks of the devil adds to the argument that Satan was not seen as a being with Unlimited Power. In 1 Peter, James, Ephesians, believers are encouraged to resist the devil, stand against him, be alert and self-controlled that the Satan might not have power in their lives.¹⁰² New Testament writers saw Satan as a real being with real power in the world. He does not, however, have Unlimited Power, and can be resisted by humans and overcome by the power of God in Jesus.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 144.

¹⁰⁰ Ephesians 6.12

¹⁰¹ Bamberger, 66.

¹⁰² Ferguson, 149.

‘That Ancient Serpent Called the Devil, or Satan’—Revelation

Revelation deserves separate treatment, as it holds the most extreme dualism found in the New Testament, and may serve as the origin of much of the mythical dualism found in contemporary Christian doctrine.¹⁰³ This book goes beyond the scope of other New Testament works in that it ceases to view the battle between Christ and Satan as a symbolic struggle between opposing kingdoms. The vision of John sees an all out war between Heaven and the forces of evil under Satan. Satan as a tester is no longer sufficient terminology—it is too weak to communicate the role of Satan in the world that John sees. He is here a “power of unmixed and ruthless wickedness,” a destroyer.¹⁰⁴

The Apocalypse of John, as Revelation is known in some canons, is reminiscent of Jewish apocalyptic literature.¹⁰⁵ That Jewish apocalyptic literature was central to the demonization of satan and the development of a being called Satan. In this context, it is not surprising that Satan is described with such expressions as, “ancient serpent”, “dragon”, and “beast” that connect the character of Satan to Old Testament and extra-biblical Jewish references to the enemies of Israel.

Another perspective presents Revelation as the Christian version of the combat myth from earlier Mesopotamian cultures.¹⁰⁶ In Revelation 12-13 in particular, where Satan is a central character, the diabolical creatures call to memory the character of Tiamat in the Enuma Elish, Rahab, Leviathan—all symbols of the enemies of Israel, and the enemies of Yahweh. These two

¹⁰³ If not the origin, it *does* at least serve as support for such dualistic views.

¹⁰⁴ Bamberger 64.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁶ Cohn, 214.

perspectives are not necessarily conflicting views, and may instead demonstrate that Satan in Revelation is a culmination of centuries of enemies, oppressors, and outside cultures perceived as a threat to Israel.

This most developed and complex Satan was applied to the most recent threat to the Jewish-born, now Christian, community. The oppression of Christians by the Roman Empire is cultural background to the work that cannot be ignored. Scholars agree that cosmic symbolism used throughout Revelation is directly related to the events occurring on earth. Although the emperor Nero and the Romans are not mentioned by name in the book, the message that they are the enemy at hand would have been clearly understood by the readers of that day. The Roman Empire, to the early Christians, was the realization of Satan's dominion on earth. Whereas Jesus weakens Satan's hold over the world in the Gospels through exorcism, he combats Satan in Revelation through an attack on the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁷

Conclusions

With such a diverse base of authors and literature, the New Testament presents views of Satan that have somewhat different emphasis, and accentuate different nuances of understanding. In the grand scheme of the New Testament, however, Satan is an identifiable and single concept. The numerous references and rich characterizations reveal him to be a personal being opposed to the ministry of Jesus and the kingdom of God. He is the ruler of the world with authority to tempt humanity. Unsatisfied, he seeks to destroy humanity completely through his demonic forces, be it in the form of demons or an evil empire. Still, his power is limited, and his defeat sure. He continually suffers losses by the spread of the kingdom of God on earth, including

¹⁰⁷ Cohn, 216.

human efforts to withstand his ploys. He is strong, but God is greater, and will overcome Satan in the end.

The ability to draw such conclusions of the New Testament perspective of Satan comes from the abundance of comparable texts. Where any of the individual passages could potentially be figurative or symbolic in nature, “the sum of all the items requires us to interpret them literally and realistically.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Bamberger, 70.

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY APPLIED:
SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF CARSON-NEWMAN STUDENTS

A Biblical theology of Satan sees Satan as a development. This survey of the canonized Christian scriptures reveals that no single definition or character sketch can be created that would satisfy all instances in the Bible. Composed over a lengthy period of time, the testament of the Hebrew Scriptures reveals a conspicuous development and ambiguity in the concept of Satan, known then as merely “satan.” The transition occurring between the testaments changed satan into the more recognizable Satan of the New Testament. Although the New Testament presents a relatively unified vision of Satan, the intensity of the dualism obviously increased over the century of the composition of the New Testament, culminating in the book of Revelation. Change and development in the concept is undeniable. A theology of Satan is not as simple or straightforward as Christians might believe.

Where does this leave Christians today? Satan as a development does not translate neatly into a viable understanding of Satan. Still, seeing Satan’s progression throughout the Bible is helpful in Biblical study and exegesis. It allows for Satanical references to be put into the correct cultural and chronological context, so that the referenced Satan, his methods, and his motives are not molded to fit contemporary paradigms. Nevertheless, the Bible is more than history to Christians. It persists, thousands of years after its composition, as relevant truth for the Christian today.

Certainly a Christian understanding of God has developed from the beliefs of Jewish forefathers. The uncompromising monotheism of the Hebrew people is almost incomprehensible for Christians who see God as all and only good; all and only love. In exegesis of Hebrew Scriptures, we recognize that rigid monotheism behind difficult passages where God is the tempter, the murderer, or the tyrant. Christian paradigms remain: God is good; God is love. Even giving the text priority in the formation of doctrines or beliefs requires a paradigm through which the text can be interpreted and understood.

Similarly, this investigation of Satan in the Bible would remain a conglomeration of information without a paradigm through which it can be incorporated into a Christian's faith. Although Satan is not a constant through the Bible, this does not necessarily mean that Satan is inconstant in history. Satan developed as Biblical writers' understandings of Satan developed. Using the records left by these writers, it is now up to the Christian to determine how he or she will interpret the reality of Satan.

It was the original intent that this segment of the study would expose a Biblical paradigm and offer it for the Christian's consideration. The search quickly demonstrated that no single Biblical paradigm exists. What the text cannot fully supply, tradition and conviction provide. This reality frustrates the original intent to ground this study in the Protestant echo of Luther's cry, "*sola scriptura*." Yet this reality is where *sola scriptura* has led us. Seemingly circular, a *sola scriptura* approach has demonstrated that *sola scriptura* is insufficient for the development of doctrine and belief.

Now at the place where the study intended to present a single coherent Biblical paradigm, it instead stands open-ended. Insight and context of Biblical references have been presented and synthesized. It is up to the individual how those references will be filtered and interpreted. One

paradigm might say that Satan is a real, personal being opposed to God who now rules over Hell. Another might understand Satan as a fabrication of religious imagination. Both can incorporate the material that has been so far presented, assimilating references in a way that does not infringe on the integrity of the text. For the former, the development of Satan through the Bible may indicate that the reality of Satan was only slowly being disclosed to humanity. The New Testament record finally grasps the true nature of Satan, where older references only caught glimpses of the oppositional nature of the “beast.” Comparatively, the latter may see the development of Satan as the growing usefulness of the concept to the faith or the religious community, as does Pagels in her *Intimate Enemy* and *Origin of Satan*. This study cannot presume to choose for its audience.

Russell does contend that for the Christian, there is a paradigm that best corresponds to the Christian faith. Christian thought is founded on Scripture and tradition, and both communicate that Satan is real. Although Satan is not a core doctrine in any major Christian tradition, “it is intellectually incoherent to affirm Christianity while affirming a view contrary to Scripture and tradition.”¹⁰⁹ Essentially, Satan is a part of the Christian tradition we inherit today, and an individual’s decision to disregard that heritage communicates a rejection of the very faith they claim to adhere to.

Beyond this adherence to the tenets of the faith, Satan remains a valuable doctrine in the life of the individual, or a collective, grappling with the issue of evil in the world. Hinson proposes, “Maybe it is this enigmatic face of evil on a global and cosmic scale which makes the resuscitation of Satan appropriate today, again not so as to create a competitor of God for control

¹⁰⁹ Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 275.

of the universe but to admit our perplexity.”¹¹⁰ Satan replaces the question mark following the problem of evil, providing a personality to blame instead of accepting our own lack of understanding. As discomfoting as the idea of an evil being at work in the world may be, perhaps it is preferable to our ignorance.

The task of the sociological study remains. The survey tool seeks to garner responses indicating an individual’s paradigm of Satan, at least certain aspects of that paradigm. This investigation of the Biblical text has set the stage well for the Carson-Newman student study. As stated, insight and context of Biblical references to Satan have been presented and synthesized. It is up to the individual how those references will be filtered and interpreted. It is the goal of the ensuing study to extract elements of an individual’s paradigm and evaluate the correlations between that filter and other aspects of their religious life.

Goals of Sociological Study

The ultimate goal of this study is to discover the relationship between understanding of Satan and religious commitment. Along the road to reaching this goal, other checkpoints call for attention. Among these goals are:

- a. Operationalization of variables ‘understanding of Satan’ and ‘religious commitment’
- b. Development of a survey that adequately tests these variables
- c. Obtain and survey a sample of students large enough to give reliable results
- d. Hypothesize about potential relationships between central variables
- e. Analyze the data in a way that shows relationships, if any, between variables

¹¹⁰ Glenn E. Hinson, “Historical and Theological Perspectives on Satan,” *Review and Expositor* 89 (1992): 475-487.

f. Draw conclusions regarding relationships between variables from the data analysis. Completing these phases and achieving these goals moves this study in the direction of being able to address the research question at hand.

Development of Survey

In this inductive research, the primary sources will be the responses to the survey instrument. The responses to the survey will serve as the raw material for data analysis, and be the basis from which conclusions are drawn. Developed specifically for this project, the survey instrument pulls from other research, other surveys, and the opinions of experts in the field.

Operationalization of Variables

Of the challenges to researching conceptions, ideas, and loyalties of individuals is finding a means of measuring such intangible realities. In terms of measuring religiosity or religious commitment, Glock provides lines of questioning that demonstrate an individual's religiosity in several areas of commitment. He categorized religiosity into five dimensions: ritual, ideological, experiential, intellectual, and consequential.¹¹¹

Ritual involvement looks at an individual's participation in prescribed rituals, which can be attendance at a worship service or taking communion. Our assessment of ritual involvement asked how often the respondent was involved in worship, Bible study, personal prayer, reading the Bible, etc.

The *ideological dimension* investigates orthodoxy. A segment in our survey instrument investigated orthodoxy by measuring adherence to seven statements that represent common

¹¹¹ R. Stark and C.Y. Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 11-19.

tenets of the Christian faith. These include “Jesus is the Son of God,” and “Faith in Jesus is the only way to Heaven.”

The *experiential dimension* investigates the personal religious experiences of a person, be it feeling as if he or she had an encounter with God, or feelings regarding God’s presence. We asked the respondent to describe their conversion experience in several ways to see if an encounter with God was behind their initial commitment. We also investigate faith satisfaction, spiritual growth, and shifts in views of God.

Intellectual involvement looks at the extent to which an individual is committed to learning about his or her faith and how much knowledge he or she has about it in a historical and academic sense. We asked the respondent to comment on how often they read religious literature other than the Bible.

Lastly, the *consequential dimension* measures the impact that a person’s faith has on the rest of his or her life. This dimension is difficult to distinguish from some of the other dimensions, as faith can potentially impact any behavior or mentality previously addressed within ritual or intellectual involvement. This study seeks to uncover other areas of potential impact.

In their *To Comfort and to Challenge: a Dilemma of the Contemporary Church*, Glock, Ringer, and Babbie suggested three dimensions of involvement: *ritual*, *organizational*, and *intellectual*. Organizational involvement, not yet mentioned, measures attachment in the form of organizational connections. In essence, the more organizational ties, the more involved an individual is. Taking into consideration that some people are more likely to be organizationally involved in general, organizational involvement with the church must be measured against

organizational involvement outside the church.¹¹² For instance, a person with 10 organizational ties but only 1 of them at the church is likely less religiously attached than a person with only 2 organizational ties, but both of them at the church. In this study, we ask the respondent how many groups they are involved in where they volunteer their time on a regular basis a) in general and b) in a religious context.

As demonstrated, many questions from the survey have their roots in these dimensions and levels of involvement, as they are measurable standards of an abstract concept. These dimensions are not necessarily the categories to be used in final analysis, but the comprehensiveness does provide a basis for getting accurate measures of religiosity valuable to this study.

The extensive 2006 Baylor study of religion shows means of getting at the internalized perceptions and attitudes of God and the world, some of which can be applied to similar internalized perceptions and attitudes toward Satan.¹¹³ Although the same questions cannot always be applied, and the same means of analysis of the answers would not always be appropriate, these questions give clues as to how to go about pulling out attitudes of an individual toward something unseen, intangible, and conceptualized by each individual. Using their techniques, we ask respondents about their feelings toward evil, which conception of Satan they adopt as their own, the importance/relevance of Satan in their lives, and in what ways they see Satan affecting the world.

¹¹² Charles Y. Glock, Benjamin B. Ringer, and Earl R. Babbie, *To Comfort and To Challenge: A Dilemma of the Contemporary Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 226-227.

¹¹³ "American Piety in the 21st Century: New Insights to the Depth and Complexity of Religion in the US," *Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion Online Record of Findings* (11 September 2006): <http://www.baylor.edu/isreligion/index.php?id=40634>.

Categories of Questions

The order of the survey instrument can be fully seen in the Appendix, where it is reproduced. It begins by asking students about their current religious involvement and attitudes. It asks about participation in church rituals and activities, basic religious beliefs, understanding of how the supernatural affects life on earth, and whether an individual's behavioral tendencies demonstrate more religious or secular mindsets. These questions provide the basis for measuring the current state of a person's religiosity, both in belief and practice.

The next section asks about the respondent's religious exposure growing up. This asks for information about religious atmosphere at home and in church as well as how that atmosphere influenced the individual's beliefs and what those beliefs were. It then asks about religious habits during their childhood. This section will provide a basis for comparison with the first section. Perhaps the relationship between view of Satan and religious commitment is strong during childhood, but then fades as a person gets older. This section will make it possible to see.

For individuals who had a conversion experience, there is a short section about their conversion and the year afterward. It asks about the motivation for conversion and the religious involvement of the individual the year following his or her conversion. These questions will allow insight into whether Satan or fear of Satan played any significant role in the *initial* religious commitment—the choice to become a Christian.

Several questions about the respondent's spiritual growth since childhood follow. They ask about growth following conversion, in various periods of life, and since coming to Carson-Newman. These questions are designed to fill in, at least to some extent, the gap of time between conversion and today.

In order to see the current context of a person's current religious involvement and attitudes, the survey next addresses his or her current religious environment. Similar to the questions dealing with religious environment growing up, this section asks questions regarding current living situation, church affiliation, and the teachings of that church's pastor. These questions will help demonstrate the role, if any, that religious environment has on religious attitudes and involvement.

For the purposes of classification and measuring correlation in various groups of respondents, the final section of the survey focuses on demographics. These questions will facilitate the grouping of respondents by gender, age, classification in school, major, region of country where raised, religious and denominational affiliation, etc. Including such questions additionally allows for control variables in the analysis. It will become evident how any of those independent variables has an effect on the answers given without regard to the experimental variables. Without controlling the variables, our results may show relationships where it is actually a case of spuriousness. Preliminary analysis, for instance, may show a relationship between fear of Satan and church attendance. Controlling classification, however, might show that sophomores are more likely to be afraid of Satan, and also are more likely to regularly attend church. It isn't really that fear of Satan affects attendance, but the sophomore status affects both.

Population Sample

Given the time frame and scale of this project, the sample had to be narrowed to an attainable population of a feasible size. Although the ideal project would sample and draw conclusions for the general population, this project had to be limited to a study of undergraduate students on the Carson-Newman campus.

Respondents

The survey was given to various undergraduate courses that meet general education requirements. Among these are courses are introductory religion and sociology courses, as well as Biblical language courses that satisfy the general education requirement for foreign language. These general education courses must be taken by virtually all students, without regard to major, place of origin, or any other separating factor. Short of obtaining a list and creating a random sample group, surveying these courses is the best means of indiscriminately reaching any student. Although a random sample would be preferable, giving a survey during class time is a much greater guarantee of getting the surveys back than if surveys were placed in certain mailboxes with a return address on them. This method also prevents obtaining a self-selected sample, which would occur were we to send surveys to all students with a campus mailbox, as only those with some sort of interest would respond.

Administering the survey

Professors of the selected course sections, with their consent, were asked to reserve approximately 10 minutes of class time for students to complete the survey. This increases the percentage of returned, completed surveys, as it is time that the students were already in class. This method virtually guaranteed a satisfactory return rate of surveys. The magnitude of the study, approximately 280 surveys or 14% of the population being studied, helps to correct the potential loss of randomness.

Hypotheses

Due to the lack of substantial research in the relationship between Satan and religiosity, this is an inductive study. Without the work of others to draw from, we were unable to form specific hypotheses to test. Instead, we will look at the data at large to uncover relationships and connections that will help to inform this largely unexplored field of study. For this reason, our hypotheses are general and are cannot necessarily be statistically rejected or substantiated.

We recognize that the extensive nature of the survey instrument creates potential for a number of relationships to emerge and be considered. While we do not expect to be able to exhaust the data set in terms of analysis or discussion, we do intend to focus on several key variables that seem promising in their capacity to be significant in this study.

As the study focuses on the role of a conceptualized Satan in religious commitment, we plan to investigate variables that help us infer the respondent's perceptions of Satan. This would include the individual's understanding of evil: human action, impersonal force, or supernatural being. If the respondent views evil as a personal, supernatural being, they were asked to answer a contingency question that we will analyze regarding what amount of power they believe that being to have. We will also look at an individual's concept of Satan where responses range from a myth in biblical history to a being equal and opposite to God. Other indicators include feelings associated with evil, and the involvement the respondent believes evil has in the world. Once assessed for the purposes of revealing perceptions of Satan, we will look to the various dimensions of religious commitment to investigate relationships there.

In our analysis of the perceptions of Satan that exist at Carson-Newman College, we expect to find the population largely in agreement. Because of the location and the religious nature of the school, we would expect greater consensus here that Satan is a supernatural and

personal being than in the general public. While it is unlikely that we will see clear, straightforward patterns and divisions, we do expect that enough variation will emerge to demonstrate that the idea of Satan is not an isolated theological issue, but is related to other areas of religious life and faith. We expect to find that a difference in view of Satan is related to a difference in dimensions of religious involvement, especially the ritual, ideological.

As mentioned, we do not expect the findings to be so simplistic as to conclude that “x factor in perception of Satan causes y element of religious commitment.” Although Satan is a prominent feature in the Christianity of many individuals, it is unlikely that Satan would be the sole reason behind a certain behavior. We expect to find interactions of several variables, including perception of Satan, that predict certain behaviors or levels of commitment. We expect any model to be complex in nature, yet informative and revealing in terms of how a perceived Satan factors into the religious life and faith of a person.

Data Collection and Analysis

The returned surveys were coded and entered into a database in Statistical Package for Social Sciences v 16.0 for Windows (SPSS). This program was used to produce frequencies for all the variables, create new variables, and then to calculate cross tabulations and correlations for the data. We used Analysis of Variance, or ANOVA, to assess the accuracy of the models, especially in regard to the test of significance in a relationship between variables. This study generally used an alpha of .05, as it was assumed that statistical significance is achieved where the p-value is .05 or less. This indicates a 95% certainty that the difference would be replicated in another test. Still, trends can be recognized where the p-value is slightly higher than the .05

level. Recognition of relationships between variables and to what degree can help lead to conclusions and generalizations that help to answer the research questions.

Limitations of the Study

The population sampled for this study is the undergraduate student population at Carson-Newman College. Due to the limited scale of the study, the conclusions drawn from the results will also be limited. College-aged students are at a point in their lives where they are challenging their foundational beliefs and ideas, which in and of itself will affect the answers given. In their reforming of ideas, they may respond a degree to the left of what the general population would.

Additionally, Carson-Newman is in a rural town in East Tennessee, a loyal member of the Bible belt. People in the area are more likely to be Christian, and Christians in the area are more likely to be fundamentalist. This may cause the answers to be a degree to the right compared to those of the general population.

Also because Carson-Newman is within the Bible belt, children are encouraged to “be saved” at young ages. Children claim salvation at as young as 4 and 5. The questions surrounding the time of conversion may be less relevant to those whose faith began at such a young age, and they may not have considered many of the issues at hand. This could hinder an accurate comparison between the different time frames, and in final analyses, age will have to be a bigger consideration.

As a Christian and a Baptist school, students may be more likely to hold to the traditions that they grew up with in church. For some students, Carson-Newman’s appeal is its status as a private and religiously affiliated school. The average student at Carson-Newman may be less likely to abandon or challenge childhood beliefs than the average student at a public university.

The study focuses on religious commitment, but largely within the realms of Christianity alone. Although students of other religions are welcome and encouraged to take the study, the relevance is essentially for Christians. This may prevent some students in classes from a religious background other than Christianity from completing a survey. In addition to a possible reduction of respondents, although likely a small and insignificant reduction, these non-Christian students may be offended by exclusivist language and material.

The respondent's self-reporting is a limitation in itself. While anonymity promotes more honest responses, the possibility of misrepresenting oneself on paper is very real, whether it is done intentionally to present a certain image or unintentionally as a genuine over/underestimate of the realities of one's behavior or thought patterns. The possibility of inaccurate responses means the possibility of inaccurate analysis, and hopefully future studies on the topic will seek more objective ways of gathering information from the sample.

FINDINGS

The survey instrument was returned by 282 individuals. Of the respondents, 132 were male and 148 were female (47.1% male, 52.9% female). As the surveys were given in general education classes, most of the respondents were undergraduates. Freshmen constituted 42.5 percent of the sample with 119 individuals, sophomores and juniors both composed 20.4 percent or 57 people each, 42 seniors made up 15.0 percent of the respondents, and 5, or 1.8 percent classified themselves as “other.” The respondents were similar in regional makeup. 91.7 percent of the sample considered the southeast their home, and 63 percent of those were from east Tennessee. Only about 10 percent of the sample came from an urban environment. The rest of the respondents were almost evenly distributed between rural and suburban environments with 120 versus 129 respondents, respectively.

The initial objective of this study was to uncover any link between an individual’s understanding of Satan and their religious commitment. The data do indicate a relationship between these two variables that warrants attention. In the process of analysis, however, other significant results emerged. Of these, the best statistically supported is the relationship between a) the biggest factor in conversion, the perceived power of Satan *and* the consistency that a person has in staying with their home church and b) an individual’s religiosity, as measured by responses to various questions from the survey input into ANOVA. The findings discussed in this chapter will deal primarily with these relationships. This far from exhausts the data provided

by the survey instrument, but does provide a basis for the establishment of some connections as well as for further analysis in the future.

We will first address each of the independent variables exclusively and their relationship with different dependent variables measuring religiosity. We will then look at the combined effect of the independent variables upon measures of religiosity. We will begin with the conversion factor variable, and then move to the power of Satan variable that is closer to the heart of the study.

Conversion Influence

Table 1 shows the responses to question 16 from the survey that seeks the most important factor in the individual's conversion. For the purposes of clarity and analysis, the categories were reworked to become Church Converted and Outside Church Converted. The Church Converted category includes those people who answered that the "presentation of the Gospel in a church/religious environment" was the biggest factor in their conversion. The Outside Church category includes those who said that pressure from their parents, presentation of the Gospel at home, or personal conviction from the individual's study was the biggest factor. Those who answered "other" were discounted from this investigation. Table 2 shows the new distribution of the factor in conversion variable. This relatively even distribution between the two groups provides a reliable sample to analyze.

Table 1. Factor in Student Conversion Based on Five Responses Given in the Survey

Factor in Conversion	N	Percent
1. Pressure from parents/other adult figures	25	9.7
2. Presentation of the Gospel at home	52	20.1
3. Presentation of the Gospel in a church/religious environment	121	46.7
4. Personal Conviction resulting from own personal study	45	17.4
5. Other	16	6.2
Total	259	100.0

These new groups shown in Table 2 proved to be distinct in various categories of religiosity at a statistically significant level. This suggests that the most influential environment in an individual's decision to convert to the Christian faith can serve as a predictor variable. For other aspects of a person's religious life and faith, then, Conversion Influence will be used as a two-level predictor. The relationships that follow cannot be established in terms of causation—that is, we cannot say for sure that Conversion Influence *causes* one thing or another. An experiment to determine causal direction is neither necessary to proceed nor realistically within the scope of this sociological project. However, logic will allow us to draw conclusions about the probable causal nature of these relationships later in the discussion. Currently, however, it will suffice to demonstrate the connection between Conversion Influence and certain other variables.

Table 2. Factor in Student Conversion Based on Environment

Conversion Influence (CI)	N	Percent
Church Converted (3)	121	49.8
Outside Church Converted (1,2,4)	122	50.2
Total	243	100.0

Using Conversion Influence as the independent variable, we ran some descriptive and ANOVA tests in SPSS. In the relationships tested, there may be some variance within the Ns of

the two categories of Conversion Influence; not all will show 121 Church Converted respondents and 122 Outside Church Converted respondents. This is due to respondents who may have elected not to answer a specific item on the survey, one of the dependent variables tested. Only respondents who answered both the Conversion Influence and the dependent variable item in question are included in the Ns of any given table.

There was a difference in mean age of conversion between the two groups, visible in Table 3 below. The responses to question 17 gave the Church Converted population a mean age of conversion at 11.31 years, and the Outside Church Converted at 10.56 years. Because of the relatively large and comparable standard deviation in both groups in this dependent variable, however, they both have a similar range of typical conversion age; approximately 7.5 to 15 years in the Church Converted group as compared to 6.5 to 14.75 years old, revealing little meaningful significance in this age difference despite a p-value of .087, indicating a statistical trend. This allows us to largely dismiss age of conversion as a factor that could be disguised as Conversion Influence, or a case of spuriousness. That is to say that because the age ranges are comparable, age does not appear to be a confounding variable, so it does not obscure any logic that flows from Conversion Influence being a predictor variable.

Table 3. Age of Conversion by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean Age	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	11.31	117	3.74
Outside Church Converted	10.56	111	4.16
Total	10.94	228	3.96

p-value = .087

Conversion Influence does appear to be related to conversion experience, as measured by question 15 of the survey. The respondent was asked to describe their conversion to their faith by selecting one of four statements including 1) not converted, 2) involved but no personal commitment, 3) committed but no specific moment of conversion, and 4) specific, memorable moment of conversion. Most respondents indicated that there was a personal faith commitment in their lives, where only 12 percent said that either they were not converted or that they had no personal faith commitment. The mean response of all respondents was 3.39, as might be suspected based upon the low percentage of respondents choosing statements 1 or 2. When crossed with the independent variable of Conversion Influence in a one way test, a difference significant at the .05 level emerged between the Church Converted and Outside Church Converted groups. Table 4 shows that the Church Converted had a mean response of 3.60, compared to the Outside Church Converted 3.42, indicating that the Church Converted group was more likely to report a specific moment of conversion.

Table 4. Conversion Experience by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	3.60	121	.60
Outside Church Converted	3.42	120	.69
Total	3.51	241	.65

p-value = .026*

Note: A higher mean indicates an experience closer to a specific moment of conversion.

A significant relationship does appear when testing responses on a belief index against Conversion Influence. This belief index was built from question 8 on the survey, which states seven tenets of the Christian faith and asks the respondent to rate their level of agreement with

each on a scale of 0-5. Averaging of the seven ratings gives the individual's score on the belief index. As demonstrated by Table 5, both groups scored highly on the index but those respondents who considered the Church to be the biggest factor in their conversion scored slightly higher at a statistically significant level where p is equal to .037. Those Church Converted scored a mean of 4.92 on the index, while those Outside Church Converted scored a mean of 4.77, and with a higher standard deviation.

Table 5. Belief Index by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	4.92	120	.25
Outside Church Converted	4.78	122	.71
Total	4.85	242	.54

p-value = .037*

Note: A higher mean indicates a higher (i.e. more orthodox) score.

The Church Converted also scored higher on each of the individual statements of belief. Every statement in question 8 that was run by Conversion Influence showed higher mean scores from the Church Converted. Within these statements, a few in particular demonstrated the greatest statistical difference between the Church Converted and the Outside Church Converted. Table 6 shows that Church Converted individuals tended to agree more emphatically to statement e of question 8 which reads, "Jesus death and resurrection saved me from sin." Similar to the belief index, both groups readily agreed with the statement, but the Church Converted were slightly more certain with a mean score of 4.96 compared with the Outside Church mean of 4.78, statistically significant at .025. An even stronger statistical relationship appeared in response to statement f which says, "Faith in Jesus is the only way to heaven." The Church

Converted sample had a mean score of 4.88, where the Outside Church Converted scored a mean 4.62, significant at the .01 level. With slightly less statistical significance, the Church Converted also substantiate statement a of the belief index, “There is one God,” with higher agreement levels with a mean of 4.96 compared to the Outside Church Converted mean of 4.80.

Table 6. Items in Belief Index by Conversion Influence

Statement	Church Converted (N = 121)		Outside Church Converted (N = 122)		p-value
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
e. Resurrection Saves	4.96	.20	4.78	.86	.025*
f. Jesus Only Way	4.88	.40	4.62	.96	.01**
a. One God	4.96	.20	4.80	.91	.067

* p-value < .05. **p-value < .01.

A trend appeared in analysis of question 12 statement I, visible in Table 7. It asked the respondent to rate the involvement of evil in the propagation of ideas and theories that contradict the Bible. Church Converted individuals rated the involvement of evil at an average of 3.60 on a 0 to 5 scale. Outside Church Converted on average saw evil’s involvement at 3.42. Both had standard deviations between .60 and .70. While not significant enough to support a definite relationship, there is a pattern of higher ratings from the Church Converted.

Table 7. Perceived Involvement of Evil in Anti-Biblical Ideas by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	3.52	120	1.30
Outside Church Converted	3.28	121	1.42
Total	3.40	241	1.36

p-value = .179

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater involvement of evil.

Some trends emerged that, while not statistically significant at a high level, are important patterns to recognize. Outside Church Converted had higher mean scores in a matured faith since the time of conversion, importance of God’s involvement in one’s personal life in their church’s presentation of the gospel, and the religious commitment of their peers. Table 8 shows that regarding change in faith since conversion, based on question 19, the Outside Church Converted were averaged a response of 3.47 where 4 indicates growth. Church Converted had a mean score of 3.29, closer to a faith that has not changed since conversion. The importance that the respondent’s church places on God’s involvement in one’s personal life averages 4.64 on a 0-5 scale for the Outside Church Converted, compared to 4.52 for the Church Converted. This trend from responses to question 27 item c appears in Table 9. Finally, Table 10 shows those Outside Church Converted have a slightly higher mean for the religious commitment of the people with whom they spend most of their time as indicated in responses to question 28. Where a 1 indicates that their peers have no faith commitment, and a 3 indicates they are both committed to their faith and heavily engaged in religious activity, Outside Church Converted had a mean score of 2.36. The Church Converted scored slightly lower, with a mean of 2.26.

Table 8. Faith Change Since Conversion by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	3.29	121	.90
Outside Church Converted	3.47	120	.83
Total	3.38	241	.87

p-value = .113

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater change.

Table 9. Church Presented Involvement of God by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	4.52	119	.70
Outside Church Converted	4.64	113	.57
Total	4.58	232	.64

p-value = .168

Note: A higher mean signifies a greater importance of God's involvement in personal life.

Table 10. Religious Commitment of Peers by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	2.26	120	.53
Outside Church Converted	2.36	120	.59
Total	2.31	240	.56

p-value = .168

Note: A higher mean indicates greater religious commitment and involvement.

Those individuals who considered the greatest factor in their conversion to be outside of the church were not depressed in every measure of religious commitment. Summarized in Table 11, analysis indicated that Outside Church Converted reported in question 3 item g that they were slightly more likely to read religious literature other than the Bible. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 indicating reading religious literature once a year or less, and 5 indicating daily reading of religious literature, Outside Church Converted on average responded at 2.82, where Church Converted had a mean of 2.51.

Table 11. Reading of Religious Literature Outside the Bible by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	2.51	120	1.27
Outside Church Converted	2.82	122	1.32
Total	2.67	242	1.30

p-value = .063

Note: A higher mean indicates more frequent reading of religious literature.

Not a direct measure of religious commitment, current church size was significantly different in the two groups. (Table 12) In response to question 25, Outside Church Converted individuals tended to answer that they attended larger churches. A higher response code indicated a larger church, where a 1 stood for a church of less than 50, ranging through a response of 4 meaning a church of 1000 or more. A response of 5 indicated that the respondent does not currently attend church. Church Converted respondents averaged a church size of 2.63 on this scale, while Outside Church Converted had a mean church size of 2.95, closer to the 300-999 answer category. This was significant at .019.

Table 12. Church Size Category by Conversion Influence

CI	Mean Size	N	Std. Dev.
Church Converted	2.63	121	.98
Outside Church Converted	2.95	122	1.14
Total	2.79	243	1.07

p-value = .019*

Note: A higher mean indicates a larger church size category.

Recognizing that a response of “do not attend” (5) does not follow the increasing size scale of options 1-4, we removed option 5 from the analysis and re-ran church size by conversion influence. The significance of the effect was greatly diminished after this reconfiguration to p -value = .253. Notable, however, is the increased likelihood that an individual will not attend church if he or she was Outside Church Converted. 14 respondents in the Outside Church Converted category were removed with the “do not attend” option, compared with only 4 in the Church Converted sample.

Power of Satan

The initial analysis showed little to no relationship between Conversion Influence and an individual’s perspective of Satan. When asked their understanding of evil, the majority of respondents stated that they viewed evil as a personal being such as Satan, or the devil. This response was unrelated to Conversion Influence.

Several other variables demonstrated the independence of Conversion Influence and understanding of Satan. How the respondent understands the concept of Satan, ranging from a myth to an anti-God; how the respondent’s view of Satan has changed since college; how important he or she sees the breaking of Satan’s power in the church’s presentation of the gospel; and the importance of escaping Hell in that presentation all proved to be statistically independent of Conversion Influence in this preliminary analysis.

As Conversion Influence alone doesn’t seem to be related to understanding of Satan, this allowed us to run the two variables together against certain dependent variables without coming into problems of spuriousness, or other analysis faux pas. These crosstabs create new groups and relationships that do have statistical significance.

The strongest aspect of an individual's understanding of Satan for the purposes of analysis was their view on the power of Satan, as measured by question 9a. Those 167 individuals (59.2%) who chose Satan as their understanding of evil were asked in a contingency question to choose a statement that best described their understanding of that evil being's power. While this contingency question applied to only 167 respondents, 226 of the respondents chose to answer that question. We chose not to discount those 59 responses, as the individuals who chose to respond found the question important enough to answer, having an opinion on the power of evil in the world.

An approximately equal number said that Satan has Limited Power and that Satan has Unlimited Power. Where other facets of understanding of Satan yielded a majority of responses in one category, power of Satan had a close to even split, beneficial for running dependent variable tests and getting reliable results. Originally, this question had three statements describing Satan's power from which the respondents could choose. The first option states that Satan can only act with the approval of God, selected by 109 individuals or 48.2 percent of the respondents. The second option, chosen by 52 individuals, asserted that Satan was allotted free reign by God, and God chooses not to interfere with it. The remaining 65 respondents choosing the third option maintained that Satan has Unlimited Power, and fights against God for dominance in the universe. Table 13 shows this distribution. For analysis, these responses were divided into two groups: those believing that Satan has Limited Power (option 1) and those believing he is unlimited in the universe (options 2 and 3). The adjusted frequency table follows in Table 14.

Table 13. Power of Satan from Question 16

Power of Satan	Frequency	Percent
Only with God's Approval	109	48.2
Free Reign Given by God	52	23.0
Unlimited Power	65	28.8
Total	226	100.0

Table 14. Power of Satan as Limited vs. Unlimited

Power of Satan	Frequency	Percent
Limited	109	48.2
Unlimited	117	51.8
Total	226	100.0

As with the Conversion Influence variable, the division of the responses into two groups creates effects with several dependent variables, demonstrating a relationship between perception of the power of Satan and other areas of religious commitment. Respondents with a view of Satan with Limited Power reported in question 27 item d that they are more likely to attend a church that presents assurance of heaven as a central part of the gospel. On a 0 to 5 scale, those believing in a Satan limited in power responded that their churches presented the assurance of heaven at an importance of 4.66 compared to the unlimited 4.46. (Table 15) This slightly more emphasized assurance of heaven for the limited Satan perspective is significant at .033.

Table 15. Importance of an Assurance of Heaven in Church's Presentation of the Gospel by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	4.664	97	.57
Unlimited	4.464	99	.72
Total	4.57	196	.66

p-value = .033*

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater assurance of heaven.

A limited in power perspective also predicts a slightly higher response for question 12 statement i. This statement asks what level of involvement the subject believes evil to have in the "propagation of ideas and theories in popular culture that contradict the Bible." Table 16 demonstrates that on a scale of 0 to 5, those with a Limited Power view had a mean response higher than those with an unlimited view, significant at .015.

Table 16. Involvement of Evil in Ideas Contradicting the Bible by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	3.78	96	1.12
Unlimited	3.36	104	1.31
Total	3.56	200	1.24

p-value = .015*

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater involvement of evil.

The importance of the concept of an afterlife is demonstrated to be greater in those individuals who see Satan's power as limited. Question 6 asks respondents to rate the importance of the afterlife to their understanding of their faith on a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 indicates not important at all, and 5 denotes a response of extremely important. Of the 281 who responded to

this item, 200 rated the importance at a 5, creating a high mean rating across the board. Still, a statistically significant difference between the Limited Power view of Satan and the unlimited emerged. Those with the Limited Power view of Satan had a mean importance rating of 4.82, compared with the unlimited view's 4.64. (Table 17) This difference was significant at the .05 level.

Table 17. Importance of the Afterlife by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	4.82	97	.60
Unlimited	4.63	104	.68
Total	4.72	201	.64

*p-value = .048

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater importance of the afterlife.

The sample was not as unified on their views of contributing financially to the church as measured by question 5. On that same scale of 0 to 5, the distribution was not nearly so skewed toward the highest responses. Of the 282 respondents, 20.6 percent rated the importance of giving at 2 or below, signifying low importance. Among those who saw it as at least somewhat important, 25.5 percent rated the importance at a 3, 23.4 percent assigned it a 4, and 30.5 percent said it was extremely important and rated it at a 5. Visible in Table 18, those with a Limited Power view of Satan had a mean rating of 3.95, higher than the Unlimited Power view of Satan group mean of 3.52, significantly different at .012.

Table 18. Importance of Financial Contributions by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	3.95	97	1.05
Unlimited	3.51	105	1.29
Total	3.72	202	1.17

p-value = .012*

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater importance of giving.

Question 4 asks the respondents if they would be more likely to turn to a religious or secular source of counsel in a time of crisis. The same 0 to 5 scale assigns secular sources a 0 and religious sources a 5. Most respondents answered on the religious side of the scale by choosing a value of 3 or higher (84.7%). With significance at the .05 level, power of Satan served as a predictor for degree of religiosity demonstrated on this scale. Those Limited Power view of Satan respondents answered at a mean of 4.26 where the Unlimited Power view of Satan respondents answered at a mean of 3.97. (Table 19) Those with a Limited Power view of Satan are more likely to choose a religious source of counsel in a time of crisis.

Table 19. Sources of Counsel by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	4.26	97	.893
Unlimited	3.97	105	1.109
Total	4.10	202	1.019

p-value = .042*

Note: A higher mean indicates a more religious source of counsel.

On the other end of the power spectrum, those with an unlimited view of Satan are more likely to be satisfied with their faith, as well as see human involvement in combating Satan as more important. In question 22, Respondents were asked to place their satisfaction with the state of their faith and religious life on a scale of 0 to 5, where 5 is extremely satisfied. Those with a Limited Power view of Satan rated their satisfaction at an average of 2.71. As seen in Table 20, respondents who said that Satan's power is unlimited and unchecked had a mean satisfaction of 3.14, significantly higher with a p-value of .011. Earlier in the survey, question 10 asks the respondents regarding their opinion on how evil can be combated. The different answers given by the two opposing power of Satan groups are significant at .006. The answer categories range from "nothing will deter evil" to "human action," with higher answers signifying increased human involvement in the battle. Table 21 shows that an Unlimited Power view of Satan led to a mean score of 2.67 on this 0 to 5 scale, more than .3 higher than the Limited Power view which had a mean of 2.35.

Table 20. Faith Satisfaction by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	2.71	97	1.24
Unlimited	3.14	104	1.14
Total	2.94	201	1.21

p-value = .011*

Note: A higher mean indicates greater faith satisfaction

Table 21. Ability of Human Activity to Combat Evil by Power of Satan

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	2.35	97	.65
Unlimited	2.67	105	.95
Total	2.51	202	.83

p-value = .006**

Note: A higher mean indicates more human involvement.

The analysis was more revealing still when crossing both Conversion Influence and power of Satan against other dependent variables. This gave us four groups of respondents: 1) Church Converted, Limited Power; 2) Church Converted, Unlimited Power; 3) Outside Church Converted, Limited Power; and 4) Outside Church Converted, Unlimited Power. The sample sizes within this manipulation were still remarkably consistent, all close to fifty respondents in each of the four groups. (Table 22) This gave us greater confidence in the results obtained in this particular analysis, providing a sound basis for comparison.

Table 22. Frequencies Where Conversion Influence is Crossed with Power of Satan

		<i>Conversion Influence</i>	
		Church	Outside Church
<i>Power of Satan</i>	Limited	52 25.7%	51 25.2%
	Unlimited	45 22.3%	54 26.7%

An examination of only at the group of respondents who said the greatest factor in their conversion was the presentation of the gospel at church, we can more clearly and easily see the distinction between those with a Limited Power view of Satan and those with an Unlimited

Power view. Important differences do emerge that help us to classify and characterize these various groups. Within the Church Converted sample, power of Satan was a predictor for involvement in voluntary groups, the importance of the assurance of heaven within their churches, and the necessity of human involvement in combating evil. Table 23 shows the distribution of number of volunteer groups the respondents reported being involved in, according to question 1. The Church Converted, Limited Power Satan sample were involved in a mean 1.96 voluntary groups, where the Church Converted, Unlimited Power Satan were involved in a mean 1.18 groups. This was significant at .010. Table 24 demonstrates the group of Church Converted, Limited Power Satan was also more likely report in question 27 item d attending a church that stressed assurance of heaven as a part of the gospel message. On a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 signifying the highest importance, this group rated the importance at a mean 4.75. The Unlimited Power Satan group had a mean slightly lower at 4.50, although still a significant difference at the .05 level. Table 25 reveals that the Church Converted, Unlimited Power Satan averaged a 2.73 response to question 10 regarding how evil can be combated, closer to a perspective where human involvement can combat evil. Church Converted, Limited Power Satan were slightly less likely to assert that human activity can combat evil, with a mean response of 2.42, again significant at the .05 level.

Table 23. Volunteer Groups by Power of Satan Given Church Converted

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	1.96	52	1.87
Unlimited	1.12	51	1.18
Total	1.57	103	1.57

p-value = .01**

Table 24. Importance of an Assurance of Heaven in Church's Presentation of the Gospel by Power of Satan Given Church Converted

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	4.75	52	.56
Unlimited	4.50	50	.68
Total	4.63	102	.63

p-value = .044*

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater assurance of heaven

Table 25. Ability of Human Activity to Combat Evil by Power of Satan Given Church Converted

Power of Satan	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Limited	2.42	52	.70
Unlimited	2.73	51	.83
Total	2.57	103	.77

p-value = .047*

Note: A higher mean indicates greater human involvement.

Looking at the interplay of Conversion Influence and perceived power of Satan in both conversion categories, the strongest relationship we find is with the involvement in voluntary groups. As previously addressed, within the Church Converted sample, those with a Limited Power view of Satan are more likely to be involved in voluntary groups. Within the Outside Church Converted sample, this pattern is reversed. Table 26 shows that those with an Unlimited Power view of Satan have a mean group involvement of 1.40, where the Limited Power view sample are as likely to be involved as the Church Converted unlimited view, at 1.18 groups. This relationship is significant at .019.

Table 26. Volunteer Groups by Conversion Influence and Power of Satan

	<u>Church Converted</u>		<u>Outside Church Converted</u>	
	Limited	Unlimited	Limited	Unlimited
Mean Groups	1.96	1.18	1.18	1.40
N	52	51	45	53
Std. Dev.	1.87	1.05	1.23	1.64

p-value = .019*

Stay or Switch from Home Church

Although these results provided strong enough relationships to draw conclusions, another element of church environment emerged as a significant predictor. Question 26 asks the respondent how long they have been attending their current church. The options range from this current church is the home church, switched before coming to college, switched since college, and do not attend at all. Excluding the category of “do not attend church,” this left us with three responses, but essentially two groups: those who had stayed in their home church, and those who had switched from their home church. Once again, when the variable was transformed into a two option variable, the disparity between the number of respondents in each category narrowed, enabling us to perform analyses with more accurate and reliable results.

Of the 281 people who responded to this item, 129 answered that they were still attending their home church. 69 said they switched churches before college, and 55 switched since college. This brings the total to 124 respondents who switched churches. Discounting the 28 responses of “do not attend church,” this gives us 51 percent of the sample staying in their home church to 49% who have switched from their home church. Tables 27 and 28 give the distribution of the variable in its original form and in the two category modification, respectively.

Table 27. Stay or Switch from Home Church Based on Three Category Response

How Long Attend Current Church	Frequency	Percent
Home Church	129	45.9
Switched Before College	69	24.6
Switched Since College	55	19.5
Do Not Attend Church	28	9.9
Total	281	100.0

Table 28. Stay or Switch from Home Church Based on Two Category Manipulation

Stay or Switch from Home Church	Frequency	Percent
Stay in Home Church	129	51.0
Switch from Home Church	124	49.0
Total	253	100.0

We combined this variable with the Conversion Influence and power of Satan variables and did discover several significant relationships. Question 21 item b asks the respondent how their view of God has changed since they came to college, and then gives four choices: God is less important, View has not changed, God is more important, and other. This was coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 indicates a negative change (less important), 2 indicates no change, 3 indicates a positive change (more important), and 4 denotes a response of “other.” For the purposes of the analysis, responses of “other” were discounted. Where none of these independent variables alone had a significant relationship with the view of God variable, the three way effect is significant at .011. The distribution is laid in Table 29.

Table 29. Change in View of God by Conversion Influence, Stay or Switch, and Power of Satan

	<u>Church Converted</u>				<u>Outside Church Converted</u>			
	Stay		Switch		Stay		Switch	
	Ltd.	Unltd.	Ltd.	Unltd.	Ltd.	Unltd.	Ltd.	Unltd.
Mean Change	2.38	2.71	2.74	2.52	2.71	2.63	2.56	2.68
N	24	24	27	27	24	27	25	28
Std. Dev.	.65	.46	.45	.51	.55	.56	.51	.48

p-value = .011*

Note: A higher mean indicates greater change in view.

The most outstanding mean is that of the Church Converted, still in home church, Limited Power of Satan sample, as the low outlier at 2.440. The highest mean response is of the Outside Church Converted, switched from home church, Unlimited Power of Satan sample at 2.750. This value, however, is less outstanding as a maximum mean than the church, stay, limited mean value is as a minimum.

Faith satisfaction, a dependent variable already showed to be predictable by understanding of the power of Satan, was also shown to have a connection with the three-way independent variable Conversion Influence, stay or switch from home church, and power of Satan. With a significance of .025, the interaction of these factors produced interesting results reproduced in Table 30. Those with the lowest mean of faith satisfaction based on question 22 were the Outside Church Converted, switched from home church, Limited Power of Satan sample. At 2.28 on a scale of 0 to 5, this group was almost .3 behind the next lowest mean faith satisfaction which was the Church Converted, stayed in home church, Limited Power of Satan. At 2.56, this group was also approximately .3 points behind the next group up. The most satisfied with their faith were the Church Converted, stayed in home church, Unlimited Power of Satan at 3.38. The other mean satisfaction ratings hovered closer to 3.

Table 30. Faith Satisfaction by Conversion Influence, Stay or Switch, and Power of Satan

	<u>Church Converted</u>				<u>Outside Church Converted</u>			
	Stay		Switch		Stay		Switch	
	Ltd.	Unltd.	Ltd.	Unltd.	Ltd.	Unltd.	Ltd.	Unltd.
Mean	2.56	3.38	2.96	2.89	3.10	3.27	2.28	3.07
N	25	24	27	26	20	26	25	28
Std. Dev.	1.33	1.17	.94	1.18	1.07	.92	1.46	1.27

p-value = .025*

Note: A higher mean indicates greater faith satisfaction.

We investigated this three-way independent variable with the dependent variable volunteer groups from question 1. Where a significant relationship had already occurred when crossing Conversion Influence and Power of Satan, we wanted to see what effect, if any, staying at or switching from the home church would have. Analysis showed that the relationship was statistically insignificant. However, staying or switching from the home church on its own did prove to have a statistically significant effect on voluntary group involvement. (Table 31) Those who stayed had a mean involvement in 1.76 groups, where those who switched were involved in an average 1.32 groups.

Table 31. Volunteer Groups by Stay or Switch from Home Church

Stay/Switch	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Stay	1.76	78	1.61
Switch	1.32	88	1.45
Total	1.53	166	1.53

p-value = .028*

Within the three way model, we find that an individual's concept of Satan appears to have a stronger connection with Stay or Switch from home church. Where the sample is limited by including only those who answered the Conversion Influence item, the Power of Satan item, *and* the Stay or Switch item, the p-value was .013, indicating a statistically very probable relationship. Within this sample of size 211, the 101 respondents who stayed in their home church had a mean response to question 14 that indicated a more symbolic view of Satan. The responses were coded 1-5, where 1 represents Satan as a myth, 2 says Satan is a symbolic representation of the reality of evil, 3 considers Satan to be a literal fallen angel of God, 4 denotes a belief that Satan is equal and opposite to God, and 5 is a response of "other." For this analysis, responses of "other" were discounted. The Switch from Home Church sample had a mean response of 2.95 compared to the Stay in home church sample mean of 2.79. Table 32 illustrates the trend.

Table 32. Concept of Satan by Stay or Switch from Home Church (Within the three way model)

Change in Home Church	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Stay	2.79	101	.54
Switch	2.95	110	.35
Total	2.87	211	.46

p-value = .013

Note: A higher mean indicates a more literal and powerful concept of Satan.

A two-way independent variable using this idea of staying or switching from home church also played a role in predicting some other dependent variables. We found that when asked how strong their fear or anxiety was in association with their image of evil in question 11 item a, the respondents answered in a way that could be predicted by the stay or switch from

home church variable combined with the power of Satan variable. Significant at .014, the highest mean response was a 3.53 on the 0 to 5 scale, where 5 is the most fearful. This came from the group that had stayed at their home church and held to a Limited Power view of Satan. Table 33 shows that the lowest mean was again within the “stay” group that had remained at their home church, but had an Unlimited Power view of Satan. This effect was reversed in those who had switched churches, with the Limited Power view having the lower response of fear and the unlimited having the higher.

Table 33. Evil-associated Fear by Stay or Switch and Power of Satan

	<u>Stay</u>		<u>Switch</u>	
	Limited	Unlimited	Limited	Unlimited
Mean Groups	3.53	2.94	3.02	3.29
N	44	50	52	55
Std. Dev.	.85	1.47	1.32	1.09

p-value = .014*

Note: A higher mean indicates a greater amount of fear.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings from the study suggest relationships between variables that are intricate and complex. It would be presumptuous to suggest that we have discovered the sole explanation that would satisfy all reported relationships. Instead, we present two models or modes of logic to help synthesize these findings into comprehensible results that suggest the interaction of perceptions of Satan, church environment, and religious life and faith. Although these models are not exhaustive, they do provide some basis for interpretation that can be further supplemented as the data is further scrutinized and clarified.

Church Authority

Individuals who claim that the gospel presented in a church setting was the biggest factor in their conversion tend to maintain orthodoxy in their faith. It is important that the basic tenets of the faith are adhered to and that worldly ideas are recognized for what they are and are not part of Christianity. The findings tell us that the Church Converted sample had a higher mean score on the belief index than the Outside Church Converted, and were more apt to contend that evil is responsible for anti-Biblical ideas. Additionally, these individuals are more likely to have a “moment of conversion” experience that mirrors the Protestant emphasis on making a profession of faith and being “born again.” The Church, having played a central role in the conversion experience, appears to maintain a position of authority in the mind and faith of these respondents. Their faith is best demonstrated in their intellectual assent; their adherence to a statement of beliefs. They interpret the events of the world through the paradigm of an orthodox Christianity.

The Outside Church Converted population tends to have a faith that is more dynamic. Without the authority of the church dictating the individual’s conversion, they are more open to explore various expressions of faith that exist in the world. They are more likely to read religious literature outside of the Bible, perhaps some of which challenges their faith and leads to greater development and growth, as evidenced by a higher mean response to items regarding changes in faith. Because these individuals assumed the responsibility for their own faith instead of having a church walk them through their religious life, it appears that the Outside Church Converted have a faith that is more internalized and personal. They responded that God’s involvement in their personal lives is more important in the gospel presented by their church than the Church Converted did. They also say as a whole that they more frequently surround themselves with

people who are deeply involved in a life of faith. In general, the Outside Church Converted seem to have a faith that is more in dialogue with their life experiences.

Stability

Assuming that churches, especially Protestant churches, teach that what is recorded in the Bible is truth, this would lead us to contend that churches would present Satan as a real, personal being that is the embodiment of evil, as presented in the New Testament. This view seems to pervade the Christian population as a whole, as the majority of respondents agreed on this point. Using the New Testament, the church would also teach that this world is Satan's domain, but that he is limited, sure to fail in the end. This assumption will be a key factor in discussion of the interplay of Conversion Influence and other independent variables. First, we will address the issue of a Limited Power view of Satan versus an Unlimited Power view.

With the assumption that a Limited Power view of Satan is consistent with a more orthodox faith and belief, we begin to see distinctions between the Limited and Unlimited Power views that make sense. Those with a Limited Power view tended to respond to questions in a way that presents as more conventional. This is perhaps best demonstrated in their stronger propensity to seek religious counsel over secular counsel in times of crisis compared to the Unlimited Power group. In this, they value the teachings of the church, and see them as relevant and necessary in a life of faith. Perhaps it is for this reason that they assign a greater importance to contributing financially to the church; people are more likely to financially support a cause that they support intellectually. Respondents holding this Limited Power view have a higher tendency to attend churches where assurance of heaven is of great importance as well as to accept that teaching and personally see the afterlife as a central part of the Christian faith. In

addition to the belief that evil is behind theories that contradict the Bible, these data reveal that they maintain ideas that are probably presented in churches, especially in conservative churches. However, because there is not a significant relationship between Conversion Influence (Church Converted) and power of Satan, we realize that while the church had the greatest impact on the conversion experience, they do not always maintain that hold in the individual's development of their concept of evil, and specifically Satan. Within the Church Converted sample, there are those who maintain a Limited Power view of Satan, but almost the same number of Church Converted respondents held an Unlimited Power view of Satan.

The sample with the Unlimited Power view of Satan tended to be more involved in volunteer groups, and also had a higher mean in the necessity of human involvement in combating evil than the Limited Power sample. This seems to be a group that looks more at the world now than at the church and the eternity awaiting. Seeing the harsh nature of the world, they contend that evil is essentially unrestricted, and so see the necessity of doing something themselves to combat that evil, perhaps uncertain that God can or will. Additionally, the Unlimited Power view of Satan group reported a higher level of faith satisfaction. Perhaps a faith that dialogues with experience, and is not merely accepted from an authority source is more internally rewarding, as it has more of the individual's own mental and spiritual effort in it. These views lend themselves more to the individuals who take their faith on personally, allowing it to be challenged by the realities of the world as well as being more open to being involved in the world in terms of relationships and voluntary group participation. Yet again, within the group of Outside Church Converted respondents that would seem to correspond to this Unlimited Power mold, there is a relatively even split between individuals who see Satan as unlimited and those who see him as limited.

Because of the even split within the Conversion Influence groups, we now have four groups that each describes a new type of person: Church Converted Limited Power, Church Converted Unlimited Power, Outside Church Limited Power and Outside Church Unlimited Power. As presented, a significant difference emerged in this two-way analysis when volunteer groups were the dependent variable. We found a chiastic relationship where the highest mean involvement rates are the Church Converted Limited Power followed by the Outside Church Converted Unlimited Power. What do these have in common, and what does it mean? Both of those groups are the most logical groups, the groups that we would expect; the Limited view corresponding with the Church Converted and the Unlimited view with the Outside Church Converted. Those that changed power views of Satan from what we would understand as the conventional power view for their conversion group reported a lower group involvement.

A possible explanation is stability: the most stable are the most involved. Those whose faith originates in the stable environment of the church AND who continue to assume the church's view of evil as their own demonstrate the most stability, and also have the highest mean number of groups where they volunteer their time. Those who come to faith outside of the church lack some of the initial stability of the institution of the Church, but if they are consistent within that personal faith by holding to an Unlimited Power of Satan, they are stable to a point where they are involved in an above average number of groups. The remaining groups, Church Converted Unlimited Power and Outside Church Converted Limited Power have lost stability in their abandonment of the power of Satan view that best fits with their Conversion Influence.

We tested this theory by incorporating the third variable of Stay or Switch from Home Church. Switching from a church, especially the home church, would reduce stability in an individual's religious life, having to change pastors, way of dealing with spiritual matters, the

church community, etc. We would expect, then, that the Church Converted, Stayed in Home Church, Limited Power Satan to have the greatest stability. In evaluating this three-way variable against the dependent variable change in view of God, we found the Church Converted, Stayed in Home Church, Limited view of Satan to have the lowest mean value, closest to the “has not changed” category. This fits out model of stability, as the most stable were least affected.

Conversely, the Outside Church Converted, Switched from Home Church, Unlimited Power Satan we assumed to be the second most stable in the sense that they are consistent on each of these levels in their demonstration of being more independent from the authority of the church. When this group of respondents displays the highest mean value in response to change in view of God, it may at first appear that the theory of stability no longer applies. However, an interpretation of the meaning makes it apparent that it fits well. This particular group of respondents is stable not in the sense of receiving fixed and regulated ideas from the church, but in terms of their consistency in challenging the status quo presented by the church. They are characterized not by their adherence to basic tenets of the faith, but by their personal engagement with their faith, leading to growth and change. Logically, this group would have the highest mean change in view of God, via their willingness to dialogue with new information and personally address the issues of faith. The other groups, lacking in consistency within these three variables, fall somewhere in between these two extremes, as would be expected.

Within this theory of stability, the effect of staying or switching from the home church plays a key role. Understandably, having the same philosophy, mission, environment, and people surrounding a person during the whole of their faith formation creates a comfort zone where it is easier to be involved. Logically, it is much easier to stay involved in one program than it is to change from one program to another and carry a commitment to the new program. Using Stay or

Switch from Home Church as the only independent variable, and volunteer groups as the dependent variable, we see this play out where those who stay in their home church are on average involved in over .5 more groups. Comfort is a significant factor in religious commitment, and this factor plays a role in an individual's perception of Satan and with that perception to affect other variables.

Conclusions

For many Christians, the idea of Satan is significant enough to affect certain areas of life and faith. This effect is by no means universal or comprehensible on a single level. The Perceived Satan, like the Biblical Satan, refuses to be neatly dissected and compartmentalized for the purposes of our analysis. A Biblical theology of Satan sees Satan as a development, the sociological study communicates that Christians vary on which Satan from that continuum they choose to incorporate into their Christianity. The effects vary based on how an individual perceives the power of Satan, and in general we note that a person who holds a Limited Power view of Satan is more likely to adhere to conventional Christian practices while those with an Unlimited Power view are more likely to internalize their faith and experience personal growth in it. In this sense, the Perceived Satan does, as we hypothesized, have an influence on religious commitment.

Still, the power of Satan cannot single-handedly predict an individual's commitment, or lack thereof. Instead, it combines with other factors to enrich our understanding of how different areas of a person's religious commitment interact with each other. Conversion Influence and church environment especially play a large role in predicting other variables of commitment. In uncovering some of these relationships, it was also demonstrated that we cannot always

determine causation. Although we can logically infer the chain of causation in some instances, we must recognize that some of these relationships mutually affect each other and there may be multidirectional causation in our models of interpretation.

Many conclusions wait to be drawn from the vast amount of survey response data and future data analysis. This is but a preliminary investigation into the topic that can be greatly developed and built upon in the future in terms of our models of Church Authority and Stability, and otherwise. Nevertheless, this analysis was enlightening and helpful, both as a student of the disciplines of religion and sociology and as a Christian. It has allowed me to explore the Biblical history of a being that I thought I knew well and push myself to see—and sometimes not see—new realities. It has allowed me to see the implications of human perceptions of that being and better understand the value of Satan in the Christian life. Make no mistake, Satan is valuable within Christianity. Different perceptions of Satan determine in what capacity that value rests. He can be valuable to the church, helping them to maintain a faithful following. He can be valuable to the individual, helping to bring about a faith that is satisfying, personally relevant, and thriving. It is an interesting sense of appreciation for such a vile concept of pure evil, but along with all the havoc that Satan is busy creating (in human minds or in reality), Satan is bolstering our religious commitment and our faith.

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT OF CARSON-NEWMAN STUDENTS

This survey is part of a campus-wide study of the religious commitment of students. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous. Please take some time to answer these questions as honestly and completely as possible. Thank you for your help in this study.

First, we'd like to know some information about your current religious involvement and attitudes.

1. How many groups are you currently involved in where you volunteer your time on a regular basis? _____
2. How many of the groups (in #1 above) would be considered "religious?" _____
3. Please check the box that best describes the frequency that you engaged in the following activities in the past year:

	Weekly+	1-2 times monthly	3-4 times a year	once a year or less	
a. Attended Sunday worship services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Attended Bible study (Sunday School)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Attended small group bible study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Daily+	1-3 times weekly	1-2 times monthly	3-4 times a year	once a year or less
d. Spent time in personal prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Read the Bible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Shared or talked about your faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Read religious literature other than the Bible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please respond to the following by circling the number that best approximates your answer.

4. In a time of crisis, how likely are you to seek religious counsel or advice, as opposed to secular (non-religious) sources?

	Secular						Religious
	0	1	2	3	4	5	5
5. How important is contributing financially to the church?

	Not important at all					Extremely important
	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. How important is the concept of an afterlife (heaven/hell) to your understanding of your faith?

	Not important at all					Extremely important
	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. If you found out for certain that there was no afterlife, how likely would you be to remain a religious person/person of faith?

	Not likely at all					Extremely likely
	0	1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the number that best describes your current religious involvement and attitudes.

8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Do not agree at all	0	1	2	3	4	Agree completely	5
a. There is one God	0	1	2	3	4	5		
b. God created all things	0	1	2	3	4	5		
c. Jesus is the Son of God	0	1	2	3	4	5		
d. Jesus died on the cross, and rose from the dead	0	1	2	3	4	5		
e. Jesus' death and resurrection saved me from sin	0	1	2	3	4	5		
f. Faith in Jesus is the only way to heaven	0	1	2	3	4	5		
g. The Bible is the Word of God	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Check the answer that best describes your current religious involvement and attitudes.

9. Which statement most accurately represents your understanding of evil?

- I believe that "evil" in the world is selfish or immoral human activity; there is no supernatural force behind it.
- I believe that "evil" is an impersonal, but supernatural, force in the world.
- I believe that there is an evil supernatural *being* in the world, such as Satan or the Devil.

9a. If you believe that an evil supernatural being exists, what power do you believe that being has?

- It can only act within the will of God; it can do nothing God has not sanctioned.
- God has chosen to give that evil being free reign and chooses not to interfere.
- It has Unlimited Power, fighting against God for ultimate power and control of the universe.

10. How do you believe that evil can be combated? (Check all that apply)

- Nothing will deter evil
- Only God can combat evil
- Prayer against it
- Rituals other than prayer that call on supernatural forces to oppose it
- Human action: living a moral life, doing good, etc.

Please circle the number that best approximates describes your response to each of the following:

11. How strong is each emotion in association with your image of evil?

	Never felt	0	1	2	3	4	Strongly felt	5
a. Fear/Anxiety	0	1	2	3	4	5		
b. Curiosity	0	1	2	3	4	5		
c. No emotional response	0	1	2	3	4	5		
d. Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Please circle the number that best approximates the level of involvement you believe evil to have in the following

12. What level of involvement do you believe evil to have in the following circumstances?

	None					Evil is solely responsible
a. Natural disasters that kill many people	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Deadly disease	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Human crimes against others (murder, rape, robbery)	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Human lapses in morality (adultery, dishonesty)	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Self-destructive behavior (addictions, eating disorders)	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Political/Governmental Corruption	0	1	2	3	4	5
g. War	0	1	2	3	4	5
h. Paranormal experiences (séances, astrology, haunted places)	0	1	2	3	4	5
i. Propagation of ideas and theories in popular culture that contradict the Bible	0	1	2	3	4	5

13. What level of involvement do you believe evil to have in the following areas of your personal life?

	None					Evil is solely responsible
a. Temptation/desire to do "wrong" things (immoral, illegal, self-destructive, harmful to others)	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Loss of loved ones in your life	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Experience with depression/despair	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Nightmares, bad dreams, fear	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Personal pain (physical/emotional)	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Pain or abuse experienced at the hands of others	0	1	2	3	4	5

14. How do you understand the concept of Satan, or the Devil?

- A myth in biblical history used to explain circumstances or events
- A symbolic representation of an impersonal force of evil
- A literal fallen angel of God who now works against God
- A being equal but opposite to God
- Other (explain): _____

Now we'd like to ask you some questions about your conversion experience.

15. How would you describe your conversion to your religious faith?
- Not converted to any faith
 - Religious involvement without personal commitment to faith
 - Personal commitment, but no specific moment of conversion
 - Specific, memorable moment of conversion

If you answered, "Not converted to any faith," skip to question 20

16. What was the biggest factor in your conversion experience?
- Pressure from parents/other adult figures
 - Presentation of the Gospel at home
 - Presentation of the Gospel in a church/religious environment
 - Personal conviction resulting from own personal study
 - Other (please specify): _____

17. At the time of your conversion, how old were you? _____

18. In the year following your conversion, please describe the frequency that you engaged in the following activities:

	Weekly+	1-2 times monthly	3-4 times a year	once a year or less	
a. Attended Sunday worship services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Attended Bible study (Sunday School)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Attended small group bible study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Daily+	1-3 times weekly	1-2 times monthly	3-4 times a year	once a year or less
d. Spent time in personal prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Read the Bible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Conversated about your faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Read religious literature other than the Bible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Since the time of your conversion how would you describe your religious faith overall?
- No longer active in my faith
 - I still have faith, but it has declined
 - Has not changed
 - Has grown

We have a few of questions to ask about your spiritual growth since your childhood.

20. During each period, how much growth in your faith did you experience?

		None					Significant growth
a. Elementary School	(5-10 yrs)	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Middle School	(11-13 yrs)	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. High School	(14-18 yrs)	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. College	(18+)	0	1	2	3	4	5

21. Since coming to Carson-Newman:

a. How has your involvement in religious activities changed?

- Has decreased
- Has not changed
- Has increased

b. How has your view of God changed?

- He is less important in my life
- Has not changed
- He is more important in my life
- Other: (explain) _____

c. How has your view of the idea of Satan changed?

- Less of a concern in my life
- Has not changed
- More of a concern in my life
- Other: _____

22. How satisfied are you with the state of your faith and your religious life today?

Not at all satisfied	0	1	2	3	4	Totally satisfied
	0	1	2	3	4	5

Now, we have a few questions about your current church and religious environment.

23. What is your current denominational affiliation? _____

24. What was your denominational affiliation when you were growing up? _____

25. What is the size of the church you currently attend?

- Less than 50
- 50-299
- 300-999
- 1000 or more
- Do not currently attend church

26. How long have you been attending this church?

- Since childhood (home church)
- Several years before coming to college
- Since coming to college
- Do not currently attend church

27. How important are each of these in your current church's overall presentation of the gospel?

	Not important at all	0	1	2	3	4	Extremely important
a. Hope for living a better life on earth		0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Christ-centered		0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Assurance of God's involvement and presence in ones personal life		0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Assurance of heaven		0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Escape from hell		0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Escape from God's wrath		0	1	2	3	4	5
g. Breaking the power of Satan		0	1	2	3	4	5

28. What is the spiritual commitment of the people with whom you spend most of your time?

- No personal faith commitment
- Personal commitment, but loosely involved in religious activities
- Committed and deeply involved in religious activities

Finally, just a few questions for classification purposes.

28. What is your age? _____

29. What is your current major(s)? _____

30. What is your gender? Male Female

31. What is your school classification?

- Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other _____

32. Where is your hometown?

If in United States: _____ (State) and _____ (County)

If outside the U.S.: _____ (Country)

33. In what type of community did you spend most of your developmental years?

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

34. How would you describe your religious belief?

- None
- Christian
- Other Western Religion (Judaism, Islam)
- Eastern (Buddhism, Hinduism)
- Other: (explain) _____

If you have comments about this survey, you may write them in the space below:

Thank you again for your participation in this survey. Please follow instructions for turning in your survey to be recorded and analyzed.

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Religion and culture seem like complex ideas to study from the perspective of International Relations. After all, scholars and philosophers have long debated the meaning of these terms and the impact they have had on our comprehension of the social world around us. So is it an impossibly complicated task to study religion and culture at the global level? Although many dimensions of the religious experience can be "politics-free", both history and contemporary events remind us that these combined elements of religion can have a political impact on individuals, nations and international society. Elements of culture. We can approach the term culture in the same way we have considered religion.