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DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE:
COSMIC CONFLICT IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

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Matthew Jay McMains
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DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE:
COSMIC CONFLICT IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

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To Ashleigh,

You are the greatest example of our Lord's kindness in my life.

To JP, Elliana, and Tabitha,

You have given me greater joy than words can ever express.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	ix
PREFACE.....	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Thesis.....	2
Background	3
Studies in Matthew’s Narrative	3
Studies of Cosmic Conflict.....	11
Methodology	16
Outline.....	18
2. COSMIC CONFLICT IN JEWISH LITERATURE	20
Cosmic Conflict in the Old Testament.....	20
Satan in the OT.....	20
Genesis 3 and Satan.....	27
The Battle of the Seeds	29
Leviathan as Satan.....	34
Summary and Conclusion.....	46
Cosmic Conflict in Second Temple Literature.....	47
Cosmic Conflict in Early Jewish Apocalypses.....	48
Cosmic Conflict in Qumran Literature	61

Chapter	Page
Summary and Conclusion.....	69
Conclusion	70
3. COSMIC CONFLICT: HUMAN ANTAGONISTS.....	71
Herod.....	71
The Jewish Leaders	76
Matthew 9:2–8.....	78
Matthew 9:9–34.....	80
Matthew 12	83
The Disciples.....	95
ὀλιγόπιστος.....	95
ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου	101
μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν	107
Judas	110
Pilate	114
Conclusion	117
4. COSMIC CONFLICT: NON-HUMAN ANTAGONISTS	119
Demons.....	119
Demonic Oppression—General References.....	119
Demonic Oppression—Individual Encounters	121
Disease	130
Satan.....	134
ὁ διάβολος.....	134
ὁ πονηρός.....	143
Σατανᾶ	160
Βεελζεβούλ.....	161

Chapter	Page
Summary: Jesus versus Satan.....	166
Conclusion	171
5. COSMIC CONFLICT: THE PROTAGONISTS	173
The Magi.....	173
God the Father	176
The Holy Spirit.....	179
Angels	183
The Disciples.....	190
Conclusion	194
6. COSMIC CONFLICT AND THE PLOT OF MATTHEW’S GOSPEL.....	196
Cosmic Conflict and Matthew’s Narrative.....	197
Matthew 4:1–11: The Kingdom Offered	200
Matthew 12:22–32: Two Kingdoms Collide	209
Matthew 28:16–20: The Kingdom Restored	220
Conclusion	227
7. CONCLUSION.....	229
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	235

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1QM	The War Scroll
1QS	The Rule of the Community
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>ABD</i>	D. N. Freedman, ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ACCSNT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament
ACCSOT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament
ACT	Ancient Christian Texts
<i>AJPS</i>	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>
ANE	Ancient Near East
<i>ANET</i>	J. B. Pritchard, ed., <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3 rd ed. with supplement
BDAG	Walter Bauer. <i>A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CD	The Damascus Document
<i>DDD</i>	Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, eds., <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i>
<i>DJG</i>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>

<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSAJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Ancient Judaism</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	The Septuagint
NIBCNT	New International Bible Commentary on the New Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary of the New Testament
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBLSBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SHBC	Smyth Helwys Bible Commentary
SP	Sacra Pagina
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
WBC	The Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>The Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table	Page
1. Narrative links between Matthew 4:10 and 16:23	105
2. Links between 3:16–4:11, 16:13–28, and 17:1–13.....	109
3. Parallel in Jesus’ response.....	117
4. Progression of the temptation account.....	140
5. Movement of angels.....	187
6. Links between Genesis 3 and Matthew 4.....	207
7. Lexical and conceptual links between Matthew 4:1–11 and 28:18–20	225

Figure	Page
1. Structural relationship between Genesis 1–3 and Isaiah 27:1–6.....	41

PREFACE

The years spent on this project have been wrought with hardship, not in its writing, but in the daily life which it has accompanied. That this project has reached its end testifies to many who have supported me along the way. I am first and foremost grateful to my God, who has been faithful in all the ups and downs. His sovereign hand has upheld me, and his gracious kindness has never ceased.

I am utterly amazed by my bride, Ashleigh. Not only has she endured with much patience this arduous process, but she has in many ways kept our little family afloat and provided the support and encouragement I have needed, not only in the writing process, but in all the trials life has brought our way. I could never have completed this without her by my side. Thanks also to our children, who were patient with me when Daddy needed to study. They mean more than I can express, and I am thankful to God for entrusting their little lives to this imperfect man.

Many others have been involved in this process. I am thankful to my dad, Larry McMains, who has read every paper I've written and whose insights have made me a better writer and student. I am also thankful to Eli Dukes, who spent hours combing through with his editor's eye what he no doubt considered captivating material in order to make this dissertation better. His careful reading and thoughtful comments have been indispensable. Further, I'm grateful for the men on my committee—Professors Schreiner, Pennington, and Cook—who have read this manuscript and provided many helpful insights. I especially want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner, who bore with me patiently and graciously provided many helpful insights and corrections. He has been there to encourage me not only in my writing, but also in my daily life as a friend and pastor whose

influence will forever be felt.

Finally, I want to say a special thanks to my mom, Cynthia, and brother, Daniel, who both stand in God's presence this day. Their love and support throughout my life have helped shape me into the man I am today. I miss you both and long for the day when the Enemy will be utterly demolished and with him all evil and hardship, and so we will worship together before the throne of our God forever.

Matt McMains

Shawnee, Oklahoma
December 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The cosmic combat between good and evil, between God and Satan, is a theme which permeates the pages of Scripture. From the crafty serpent of Genesis 3 to the ferocious red dragon of Revelation 12, the Scriptures recount the unfolding of a cosmic battle which has raged from the beginning and will continue until the Christ returns to make all things new. The outworking of this great battle is a major motif in the whole of Scripture. The Gospel of Matthew is no exception, yet cosmic conflict as a major theme in Matthew has perhaps not received the attention it deserves.

D. A. Carson states, “It is true that the Synoptics provide some theological reflection on what Jesus is doing when he eliminates demons from human personalities . . . but it is the fourth Gospel that provides a theology of the devil.”¹ Similarly, regarding Matthew's demonology, Graham Twelftree suggests that exorcisms are given “relatively low priority in the ministry of Jesus.”² Some, however, have noted the important place of cosmic conflict in Matthew's Gospel. Both Robert Charles Branden and Mark Allan Powell have argued that the fundamental conflict present in Matthew's plot is that between Jesus/God and Satan.³

¹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 53.

²Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 167–68.

³Robert Charles Branden, *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 89 (New York: Peter Lang, 2006); Mark Allan Powell, “The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel,” *New Testament Studies* 38, no. 2 (April 1992): 187–204.

Attention to conflict as the central aspect of plot is important when discussing the Gospel of Matthew. Many have recognized the escalating conflict in Matthew between Jesus and the religious leaders, which culminates with the apparent victory of the Jewish leaders at his crucifixion.⁴ Yet in Matthew's multifaceted plot, the conflict motif runs deeper. I argue that conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders is subservient to a more fundamental conflict that Matthew consistently brings to the forefront in his gospel, namely, the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan.

Thesis

My thesis is that a foundational theme in Matthew's Gospel is the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan, and that Matthew does indeed develop a theology of the devil. This broad motif, as it plays out specifically in Matthew's gospel, permeates important themes and passages therein, and is thus foundational for the plot of Matthew's drama.⁵ My argument will unfold as follows: First, I establish this cosmic conflict motif within Jewish literature, beginning with its Old Testament context, and further evidenced in Second Temple literature, and so demonstrate the likelihood that Matthew would draw upon this motif as a major aspect of his work. As Williams and Farrar stated in their two part study on Satan, "The historical problem thus becomes one of identifying how the peculiar emphases [regarding Satan] of the NT emerged from Judaism."⁶ It is the aim of this section to aid in

⁴Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," *Interpretation* 46, no. 4 (October 1992): 347–56; Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*, JSNTSup 91 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994), 188–89; Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 244; Frank J. Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," *CBQ* 49, no. 2 (April 1987): 233–53, who argues that Matthew's plot moves from Israel's rejection of the Messiah to the Gentile inclusion in the people of God.

⁵Milton Marx, *The Enjoyment of Drama* (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co, 1940), 51–54.

⁶Thomas J. Farrar and Guy J. Williams, "Talk of the Devil: Unpacking the Language of New Testament Satanology," *JSNT* 39, no. 1 (September 2016): 90.

providing an answer to that question. Second, I demonstrate topically the importance of cosmic conflict to Matthew's gospel. Here I show how various aspects of Matthew's Gospel can be better understood in light of cosmic conflict. Following this, I focus on the plot of Matthew, demonstrating the prominence of cosmic conflict in Matthew's Gospel through an analysis of its plot based on Aristotle's understanding that every good plot has a beginning, a middle, and an end, which portions will be demarcated by three important Matthean pericopes: 4:1–11; 12:22–32; and 28:16–20.⁷ By providing the reader a narrative perspective of Matthew through an analysis of its plot in light of this cosmic conflict motif, I show that Matthew views the life and ministry of Jesus as the continuation and climax of the cosmic conflict of the Old Testament, and that in Christ the conflict finds its culmination when Jesus regains the dominion that Adam forfeited in the garden.

Background

As previously mentioned, specific works that focus entirely on cosmic conflict in Matthew are scarce; however, there are important works about Matthew's narrative in general, some of which touch on the conflict motif. Further, several important works on spiritual warfare in general incorporate discussions of the Gospels as a whole, or Matthew specifically. This section highlights important works in these two areas.

Studies in Matthew's Narrative

Richard A. Edwards. In his *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, Edwards was one of the first to call attention to the appropriateness of a narrative critical approach to Matthew, arguing that due to its narrative genre, it is “inappropriate and misleading

⁷Aristotle, *On the Art of Poetry*, trans. S. H Butcher, 2nd ed., Library of Liberal Arts, no. 6 (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956).

to impose upon it a precise outline.”⁸ Nevertheless, he proceeds to divide the Gospel into “segments” which look much like an outline. He anticipates this criticism of his approach by explaining that these segments should not be considered “self-contained units” but rather “basic segments or moments in the continuing narration.”⁹ Edwards then performs a running commentary on the narrative of Matthew, taking into account narrative critical and reader response issues.¹⁰

Two significant features of Edwards' work are his emphasis on the narrator and the implied reader. The narrator is important for establishing a story's point of view and thus he must be considered credible. Throughout his work Edwards notes places where the reader is encouraged to make such a judgment of the narrator. Regarding the implied reader, Edwards emphasizes that he is not concerned with any particular reader in any century, but rather the reader which the text itself posits. This is important because it emphasizes the work as literature in and of itself, not dependent on any particular cultural phenomenon that the text itself does not suggest. Edwards' work is important in that it brought attention to the importance of reading Matthew as a narrative; however, conflict does not appear as a major theme in his analysis until chapter 6.

Frank J. Matera. In a 1986 essay, Matera discusses the importance of plot analysis in understanding biblical narrative.¹¹ His understanding of plot follows Aristotle's *Poetics*, noting two primary points regarding plot. First, plot is an

⁸Richard Alan Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 9.

⁹Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 9.

¹⁰Edwards is careful to point out that he is not attempting to write a commentary, but rather it is “an attempt to point to significant features of the narration.” Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 10.

¹¹Matera, “The Plot of Matthew's Gospel.”

“arrangement of incidents” which contains a beginning, a middle, and an end. Second, plot is based on causality, because the middle flows from the beginning and necessarily brings about the end. Matera, following Chatman, divides events into kernel events, which are the most important, and satellite events, which are of secondary importance.¹² In essence, a kernel event is fundamental to the plot of the story, while satellites provide aesthetic value to the narrative.

Matera then proceeds to define Matthew’s plot. After making note of certain important indicators, such as the beginning of Matthew and the end, Matera defines Matthew’s plot as, “In the appearance of Jesus the Messiah, God fulfills his promises to Israel. But Israel refuses to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Consequently, the Gospel passes to the nations.”¹³ Based on this definition, Matera proceeds to identify six kernel events in Matthew, namely, the birth of Jesus (2:1a), the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (4:12–17), the question of John the Baptist (11:2–6), Jesus’ conversation at Caesarea Philippi (16:13–28), the cleansing of the temple (21:1–17), and the Great Commission (28:16–20). Based on these kernel events, Matera arranges Matthew’s Gospel into narrative blocks by adding in the “satellite events.” He offers the suggestion that, while similar to outlining the gospel, what he has done is different because it is not dependent on certain phrases which are repeated in the gospel, and thus allows for more of Matthew’s turning points to be recognized.

Matera’s work is important to this dissertation in that it draws attention to Aristotle’s understanding of plot, and applies that to the Gospel of Matthew. His development of the idea of kernel and satellite events is also helpful in narrative

¹²See Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (London: Cornell University Press, 1980).

¹³Matera, “The Plot of Matthew’s Gospel,” 243.

analysis. However, Matera overlooks conflict as a key ingredient in his discussion of plot in general, and Matthew's plot specifically.

Jack Dean Kingsbury. In his article "The Plot of Matthew's Story," Kingsbury, like Matera, builds upon the notion that plot, in its most basic sense, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Kingsbury argues that in Matthew these divisions are delineated by the repeated phrase Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο in 4:17 and 16:21.¹⁴ However, unlike Matera, Kingsbury sees conflict as essential to a story's plot. In this regard, Kingsbury focuses on Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders as central to Matthew's plot. The beginning of Matthew's story (1:1–4:16) introduces Jesus, the protagonist, and his adversaries, the religious leaders. The middle of the story (4:17–16:20) is where Jesus first clashes with the religious leaders, and is divided into two parts. In part 1 (4:17–11:1), Jesus first offers salvation to Israel through his teaching, preaching, and healing. In part 2 (11:2–16:20), Matthew records the rejection of Jesus as the Jewish messiah. The end of the story (16:21–28:20) includes Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, as well as his suffering, death, and resurrection. For Kingsbury, the cross is the culmination of Matthew's plot. For Matthew and his readers, it represents victory, while for the Jewish leaders it represents Jesus' defeat. Thus, while the narrative finds its culmination at the cross, it is the resurrection which vindicates Jesus and demonstrates that at the cross he was indeed victorious.

Kingsbury improves upon Matera in that he recognizes the crucial aspect of plot in Matthew's story, focusing on Jesus' conflict with Israel as represented by the religious leaders. This leads him to emphasize Matthew 27:41–43 as the most crucial passage in the end of Matthew's story. While Kingsbury is certainly correct in highlighting this conflict, he fails to focus attention on the deeper conflict between

¹⁴Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story."

Jesus and Satan.

Mark Allan Powell. Powell has contributed to this field through two primary means. In 1990, Fortress Press published a monograph by Mark Allan Powell titled *What is Narrative Criticism?*¹⁵ This is a general discussion by Powell regarding narrative criticism and its place in biblical studies. In chapter 4, titled “Events,” Powell discusses the role of plot in narrative criticism and uses Matthew as a case study. Powell later published an article titled, “The Plot and Subplots of Matthew’s Gospel,” in which he argued specifically that the central conflict in Matthew is the conflict between God and Satan.¹⁶ According to Powell, other “subplots” were tangential, yet related, to this primary plot. Powell presents two primary means of discerning Matthew’s plot, namely, causality and conflict resolution. With regard to the former, the primary cause in Matthew’s story has to do with saving his people from their sins (1:21; 9:13; 20:28).

Powell’s essay comes closest to the present work in that he argues that the main plot of Matthew’s story is the conflict between God and Satan. However, Powell spends as much time discussing the subplots of Matthew’s Gospel as this primary plot. While this approach is helpful, the purpose of the present work is to analyze the whole of Matthew in light of the primary conflict between the Jesus and Satan. Nevertheless, Powell’s essay, as well as the following work by Branden, are the only two studies I have found that analyze Matthew's plot from the perspective of cosmic conflict.

David B. Howell. In his work *Matthew’s Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel*, Howell critiques the traditional methods of

¹⁵Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

¹⁶Powell, “Plot and Subplots.”

interpreting Matthew, particularly those which focus on salvation history as a way to solve the tension between the implied readers of the Matthean community and the historical persons who accompanied the earthly Jesus.¹⁷ Howell seeks to recast the debate in literary categories “which are more sensitive to the movement and dynamism of the story.”¹⁸ The underlying question he seeks to answer concerns how the “readers of the Gospel are to appropriate and involve themselves in the story and teaching of the Gospel.”¹⁹ Howell lays out several literary presuppositions which are necessary in narrative critical analysis. First, “The integrity rather than the fragmentation of the Gospel narrative is assumed.” One important corollary is that the Gospel is treated as a self-contained or closed narrative world. In other words, “it is conceptualized as a complex structured entity in which partial meanings are dependent upon their relationship to the whole.”²⁰ This is important for the present study of Matthew because, in order to discover the plot of the story, it is necessary to recognize that the Gospel must be read as a whole, and hence a single narrative thread can be established from beginning to end. Second, Howell presents point of view as an indispensable element in narrative.²¹ It is the point of view that reveals the author's interpretation of a particular narrative world. Also, perceptions of the characters and events in the story are filtered through the point of view of the author who has shaped the narrative. Third, Howell argues that “The reader of the narrative has a role in the production of textual meaning.” This falls under the category of “reader-response” criticism, and seeks to determine in what way the reader is

¹⁷David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel*, JSNTSup 42 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990), 15.

¹⁸Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 17.

¹⁹Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 17.

²⁰Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 33.

²¹Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 37.

involved in the meaning of a text. Are they in the text, over the text, or with the text? Howell opts for a textually centered approach in which the literary critic starts with the text, thus focusing attention on the “implied reader,” who “embodies all the predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect,” and is therefore “on the receiving end of all the various textual strategies and rhetorical devices used to comment, representing the response which the author may have been aiming at for his audience.”²² Finally, Howell states that “The most important aspect of the interaction between reader and text is its temporal, situational dimensions.”²³ This is important, since reading is not simply a sequential, irreversible linear experience. Readers anticipate what is ahead, as well as revisit and revise their understanding of the text in retrospect.

After his introductory material, Howell proceeds to analyze Matthew’s story according to the paradigm he has set forth. In chapter 2, he critiques the salvation–historical method of interpreting Matthew. In chapters 3–4, he describes the “narrative rhetoric of Matthew’s inclusive story by means of a narrative and reader–response criticism that examines respectively the Gospel story, story–teller, and audience.”²⁴ His goal is to describe how a reader experiences and applies the story of Jesus as narrated in the Gospel. In chapter three, Howell focuses on the plot of Matthew, arguing that the plot elements which structure the Gospel narrative are that of promise/fulfillment and acceptance/rejection.²⁵ Thus, while Howell’s work is important in understanding the role of the reader in narrative criticism, as well as how the implied–reader is presented in Matthew, he focuses little on conflict when

²²Howell, *Matthew’s Inclusive Story*, 38–42.

²³Howell, *Matthew’s Inclusive Story*, 43.

²⁴Howell, *Matthew’s Inclusive Story*, 52.

²⁵Howell, *Matthew’s Inclusive Story*, 132.

discussing the plot of Matthew, particularly the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan.

Robert Charles Branden. In 2006, the Studies in Biblical Literature series, published by Peter Lang, published *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew* by Robert Charles Branden.²⁶ In this volume, Branden utilizes historical and narrative criticism to explore demonology in Matthew's gospel. He spends a significant amount of time examining the background of demonology in Matthew, including the divine council literature as well as Jewish apocalyptic literature. Branden then discusses the plot of Matthew, focusing on possible apocalyptic models, as well as interacting with the views of Matera, Kingsbury, and Powell. Finally, Branden applies the plot of Matthew to three problem passages, namely, 11:12, 11:23, and 13:58.

Branden's work is important to my own as it is the only book-length work arguing for Satanic conflict as the primary plot in Matthew. His chapter on Satan in the Gospel of Matthew provides in depth exegesis of the temptation account as well as the Beelzebul controversy. There Branden argues that both are in keeping with the understanding of Satan in the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the day. He also has a separate chapter on the plot of Matthew in which he analyses several views of Matthew's plot, ultimately adopting Powell's view, with added discussions of the summary statements and the crowds in Matthew.

While there is some overlap between Branden's work and the present study, there are significant differences which make this dissertation relevant. First, Branden relates demonology in Matthew to the demonology of Second Temple Judaism. While I recognize some common ground between Matthew's demonology

²⁶Branden, *Satanic Conflict*.

and that of apocalyptic Judaism, I argue that Matthew's narrative follows primarily from the Old Testament concept of the battle of the seeds beginning in Genesis 3:15. Second, Branden has little to say about the plot of Matthew as a whole. He analyzes Matthew's utilization of Satan in two passages, namely, the temptation and the Beelzebub controversy, and then has a chapter on various proposals concerning Matthew's plot. This work, on the other hand, offers a comprehensive analysis of Matthew's plot in light of cosmic conflict which goes far beyond simply discussing Matthew's references to Satan. Finally, my analysis seeks to discover the deeper conflict behind all other conflicts present in Matthew's gospel, which leads me to analyze all the major characters in Matthew, both antagonists and protagonists, and thus offers a much more detailed framework for analyzing Matthew's plot in light of the cosmic conflict motif.

Summary. This overview indicates that while the narrative reading of Matthew has received attention in recent decades, few examples focus primarily on cosmic conflict in Matthew's Gospel. Branden and Powell appear to be the only two who have looked at Matthew's plot through the lens of cosmic conflict.

Studies of Cosmic Conflict

Although this project will focus on cosmic conflict in Matthew's gospel, many important works have contributed to the idea of cosmic conflict in Scripture. I only summarize a sample of these here.

Gregory Boyd. In his *God at War*, Greg Boyd sets forth this view through an examination of cosmic conflict between God and the Satanic forces which oppose him, arguing that the message of Scripture can only be rightly understood in the context of this conflict.²⁷ Boyd succeeds in demonstrating both the foundational

²⁷Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove,

nature of cosmic conflict and the reality that according to Scripture, “The whole of the cosmos is understood to be caught up in a fierce battle between two rival kingdoms.”²⁸ Boyd’s overall paradigm for a combat context of Scripture is one I demonstrate specifically in Matthew’s Gospel both through a topical analysis and narrative exegesis. In Boyd’s section on warfare in the New Testament, he makes several important observations. First, in the Gospels, Jesus views Satan as having a certain authority over the world. He is the “prince of this world” (John 12:31), he holds authority over kingdoms (Luke 4:5–6), and he works his power in this world through his demonic host. Second, the above ideas play an important part in Jesus’ understanding of the kingdom of God. Indeed, the kingdom of God is a warfare concept.²⁹

Walter Wink. Walter Wink produced a three-volume work on the notion of power in the New Testament. The first volume, *Naming the Powers*, looks at the language of power specifically in the letters of Paul. However, Wink does make one statement in this volume which lines up nicely with the present work: “Jesus regards his healings and exorcisms as an assault on the kingdom of Satan and an indication that the kingdom of God is breaking in. The Gospel is very much a cosmic battle in which Jesus rescues humanity from the dominion of evil powers.”³⁰

In his second volume, Wink attempts to erode “the soil from beneath the foundations of materialism” by reassessing the powers present in the New Testament

IL: InterVarsity, 1997).

²⁸Boyd, *God at War*, 290.

²⁹Boyd, *God at War*, 185. While Boyd and I differ significantly on what these points indicate theologically, they are themselves true and important for understanding cosmic conflict in Matthew.

³⁰Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 26.

texts.³¹ Wink examines these powers according to seven categories: Satan, demons, angels of the churches, angels of the nations, the gods, the elements of the universe, and the angels of nature. It is Wink's discussion of Satan and demons which is relevant to this dissertation. After assessing Satan's role and function in Scripture, Wink ultimately does not concern himself with whether an actual entity named Satan exists, but rather how the Satan figure helps to make sense of people's experiences of evil.³²

Finally, in his third volume, *Engaging the Powers*, Wink suggests that the institutional life of this world is a "domination system" whose spirit is Satan. The book is largely an examination of the nonviolent response of Jesus to evil powers and their worldly manifestations and how such should inform the church's response to those same powers. Thus, "We pray to God, not because we understand these mysteries, but because we have learned from our tradition and from experience that God, indeed *is* sufficient for us, whatever the Powers may do."³³

Graham Twelftree. Twelftree has written extensively on the subject of spiritual warfare. His published dissertation, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus*, added to the discussion of the historical Jesus, and was followed by *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now*, which attempted a comprehensive examination of exorcism in the New Testament.³⁴ He continued to write on the subject, completing no fewer than nine books and numerous journal

³¹Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 6.

³²Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 25.

³³Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 337.

³⁴Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993); Graham H. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1985).

articles. His most recent work, *In the Name of Jesus*, seeks to determine the early church's view of exorcism through an analysis of Q, the synoptic gospels, early church fathers, and second-century critics of the Christian faith.³⁵

In his chapter on Matthew, Twelftree recognizes that exorcisms “are a part of the destruction of Satan’s kingdom and the realization of the power of the presence of God,” yet he sees exorcism as being given “relatively low priority in the ministry of Jesus.”³⁶ Because of his focus on only exorcism passages, Twelftree discusses neither the temptation narrative nor the Great Commission. These two passages play a vital role in my analysis of Matthew’s plot and of his theology of cosmic conflict as a whole.

James Kallas. In his work *Jesus and the Power of Satan*, Kallas argues that the entire fiber of the Gospel narrative is dominated by the conviction that the world is to some degree in bondage to Satan.³⁷ In part 1, he discusses some of the literary, historical, and theological background necessary for understanding the message of the synoptic gospels. In this section he suggests that “While both the Godward and Satanward views are valid, one is primary. And that which is primary in the Synoptics is, as in Paul, the Satanward view.” He goes on to say that it is “not until Hebrews and the later Johannine literature . . . does one find the Godward view moving into the ascendancy.”³⁸

Kallas then discusses the events of Jesus life, including the virgin birth narratives, Jesus’ ministry, including his baptism and temptation, his trial and

³⁵Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*.

³⁶Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 167–68.

³⁷James G. Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968).

³⁸Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan*, 77.

crucifixion, and finally, his resurrection and promised return. In each of these sections, Kallas argues that the best backdrop for a proper understanding is one of demonology. For example, regarding the virgin birth, “The same Spirit of God who casts out demons (Matt 12:28), thus reestablishing the rule of God, is already active in the time of Jesus’ conception and birth.” This fierce conflict surrounding his birth demonstrates that “The invasion of God has precipitated resistance.”³⁹ Kallas interprets Jesus’ baptism and temptation in light of this theme as well. He argues that the declaration of Jesus’ sonship is aimed directly at Satan, whom Jesus will soon face in the wilderness.⁴⁰ And so Kallas continues his analysis, demonstrating that the Synoptics as a whole are most properly understood against the backdrop of a demonology of dualistic conflict.

Kallas’s work is important to the present work for a few reasons. First, his general thesis with regard to the Synoptic narratives is relevant to Matthew’s Gospel specifically. Thus, while Kallas looks at specific events in the Gospel accounts, and comments on them in light of demonology, I look at cosmic conflict in light of Matthew’s overall story and theology. Also, Kallas has an individual section on the kingdom of God. He spends the majority of this chapter discussing the Jewish background of the kingdom, albeit with very little analysis of the Synoptic texts. He ultimately argues that Jesus’ idea of the kingdom was entirely eschatological and celestial, rather than earthbound and political.⁴¹ So while Kallas does relate the kingdom of God to the theme of demonic conflict, the case can be made in a more compelling way by looking at the text itself. While we do not agree in all the particulars, one thing Kallas and I hold in common is that “The important factor is

³⁹Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan*, 101.

⁴⁰Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan*, 110.

⁴¹Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan*, 125.

not the demons themselves, but Christ's superiority over the demons! That is what the New Testament is most concerned about!"⁴²

Summary. This brief overview of cosmic conflict studies indicates that while attention to Satanic conflict certainly exists, there have been few works which have focused solely on Matthew's Gospel and how this conflict affects the narrative and theological framework of Matthew.⁴³ While it is clear that conflict with demonic forces is important in Matthew's gospel, an in depth look at the role this motif plays in the Gospel narrative is warranted.

Methodology

This work begins with an examination of the background literature that may have informed the idea of cosmic conflict in Matthew's gospel. This literature includes portions of the OT and Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic writings. I seek to determine what influence this literature had on Matthew, arguing that though Second Temple literature certainly provides some context for this theme in Matthew,

⁴²Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan*, 212.

⁴³Studies in the demonic and spiritual warfare are prolific. I have attempted to include works that touch on the current project. For some of the other works available, see J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Conquering Satan, Demons, Principalities, and Powers: Ghanaian Traditional and Christian Perspectives on Religion, Evil, and Deliverance," in *Coping with Evil in Religion and Culture* (New York: Rodopi, 2008), 85–103; William C. Tremmel, *Dark Side: The Satan Story* (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1987); C. A. Evans, "Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 15, no. 1 (2005): 49; Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Edward M. Bouds, *Satan: His Personality, Power and Overthrow* (New York: F. H. Revell, 1922); Johnny B. Awwad, "Satan in Biblical Imagination," *Theological Review* 26, no. 2 (2005): 111–26; Robert Recker, "Satan: In Power or Dethroned?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (November 1971): 133–55; Rivkah Schärf Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament*, Studies in Jungian Thought (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967); Willard M. Aldrich, "Satan's Attempt to Keep Christ from the Cross," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 102, no. 408 (1945): 468–73; Daniel Day Williams, *The Demonic and the Divine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); James G. Kallas, *The Real Satan: From Biblical Times to the Present* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975); James G. Kallas, *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles*, S.P.C.K. Biblical Monographs 2 (London: S.P.C.K., 1961); James G. Kallas, *The Satanward View: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966); Elaine H. Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Random House, 1995); Erwin W. Lutzer, *The Serpent of Paradise: The Incredible Story of How Satan's Rebellion Serves God's Purposes* (Chicago: Moody, 1996).

the conflict motif that provides the primary context for his story is found in the Old Testament.

The remainder of the dissertation blends two distinct approaches to the discussion of cosmic conflict in the Gospel of Matthew. The first is a strictly narrative reading of Matthew, moving through the Gospel from beginning to end, demonstrating the prominence of cosmic conflict via a running commentary. While this method is beneficial in showing how cosmic conflict permeates the narrative of Matthew, if used exclusively it might be difficult to avoid a certain superficiality when attempting to comment on the entire narrative.

A second approach is a topical study, in which a certain aspect of cosmic conflict is discussed, examining each passage in which that aspect is prominent. This approach adds volume to the discussion through an in-depth, exegetical analysis of passages and themes that are most pertinent to cosmic conflict in Matthew. If used alone, however, this approach places one in danger of missing the critical perspective on how the theme develops in Matthew's narrative.

Seeing that both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses, I capitalize on the strengths of each by beginning with an exegetical study of the theme of cosmic conflict in Matthew's gospel. Early chapters delve into the characters and themes which relate to cosmic conflict.⁴⁴ I then include a chapter on how cosmic conflict is fundamental to Matthew's plot. This chapter utilizes the passages mentioned above as the story's beginning, middle, and end, and in doing so demonstrates how cosmic conflict pervades Matthew's narrative, moving the story line from its beginning to its culmination.

⁴⁴This method of organization has been adapted from Jason Mackey's 2014 unpublished dissertation. Jason Alan Mackey, "The Light Overcomes the Darkness: Cosmic Conflict in the Fourth Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

Outline

In the present chapter, I have introduced the question at hand, as well as surveyed those works which relate to my thesis. I have evaluated the history of research and presented a rationale for additional work in this area. I have thus offered a thesis which argues that cosmic conflict is a major motif in Matthew's Gospel, permeating its themes in such a way as to be central to its plot.

In chapter 2, I analyze the Jewish literature relevant to the cosmic conflict motif to determine if, and in what way, such has affected Matthew's framework. Chapter 2 looks at specific and implied references to Satan and demons in the Old Testament, as well as the battle of the seeds implied in Genesis 3. It also surveys the apocalyptic literature of the intertestamental period to elucidate contextual clues as to the possible background of demonology in the NT.

In chapter 3, I discuss the human antagonists of cosmic conflict. The antagonists are those characters in the Gospel which at any point in time seem to hinder the ultimate goal of the protagonist. These include the Jewish leaders, Herod, Pilate, Judas, and at times even the disciples.

In chapter 4, I continue my discussion of the antagonists in Matthew's narrative, focusing on the non-human opponents to Jesus. These include Satan, demons, and disease.

In chapter 5, on the other hand, I analyze the protagonists of Matthew's Gospel, including the magi, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, angels, and the disciples. Jesus, as the main character of Matthew's gospel, is highlighted in how each of the characters relate to his person throughout Matthew's narrative.

Chapter 6 then examines Matthew's plot in light of cosmic conflict. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how a recognition of the pervasiveness of this theme in Matthew helps one better understand Matthew's narrative plot. I draw upon the Aristotelian method, arguing that it is the theme of cosmic conflict, which

began in the Old Testament and is prevalent in the life and ministry of Jesus, that serves as foundational to Matthew's gospel. The oldest and most traditional model of plot analysis comes from Aristotle, who famously argued that every good plot has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning has no necessary logical antecedent, the middle contains the events which thrust the main character into trial, and the end resolves all the preceding events such that it requires nothing after it for logical, narrative resolution. Based on the above plot structure analyses, I argue that three texts are essential to Matthew's narrative framework: 4:1–11; 12:22–32; and 28:16–20. This chapter shows how Matthew's narrative weaves in and out of these three texts a narrative web with cosmic conflict at its center.

Finally, in chapter 7, I offer a summary of the work as a whole, demonstrating that Matthew indeed has a robust theology of the devil and that cosmic conflict provides a foundational lens through which to view his narrative.

This dissertation asserts that a robust theology of cosmic conflict is present in Matthew's Gospel. This is demonstrated through a topical analysis of characters and themes in Matthew's narrative, as well as an analysis of the plot of the Gospel in light of cosmic conflict. Having introduced the topic, chapter 2 delves into the possible background to this motif in Matthew by analyzing the theme in the OT and Second Temple apocalyptic literature.

CHAPTER 2
COSMIC CONFLICT IN JEWISH LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the background to Matthew's presentation of cosmic conflict. I first survey this theme as it portrayed in the OT, and then how such was understood in the Second Temple apocalyptic literature, which provides the immediate context for Matthew's Gospel. While the latter certainly provides a context in which Matthew writes, I argue that the OT is the primary backdrop by which to analyze this theme in his gospel.

Cosmic Conflict in the Old Testament

There are two primary ways of analyzing this motif in the OT. The first is to analyze individual passages which reference Satan or the demonic, and then attempt to provide a summary of the whole of its theology of the demonic. A second possibility is to trace the theme through the OT as one coherent story, elaborating on important passages along the way. In keeping with the methodology of this dissertation regarding Matthew's Gospel, I begin with an examination of texts which specifically refer to the demonic realm, and then show how this theme is woven together into a coherent story line in the OT.

Satan in the OT

Satan is only specifically mentioned in three passages in the OT: 1 Chronicles 21:1, Job 1–2, and Zechariah 3:1–2. In Job 1:6, the author describes a day “when the sons of God came to stand before Yahweh and Satan (שָׂטָן) also came in

their midst.”¹ What is in view here is a kind of heavenly council, in which the supreme king, Yahweh, is surrounded by lesser spiritual beings who give account to him and receive directives from him. One being is singled out among all the rest, a being known as הַשָּׂטָן.² Yahweh asks this being, “from where have you come?” This question does not imply ignorance on God's part as to the whereabouts of Satan, but rather serves a rhetorical function in the narrative.³ First, it singles out Satan from among the other beings as having a unique role. Second, it is Yahweh who initiates the conversation which leads to the major events narrated in Job.⁴ Regarding the former, Satan has been scouring the globe, presumably in active resistance to God and his creation.⁵ Regarding the latter, Yahweh proceeds to ask specifically regarding

¹All citations from the Hebrew Scriptures are my own translation unless otherwise noted.

²There are two primary views regarding the role of הַשָּׂטָן in Job. The first is that “the satan” here simply refers to a member of Yahweh’s heavenly court who serves a specific, non-malevolent function. For this view, see Tremper Longman III, *Job*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 82; Marvin E. Tate, “Satan in the Old Testament,” *Review & Expositor* 89, no. 4 (September 1992): 461–74; Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 39; Samuel R. Driver and George Buchanan Gary, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary: The Book of Job*, ed. Charles Briggs (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921), 11; John H. Walton, *Job*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 64–67; Pope likens the satan to the “secret police in Persia” who were “the eyes and ears of the king.” M. H. Pope, *Job*, AB, vol. 15 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 10. Clines recognizes a conflict between “two heavenly personalities in uneasy confrontation.” David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, WBC, vol. 17 (Waco, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 22. However, Clines does not ultimately recognize the satan as a malevolent being, but rather as a member of God’s heavenly court serving a specific function. Also Norman C. Habel, *Job*, Knox Preaching Guides (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 89. The second view is that הַשָּׂטָן is a malevolent being opposed to God, singled out as separate from the angelic hosts surrounding God’s throne. Here see Elmer B. Smick, *Job*, in vol. 4 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 843–1060; Robert Alden, *Job: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC, vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1994), 53; Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 145–48. Boyd perhaps most thoroughly and convincingly defends this position. Finally, see David Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness: The Book of Job, Essays and a New English Translation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 202. Wolfers recognizes that Satan is here singled out as entirely separate from the heavenly council. However, he then argues that Satan is “the projection of the spirit of doubt and skepticism within the complex mind of the Deity itself.”

³Walton, *Job*, 65; also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 17:20.

⁴Habel unnecessarily suggests that Yahweh’s raising the question of Job’s goodness indicates “that the Satan may be verbalizing Yahweh’s own latent misapprehensions.” Habel, *Job*, 89.

⁵*Pace* Longman, who describes the accuser’s role as “a spy in God’s service.”

Job, and this leads to Satan's accusation that Job is only blameless because God has poured his blessings upon him (1:10).

It is in response to Satan's accusation that God permits him to chastise Job. In a whirlwind of devastation Job loses his wealth and livelihood, his ten children in a horrific storm, and then he is incapacitated by devastating health problems. Each of these calamities take place in response to Satan's continued accusation that Job is only blameless because God has withheld certain tragedies from him. The last time Satan is mentioned by name in Job is when Yahweh allows him to strike Job physically.

The book of Job is rightly considered to be a theodicy in which the author grapples with the fairness of God amid tragedy.⁶ The enemy is clearly Satan, who accuses God's people in the presence of Yahweh. However, the answer to this problem of evil in Job is not simply that there is a malevolent being who does wicked things in the lives of good people, but rather that God as creator is in control of all things and is just in all his ways. It is also important to note that Satan directly questions the validity of what God has spoken.⁷ Whereas God said that Job was blameless and righteous, Satan suggested he is only so because of the gain it has afforded him. Perhaps Day is correct in her assessment that “The satan is not accusing Job, or at least not directly. He is attacking the problem at its source, by

Longman, *Job*, 52, 83.

⁶So Alden, *Job*, 40–41; Pope, *Job*, xv; Driver and Gary, *The Book of Job*, li; Habel, *Job*, 60–69; contra Smick, who suggests that Job largely ignores the problem of theodicy. However, he also states, “Job thus realizes that God does not need man’s advice to control the world and that no extreme of suffering gives man the right to question God’s wisdom or justice, and on this he repents (42:2–6). On seeing the power and glory of God, Job’s rebellious attitude dissolves and his resentment disappears.” Smick, *Job*, 860. This statement seems to arrive precisely at the answer to the problem of evil in the world. It is found in dependence on and trust in the sovereign God, whose ways are beyond comprehension.

⁷It was in the garden that the enemy first called into question God’s word. Here, as in Gen 3, God allows the accuser to question his word and so test a man. See also Smick, *Job*, 860.

accusing the creator of perpetrating a perverse world order.”⁸ As Wolfers states, “The Satan’s name in Hebrew means ‘the adversary’ . . . in this book he functions as adversary not of man or Job, but of God Himself. It is to Him that he delivers his challenge . . . it is God whom he reproaches.”⁹ Satan is indeed an evil being who seeks to thwart God's purposes, yet God remains the supreme ruler of all and ultimately his plans endure.¹⁰

In Zechariah 3:1–2 Satan appears in a role similar to that which he had in Job. In this passage, Joshua is standing before the Angel of Yahweh, with Satan (שָׂטָן) on his right. This is similar to the heavenly counsel of Job in that Satan appears before the Lord as accuser (v. 1),¹¹ there are other angels present (v. 4), and

⁸Peggy Lynne Day, *Satan in the Hebrew Bible* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1987), 58; also Boyd, who states, “The satan is calling into question Yahweh’s wisdom in the way he orders his creation . . . it is not Job who is on trial here, but God.” Boyd, *God at War*, 147.

⁹Wolfers, *Deep Things out of Darkness*, 202; Angel M. Rodriguez agrees, and notes the connection between the adversary of Job and the serpent of Gen 3, stating, “In both cases, we find an adversary—the serpent, the satan—in dialogue with another person . . . but the fundamental attitude of the adversary is the same. The theological concept of a cosmic conflict is present in both, and the adversary’s primary object of attack is not Eve or Job; it is God Himself.” Angel M. Rodriguez. “Genesis and Creation in the Wisdom Literature,” in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015], 234

¹⁰Wink appears to take a sort of middle ground regarding Satan’s identity in Job. He first states that “Satan is not a fallen angel but a fully credentialed member of the heavenly court.” Later, however, Wink does attribute a sort of malevolence to Satan in Job when he says, “Satan is here . . . an agent provocateur, actively striving to coax people into crimes for which they can then be punished.” In the end, Wink misses the mark in concluding that “Satan is not evil, or demonic, or fallen, or God’s enemy . . . [he] is merely a faithful, if overzealous, servant of God.” Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 13–14. My discussion of Leviathan in Job below will explain why this assessment is likely not the case.

¹¹The Hebrew וְהַשָּׂטָן עֹמֵד עַל-יְמִינוֹ לְשׂוֹנוֹ emphasizes Satan’s active opposition to Yahweh. Kreuzer states, “In Sach 3,1 tritt ‘der Opponent’ auf, ‘um in Opposition zu treten’; diese zweifache Verwendung der selben Wurzel betont im Sinne einer Figura Etymologica die geplante Gegnerschaft. Ebenso intensiv wird שָׂטָן aber auch zurückgewiesen.” Florian Kreuzer, “Der Antagonist: Der Satan in Der Hebräischen Bibel—Eine Bekannte Größe?,” *Biblica* 86, no. 4 (2005): 539; also John Calvin, who says, “To retain the alliteration of the Hebrew, the words may be thus rendered — ‘and the opponent standing on his right hand to oppose him’ . . . The word [שָׂטָן], according to its use as a verb, participle, or a noun, means an opponent or adversary, rather than an accuser.” John Calvin, *Zechariah, Malachi: Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, trans. John Owen, Accordance ed. (Charleston, SC: BiblioLife, 2010), Zech 3:1–2n28.

God addresses Satan directly (v. 2).¹² Here, however, Satan is not even given an opportunity to speak, rather Yahweh rebukes him and affirms his choosing of Joshua as the high priest (v. 2). The Angel of Yahweh proceeds to remove the “filthy garments” from Joshua, and he states, “Behold, I have taken away your iniquity from you and have clothed you with white garments” (v. 4). These and the following verses represent Israel’s restored priesthood, which itself is “a pledge of the approach of the Messianic Kingdom.”¹³ Therefore, in this passage, Satan is the accuser who stands in the way of a restored Messianic kingdom.¹⁴ As Kreuzer states, “Setzte man die Bedeutung der Wurzel als unbekannt voraus, könnte man aus dem Kontext eine Grundbedeutung erschließen, die sich im Wortfeld von ‘in Opposition Stehen’ bzw. ‘sich in Opposition stellen’ finden ließe.”¹⁵ Thus, Chambers is correct when he states, “The force of this antanaclasis can hardly be expressed in a version—‘the opposer to oppose’ him fails to convey the force of the proper name Satan.”¹⁶

¹²So Ralph L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, WBC, vol. 32 (Waco, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 199; on the scene of the heavenly councils in ANE literature, see Min Suc Kee, “The Heavenly Council and Its Type–Scene,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31, no. 3 (March 2007): 259–73.

¹³Samuel R. Driver, *The Minor Prophets: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1906), 197.

¹⁴For an alternative understanding of Satan’s role, see Ryan E. Stokes, who argues that this and other texts actually refer to the role of *הַשָּׂטָן* as an executioner, rather than an accuser. Ryan E. Stokes, “Satan, YHWH’s Executioner,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 2 [2014]: 251–70.

¹⁵Kreuzer, “Der Antagonist,” 537. Kreuzer goes on to state, “Somit ließe sich zum Auftreten von *הַשָּׂטָן* in Sach 3 und Ijob 1–2 sagen: Im Verlauf beider Erzählungen bedarf es des Moments der Opposition. Diese wird von einer Figur verkörpert, die von Anfang an so auftritt, dass sich Fragen über ihre Existenz gar nicht erst stellen sollen. Als Bezeichnung wird deshalb ein abstrakter Titel gewählt, der als eine Art ‘Platzhalter’ lediglich die dramaturgische Rolle beschreibt: *הַשָּׂטָן* = ‘der Antagonist.’” Kreuzer recognizes the clear intention of both the author of Job and Zechariah to present Satan as the opponent of Yahweh, though he unnecessarily concludes that he is a previously unknown figure invented solely for this purpose.

¹⁶Talbot W. Chambers, *The Book of Zechariah*, in *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 14 (New York: Scribner, 1874), 35; see Kenneth L. Barker, *Zechariah*, in vol. 7 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 623. Barker seems to agree, but states, “One cannot be dogmatic, as it is sometimes difficult to determine when (or if) a common noun also began to function as a personal name.”

However, once שָׂטָן is rebuked by Yahweh, Joshua is cleansed and the restored priesthood and fulfillment of the promised Messianic kingdom commences. Here again, while not specifically stated, the text implies that Satan, present as the accuser, will question the validity of what God has said and is thus the enemy of Yahweh.¹⁷ This is clear in Yahweh's rebuke: "Yahweh, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you" (3:2). It is God himself who has chosen Jerusalem, thus Satan's accusations against her cannot stand.¹⁸

The final reference to Satan in the OT is found in 1 Chronicles 21:1, where the author states, "and then שָׂטָן stood over Israel and stirred up David to number Israel." Here the Chronicler is retelling the account of David's census found in 2 Samuel 24. The accounts are very similar except for one important difference. In the latter, it is God who, in his anger, incites David to number Israel, while in Chronicles it is שָׂטָן who provides the impetus. Several attempts have been made to reconcile this apparent discrepancy.¹⁹ One attempt postulates that the Chronicler is spinning the story in light of a later, more developed theology of Satan in an attempt

¹⁷So Boyd, *God at War*, 153; contra Tate, "Satan in the Old Testament," 464. Tate recognizes that the satan here is clearly an opponent of Joshua and the Angel of Yahweh, and perhaps Yahweh himself, yet concludes that such does not make him an enemy.

¹⁸As Barker states, "God's sovereign choice of Jerusalem in grace shows the unreasonableness of Satan's attack." Barker, *Zechariah*, 623. Also Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Exegetical Commentary* (Garland, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 2003), 121.

¹⁹See Boyd, *God at War*, 153. Boyd states, "It is obvious that the author of 1 Chronicles edited the passage in 2 Samuel to fit his own theology and purpose for writing." Also Jacob M. Myers, *I Chronicles* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1965), 147; cf. Sara Japhet, who does not discuss the purpose for which the change was made, but argues, contra Boyd and Myers, that "satan" here is simply a common noun serving as "the antithesis of Joab." Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 375. Also, see her discussion in Sara Japhet, *1 Chronik*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2002), 346–48; further, see Ryan E. Stokes ("The Devil Made David Do It . . . or Did He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1," *JBL* 128, no. 1 [2009]: 91–106. Stokes argues that the Chronicler is reading the Samuel narrative in light of the Balaam account in Num 22, and satan is a superhuman adversary meting out God's divine retribution upon Israel.

to absolve David of any blame. The presumed motive is to cast David in a positive light since the Jews have been released from exile and the promise of a Messianic King in the likeness of David is ringing in their ears. Thus, “By assigning blame to Satan, the Chronicler, in a stroke of sheer genius, is able both to preserve David’s integrity and to keep Yahweh’s reputation unblemished.”²⁰ However, there is a better way to understand this text. The Chronicler is not changing the story to suit his purposes, rather he is interpreting the words of 2 Samuel in light of his understanding of the nature of God and the role of Satan.²¹ In the words of Jim Hamilton,

The Chronicler appears to have interpreted 2 Samuel 24:1 to mean that Yahweh used Satan to accomplish his purpose as he did with Job. Yahweh did not tempt David to sin . . . Satan did, but not apart from God's ultimate purposes.²²

A few observations can be made regarding the above texts. First, while the

²⁰T. J. Wray and Gregory Mobley, *The Birth of Satan: Tracing the Devil’s Biblical Roots* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2005), 67; also Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, who say the discrepancy is “due to the Chronicler, who desired to remove the offence caused by the statement that Yahweh was the direct instigator of an act portrayed as sinful.” Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*, ICC (New York: Scribner, 1910), 246–47. Further, see discussion in Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 418–19.

²¹So Wink states, “Satan furthers God’s will by visiting wrath on disobedient mortals, and in so doing carries out the will of God.” Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 12. J. A. Thompson states, “The Samuel passages suggests that the sinful designs of Satan and David were used by the Lord as agents of his wrath,” and that the Chronicler is focusing “on the immediate rather than the ultimate cause.” J. A. Thompson, *First and Second Chronicles*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 161. John Sailhamer argues similarly that the Chronicler is not altering the Samuel text, but rather explaining it exegetically. John Sailhamer, “1 Chronicles 21:1—A Study in Inter-Biblical Interpretation,” *Trinity Journal* 10, no. 1 (1989): 33–48. Sailhamer himself argues that “satan” refers to the enemies of Israel and so God in his anger brings the enemies of Israel against them (42).

²²James M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 175; D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspective in Tension* (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 11–12; see also Boyd, *God at War*, 154. Ironically, Boyd makes a very similar argument though his view of God’s sovereignty is very different. He states, “From one perspective it was Satan who incited judgment, but from a broader perspective it was God himself.” Tate states, “We may guess that the readers of 2 Sam. 24:1 understood that Yahweh incited David through the means of a satan or other divine agent.” Tate, “Satan in the Old Testament,” 466. Tate seems to agree that the Chronicler understood שָׂטָן as the agent of Yahweh, yet, following Day (*Satan in the Hebrew Bible*, 113–32), he does not believe the term is used as a proper noun.

references to Satan discussed so far do not offer a full orbbed theology of the devil as found in the NT, there is an understanding of Satan as a being who is opposed to God and his purposes.²³ Second, Satan's goal as accuser is to thwart God's plans to bring about his promise of a Messianic kingdom to his chosen people. Finally, though Satan is opposed to God, ultimately he does not act outside of the realm of God's sovereign purposes. Indeed, Satan's mischief becomes the vehicle by which God accomplishes his plans on earth. Having discussed the direct references to Satan in the OT, there are important less direct references which likely add to the Old Testament understanding of Satan.

Genesis 3 and Satan

Another important avenue of inquiry is the account of the fall of man found in Genesis 3. Genesis 1–3 is a foundational text for the OT, and thus if the serpent of Genesis 3 is a reference to Satan, then it adds a vital piece to the puzzle.²⁴

The Genesis 3 account sets the stage for everything that follows. In Genesis 1–2, God creates the universe. It is a masterpiece which he calls good. The crowning jewel of that creation is mankind, made in the image of God, given dominion over all the rest of creation, created to walk with God. This perfect fellowship in a perfect paradise is cut short, however, by the arrival of the serpent. The serpent approaches Eve and begins to question God's command. After calling into question the validity of what God had said, the serpent proceeds to portray God

²³So Paul Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology," *Biblica* 85, no. 4 (2004): 557. Evans states, "Despite the distinction between the OT concept of Satan and that of later intertestamental literature (and the NT), יטש in Chronicles is still a malevolent figure [yet] the term is still a long way from denoting the archenemy of God."

²⁴See Richard E. Averbeck, "Ancient Near Eastern Mythography as It Relates to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible: Genesis 3 and the Cosmic Battle," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 328–56. Averbeck has suggested that Gen 3 has not been given its due attention in the cosmic battle motif found in Biblical and ANE literature. The current discussion of Gen 3 and cosmic conflict seeks to speak in some measure to this void.

as one seeking to hold something good back from his human creation. Adam and Eve eat the fruit, and immediately their eyes are opened, they realize they are naked, and their fellowship with God is broken. Important for the present discussion is God's judgment and promise found in Genesis 3:15. After pronouncing judgment on both Adam and Eve, God turns to the serpent and says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed, he will crush your head and you will bruise his heel." This passages contains the promise of the future demise of the evil introduced by the serpent in the garden. This demise is accomplished by the absolute defeat of the serpent by the offspring of the very woman who failed to reject the serpent's temptation.

But what is the significance of this account? Perhaps it is just a story intended to explain certain difficult aspects of life, such as the difficulties of manual labor, child bearing, or even why the serpent crawls on its belly.²⁵ Indeed, Tate dismisses the notion that this text refers at all to the devil of later literature as "not justifiable on an exegetical basis."²⁶ While the text of Genesis 3 does not explicitly identify the serpent with Satan or any other demonic being, there are good reasons to draw such a conclusion from the text.²⁷ First, while the serpent is compared to the animal kingdom, it is not explicitly identified as a natural creature. Indeed, the serpent is set apart in several significant ways. First, it "was more crafty than all of

²⁵So Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed., OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 92–93; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, vol. 1, trans. J. J. Scullion, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 258–61; for an in–depth discussion of serpent language in Jewish literature, see R. S. Hendel, "Serpent," in *DDD*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 744–747.

²⁶Tate, "Satan in the Old Testament," 466.

²⁷Against Karen R. Joines, "Serpent in Gen 3," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 87, no. 1 (1975): 8–10. Joines states, "The serpent of Gen. 3 is no satan." While Joines seems to suggest that the serpent is an embodiment of evil, she also calls the serpent "completely neutral" and even argues the serpent desired the good of mankind. Joines' overreliance on ANE literature seems to muddy her argument regarding the serpent's nature.

the beasts which Yahweh had made” (3:1).²⁸ The craftiness which is utilized in the deception of Eve indicates that this creature does not fit into the category of “good” with the rest of God’s creation.²⁹ Second, the serpent’s ability to speak and reason sets it apart from the other beasts which God had made.³⁰ Further, the nature of the serpent’s actions clearly presents it as an enemy of God, which again differentiates it from the rest of God’s creatures. Thus, the enmity created between the serpent and the offspring of Eve seems to transcend that of the mere conflict between people and snakes. As Boyd notes, “Crawling on one’s belly and eating dust (something snakes do not do) were idiomatic ways of referring to defeat and humiliation in ancient Semitic culture.”³¹ Finally, if the OT is read as a canonical whole, there is much more to the story of the serpent in the garden than merely an explanation of the behavior of snakes. While a full treatment of the relationship of Genesis 3:15 to the OT is beyond what may be accomplished here, a summary of the concept is beneficial to the purpose of this dissertation.

The Battle of the Seeds

The Battle of the Seeds refers to the enmity placed between the serpent

²⁸So Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 9; see Santiago García-Jalón de la Lama, “Génesis 3,1–6: Era La Serpiente La Más Astuta Alimaña Que Dios Hizo,” *Scripta Theologica* 38, no. 2 (May 2006): 425–44. He notes that עָרִים is used twice in Job and is negative in both contexts, thus in Job 5:12 it is said that Yahweh “breaks the thoughts of the עָרִים.”

²⁹*Pace* García-Jalón de la Lama, who argues that this craftiness does not indicate a lack of goodness in the snake: “En este sentido, que en Gn 3, 1 se califique de «astuta» a la serpiente no entraña, en principio, ningún juicio negativo. Ni la concesión de esta cualidad compromete la bondad de Dios. Sólo hace que la serpiente tenga la capacidad” (“Génesis 3,1–6,” 437).

³⁰Smith believes the craftiness and reasoning abilities of the snake should be read against the backdrop of Mesopotamian Ophiomancy. Duane E. Smith, “The Divining Snake: Reading Genesis 3 in the Context of Mesopotamian Ophiomancy,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, no. 1 (2015): 31–49.

³¹Boyd, *God at War*, 157. Boyd also argues based on ANE sources that serpent language often referred to demonic activity and thus reading Gen 3 this way fits its historical context.

and the seed of woman in Genesis 3:15, which has been widely recognized to refer to God's ultimate victory over the serpent through his Messiah.³² This conflict is graphically portrayed throughout the OT.³³ The battle ensues with Cain and Abel, where God warns Cain that "evil is crouching at your door" (Gen 4:7), yet Cain gave into this evil and therefore was "of the Evil One" (τοῦ πονηροῦ; cf. 1 John 3:12).³⁴ As Minear suggests, "Cain's murder of his brother Abel was a dramatic initial example of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent."³⁵ Genesis 6 contrasts the godly line of Seth ("sons of God") and the wicked line of Cain, even as the two lines merge through procreation.³⁶ This results in a spiraling of mankind into sin to the point that God is sorry he created them and he sends judgment to

³²While this interpretation has been favored throughout much of its interpretive history, many modern commentators have disputed it. See discussion in John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Scribner, 1910), 80–81. Skinner notes its favorable interpretation throughout church history, yet himself rejects the Messianic reading. For a brief but convincing defense of the Messianic interpretation, see Walter R. Wifall, "Gen 3:15: A Protevangelium?" *CBQ* 36, no. 3 (July 1974): 361–65; also see Thomas R. Schreiner, "Editorial: Foundations for Faith," *SBJT* 5, no. 3 (2001): 2–3; James M. Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3: 15," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30–55; further see Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 45–46. Hamilton argues robustly for a Messianic reading, then states, "For these reasons I believe that any reflection of Gen. 3:15 that fails to underscore the Messianic emphasis of the verse is guilty of a serious exegetical error" (46).

³³*Pace* von Rad (*Genesis*, 90, 102) and Rolf Rendtorff (*The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* [Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2005], 15), who have both argued that the theme of the fall is not present in the Old Testament.

³⁴Boyd notes that scholars have argued that the reference to evil crouching is meant to be a demonic reference. Boyd, *God at War*, 82. See also, M. K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 88; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, 2nd ed., AB, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 29, 33.

³⁵Paul Sevier Minear, "Far as the Curse Is Found: The Point of Revelation 12:15–16," *Novum Testamentum* 33, no. 1a (January 1991): 74; also Kenneth A. Mathews states, "The adversary wins the first battle when Cain yields to sin and murders the woman's seed, Abel." Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1996), 246. For an in-depth discussion of the connections between Adam's sin and Cain's sin, see Matthew T. Powell, "The Serpent Absent: Reading the Second Story of Sin," *The Living Pulpit* 18, no. 4 (October 2009): 1–3.

³⁶Another possible interpretation of this text is that the "sons of God" are fallen angels who had intercourse with women, thus producing wicked men whom God eventually destroyed in the flood. Either interpretation represents a continued conflict between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent.

wipe them out. By sparing Noah and his family, God confirms the Adamic covenant (Gen 6:5–8). Sadly, humanity rebels against God revealing that its heart is evil continually. Thus, at Babel, humanity strives to make a name for itself and in essence be like God. As in the garden, God thwarts evil’s apparent triumph by confusing language and scattering humanity across the globe (Gen 11:9).³⁷ God then chooses one man to be a blessing to the whole world. Abraham is a new Adam, and God promises to reverse the curses of Genesis 3:15 through Abraham and his offspring.³⁸ This promise is reiterated to Isaac (Gen 26:3–4) and to Jacob (Gen 18:14–15; 35:12–13), yet its accomplishment is not without obstacles. These obstacles culminate in the attempted murder of Jacob’s son Joseph by his brothers, who decide to sell him into slavery. Yet God providentially elevates Joseph to second in command over Egypt, and sovereignly brings Jacob and his entire family into Egypt for protection. Thus, Joseph can say to his brothers: “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today” (Gen 50:20). Therefore, in the Egyptian sojourn the seed of the woman is miraculously preserved but also multiplied.

However, the seed again is threatened when a new Pharaoh enslaves the Israelites, treats them harshly, and fearing their numbers, attempts to stamp out the seed of woman by killing all Israel’s newborn males.³⁹ Though the promised

³⁷See John Sailhamer. *Genesis–Numbers*, in vol. 2 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 104. Sailhamer notes that the people moved eastward to build Babel, which is reminiscent of the movement East of the garden by Adam and Eve, as well as Cain. Gordon J. Wenham notes a further connection to Gen 3 in God’s response to the people’s sin. He states, “The structure (note the introductory הן ‘since’ and ועתה ‘now’) and sentiments closely resemble 3:22, “Since man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, now lest he reach out . . . and live forever.” Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC, vol. 1 (Dallas: Word Books, 1986), 240.

³⁸For a robust defense of this interpretation, see James M. Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253; also Kenneth A. Mathews, “Genesis,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture*, ed. Brian S. Rosner et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 143; also see Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 10–11.

³⁹So Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 247.

offspring is once again threatened, God raises up Moses to liberate the people of God from the hands of the Egyptians. God demonstrates his absolute power when he hardens Pharaoh's heart and he demonstrates his authority over Egypt's so called gods by bringing them all to naught. In bringing Israel out of Egypt and delivering them from the clutches of Pharaoh, who in Ezekiel is called "the great dragon" (τὸν δράκοντα τὸν μέγαν; Ezek 29:3 LXX), Yahweh proves his covenant faithfulness, though the Israelites continually sin against their creator. Israel finally enters the promised land under the leadership of Joshua and, in a sense, the land promise is fulfilled (Josh 11:23); yet Israel continues its rebellion and a pattern of sin, repentance, and deliverance emerges.

Israel in the land is parallel to Adam in Eden. They are a stiff-necked people who continually fall into idol worship and go after the false gods of the nations until God raises up a king in the land. The first king, Saul, assumes the role of the serpent when he attempts to kill the true king, David. Yet God preserves David and raises him up as a king who follows after the ways of Yahweh. David is presented as a new Abraham and a new Adam.⁴⁰ As in Genesis 3:15, David's seed will endure forever (Ps 89:35–37) and David and his sons will crush their enemies beneath their feet (Ps 89:10, 23; 2 Sam 22:37–44).⁴¹ In a sense the covenant with Abraham is fulfilled and in David an eternal dynasty is established. However, David is an imperfect king and he also falls into sin; and so there are promises of a new David (Hos 3:5; Mic 5:2–4, etc.).

David's son Solomon seems to be that ruler. He is given incredible wisdom, Judah and Israel are multiplied by as many as the sand by the sea, and they

⁴⁰So Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 176.

⁴¹Several scholars connect these texts with the promise of Gen 3:15. See Wifall, "Gen 3," 363; Schreiner, "Editorial," 3; Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman," 31; see also discussion in Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 143–44.

were happy (1 Kgs 4:20). A temple is built and there is unrivaled peace and prosperity in the land of Israel; however, it all breaks down when Solomon falls into sin, Israel is exiled into Assyria in 722 BC, and Judah is exiled into Babylon in 586 BC. Though the prophets speak of a new covenant, a new David, and a new exodus, there seems to be little hope and the serpent again seems to have triumphed over the seed. Even when there is a return from exile under Ezra and Nehemiah, Israel continues to be under foreign powers, and in 63 BC Israel is subject to the mightiest of these foreign powers, Rome. In conclusion, it is not an exaggeration to say that “Every sin and transgression, every act of ingratitude and rebellion, which had brought these dire calamities on the nation, were the instigations of the Adversary; all demonstrations of his eternal enmity against the God of heaven.”⁴²

Summary. Woven through the OT is the thread of the conflict which began in Genesis 3:15. While some have argued that Genesis 3 is scarcely represented throughout the OT, this seems to arise from a certain word study fallacy which ignores the fact that biblical writers often prefer to allude to previous accounts through concepts and themes rather than precise wording.⁴³ When one recognizes this, many thematic and conceptual links from Genesis 3 woven throughout the OT emerge, forming consistent thread which tells the story of cosmic conflict between the seed of the woman and the serpent.⁴⁴ Averbeck is insightful at this point:

The fact of the matter is that there is more to the serpent in Genesis 3 than has

⁴²Hollis Read, *The Footprints of Satan: Or, the Devil in History, or The God of This World* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1873), 66.

⁴³Hamilton states, “Too much biblical theology has fallen prey to the word–study fallacy and has failed to see that themes can be developed with synonymous terms.” Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 77.

⁴⁴See discussion in Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 245–48. Mathews notes that both the seed language and the conflict language of Gen 3:15 take on a programmatic significance. On the one hand, “Chapter 3’s oracle implies a hope for the human family,” and on the other hand “the strife between the elect line and the cursed” is envisioned beginning with Cain and Abel and culminating in the defeat of Pharaoh.

generally been recognized . . . the theme of a cosmic battle between God and a serpentine monster bent on evil and destruction was alive and well in ancient Israel. The narrative in Genesis 3 is relatively subtle as compared to some of the poetic texts, but to the Israelites the message was anything but subtle precisely because of their awareness of the theme and its significance for their understanding of their God . . . the prose narrative account in Genesis 3 makes full use of this mythological background in the sense that the writer depends on the readers' (or hearers') awareness of it as it is expressed in biblical and/or extrabiblical intertextual parallels.⁴⁵

The present study differs with Averbeck in arguing that the serpent of Genesis 3, as well as other serpent figures, such as Leviathan, ultimately point to Satan, God's arch enemy. As Pinero notes, "The devil appears associated with the adversities and misfortunes of men represented by the protoplastoi."⁴⁶ As the OT narrative ends, it appears as though the serpent has the upper hand, and it is within this context that Matthew begins his gospel. However, before discussing cosmic conflict in Matthew's gospel, there is another angle which may shed light on Satan in the OT literature, namely, the great dragon, Leviathan.

Leviathan as Satan

Much discussion has taken place concerning the ever elusive "Leviathan" of Isaiah 27:1. Is it a symbol of chaos, evil, specific nations, kings, or an hyperbolic crocodile? Several positions have been championed, and valid points raised. Perhaps, however, there is a way to integrate various viewpoints, while taking into account the canonical nature of Scripture. With this in mind, I argue that Leviathan is not merely a symbol of chaos, evil, or nations/kings, but that its ultimate referent is Satan himself, who is the force behind world chaos and those who stand against the purposes of Yahweh. Such an understanding springs from the broader context of cosmic combat in the Bible outlined above. The argument begins with an

⁴⁵Averbeck, "Ancient Near Eastern Mythography," 88–89.

⁴⁶A. Pinero, "Angels and Demons in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve," *JSAJ* 24, no. 2 (December 1993): 206.

examination of Isaiah 27:1–6 and its relationship to Genesis 1–3, which is followed by discussions of Leviathan elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

Isaiah 27:1–6 and Genesis 1–3. Isaiah 27 should not be interpreted without regard for its context within the book of Isaiah. Isaiah might be properly summarized as a book of judgment and salvation. It begins with a detailed account of Israel's apostasy (Isa. 1:1–6:13), followed by the judgment that will result (6–12), as well as God's subsequent judgment on many evil nations for the wicked intentions of their heart (13–23). Chapters 24–27, often referred to as “the little apocalypse,” not only describe God's final judgment on the entire world (24:1), but also his defeat of evil powers (27:1) and salvation for his people (27:6).⁴⁷ A brief discussion of these four chapters will prove beneficial before addressing Leviathan.

Chapter 24 commences an exhaustive description of what appears to be final judgment. The whole earth will be laid waste and made desolate with no distinction among the peoples, who will be scattered (vv. 1–3).⁴⁸ Verse 5 gives us the reason: “For the earth is polluted under those who dwell in it; for they have disregarded the laws, transgressed the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.” Thus, “a curse (אֵלֶּה) consumes the earth and those who dwell in it are punishable due to their guilt (אָשָׁם); therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are consumed by wrath, and the men left are few” (v. 6). The phrase “everlasting covenant” reminds the reader of the “everlasting covenant” God made with Noah never to destroy the earth with a flood; this connection is strengthened by the language of the

⁴⁷J. Todd Hibbard, *Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27: The Reuse and Evocation of Earlier Texts and Traditions* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 37.

⁴⁸The author here appears to recall the early chapters of Genesis, particularly the scattering of the people at Babel (Gen 11:19). So Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, in vol. 6 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 151–52.

destruction and pollution of the earth.⁴⁹

However, there are several reasons to consider the possibility that Isaiah's thought goes back even further to the initial covenant transgression of Adam.⁵⁰ First, while God declared the heavens and the earth to be good at creation, through Isaiah he declares the earth to be "defiled" (הִנָּף). Second, in Genesis, Adam did what God had "commanded" him not to do, and in Isaiah, the inhabitants of the earth have "transgressed" God's "laws" and "statutes." Third, in Genesis 3:16, the ground is "cursed" (אָרַר) because of Adam's transgression, and in Isaiah a "curse" (אִלְהָה) devours the earth because of the guilt of its inhabitants. Not only is the land subject to curse because of Adam's sin, but also humanity itself suffers from the curse (3:19). Similarly, in Isaiah, the inhabitants of the earth suffer punishment and are consumed by wrath because of their guilt (24:6). These parallels indicate that Isaiah is reaching back to Genesis 3 and describing the universal results of Adam's rebellion.⁵¹ It is interesting that in the midst of describing judgment Isaiah erupts into shouts of praise to God (24:14–16a). Verse 14 begins, "They lift up their voices." Then verses 14b–16a describe a universal chorus of praise from the west, the east, the "coastlands of the sea," and "from the ends of the earth." It seems here that Isaiah is describing a reversal of the effects of the curse pronounced at the fall. Thus, while Adam's sin results in the judgments described thus far, Isaiah points to the hope that God's original purpose that Adam would multiply and fill the earth will still be fulfilled.

⁴⁹So John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, rev. ed., WBC, vol. 24 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 379–80; Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 175; Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 183; Daniel R. Streett, "As It Was in the Days of Noah: The Prophets' Typological Interpretation of Noah's Flood," *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 1 (September 2007): 42–43.

⁵⁰For a persuasive argument for a covenant at creation, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical–Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2012), 19–22.

⁵¹See similar argumentation in Grogan, *Isaiah*, 152.

Again, the text turns to judgment, and this alternating pattern of judgment and praise continues through chapter 26.⁵²

Though a detailed exegesis of Isaiah 27:1–6 is beyond the scope of this dissertation, some important points should be underscored. The phrase “in that day” is used 66 times in the Hebrew Bible, and 42 of them occur in Isaiah. In prophetic literature, and particularly in Isaiah, it seems to take on a special function, pointing to a future cataclysmic event of apocalyptic and eschatological significance.⁵³ As Sweeney states, “With Isaiah 27, this theme becomes the climax of God’s universal judgment and restoration in the so-called Isaiah Apocalypse.”⁵⁴ Isaiah ties this event to the destruction of a mysterious creature named Leviathan. Several interpretations have been advanced regarding the identity of Leviathan, ranging from a mere marine animal to a symbolic reference to the enemies of God and Israel, or even a representation of the chaos that existed before creation itself.⁵⁵ While the idea of Leviathan as hyperbolic of some marine animal is less likely, each of the alternate positions has merit; however, one should be cautious in attempting to “tie Leviathan down to one particular referent.”⁵⁶ Thus, while there is a good deal of evidence

⁵²As Grogan states, “One feature of chapters 24–27 [is that] declarations of coming judgment are interspersed with songs of thanksgiving.” Grogan, *Isaiah*, 153.

⁵³Young states, “That day is the day of punishment, the day when Yahweh will visit His punishment upon all His enemies. The phrase, therefore, is eschatological.” Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 232.

⁵⁴Marvin A. Sweeney, “Textual Citations in Isaiah 24–27: Toward an Understanding of the Redactional Function of Chapters 24–27 in the Book of Isaiah,” *JBL* 107, no. 1 (1988): 50.

⁵⁵For Leviathan as marine animal, see G. S. Cansdale, “Animals of the Bible” in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. I. Howard Marshall, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 196–98; Jonathan Fisher and Mary Ellen Chase, *Scripture Animals: A Natural History of the Living Creatures Named in the Bible* (Princeton, NJ: Pyne Press, 1972), 294; for Leviathan as Israel’s national enemies, see Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 234; for Leviathan as a symbol of chaos, see B. Doyle, *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24–27* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), 328; John Day, “God and Leviathan in Isaiah 27:1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155, no. 620 (October 1998): 423–36; David J. A. Clines, “Job,” in *New Bible Commentary*, ed. Gordon J. Wenham et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 482.

⁵⁶Donald C. Polaski, *Authorizing an End: The Isaiah Apocalypse and*

supporting both the ideas that Leviathan represents Israel's enemies as well as chaos, both pre-cosmic and throughout history, neither of these ideas provides a sufficient solution to the question.⁵⁷ In fact, it is more likely that Leviathan represents that one creature who is behind all chaos and opposition to God and his people, namely, Satan.⁵⁸ Indeed, after the description of Yahweh's judgment and overthrow of the wicked nations, it is likely that this cataclysmic battle with Leviathan describes nothing less than the overthrow of the evil behind all nations that oppose Yahweh.⁵⁹ As Kaiser notes, "Behind 26.20f we saw Yahweh's judgment upon the nations; and it follows . . . that after the incarnations of evil the evil itself must be conquered, and that God has to destroy the last enemy, if 'that day' is really to bring the final turning point in history."⁶⁰ Such an understanding encapsulates each of the above interpretations, for who ultimately brings chaos and evil within God's creation but Satan? And who is the ultimate power behind those world powers that continually attempt to stamp out God's promised seed if not the serpent himself?⁶¹

Intertextuality, Biblical Interpretation Series 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 290.

⁵⁷For a fascinating and insightful discussion of Leviathan, see Boyd, *God at War*, 93–113. Boyd argues convincingly that Leviathan, as well as other monster imagery, refers to demonic forces opposed to Yahweh which are manifest in the chaos before creation and throughout history.

⁵⁸So Day, who states, "This enemy functions typologically, so that the principle locus of the prophecy is the eschaton and the enemy Satan." Day, "God and Leviathan in Isaiah 27," 434. However, Day only interprets Leviathan in Isaiah 27:1 as a reference to Satan, while in Job he is chaos and elsewhere he is Egypt and Babylon (436). Calvin argues that Leviathan immediately represents Egypt, but ultimately Satan. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, trans. William Pringle, Accordance ed. (Charleston, SC: BiblioLife, 2010).

⁵⁹So Young, who argues, "The prophet is teaching that enemies of all kinds, those who belong to the heights and those who belong to the depths as well as those that live in the most inaccessible places will suffer the punitive judgment of God. Wherever the spirit of opposition to God has appeared, in whatever kingdom it may be, there God will show himself victorious." Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 235.

⁶⁰Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 179.

⁶¹Jennings states, "It is the antitypical leviathan behind the systems that express, in opposite ways, the antagonism of the devil to Christ . . . it is he to who is behind the world empires that have oppressed Israel . . . He the devil is leviathan, the dragon or serpent."⁶¹F. C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 318–20.

Further, it should be noted how the current passage relates to Genesis 1–3. Indeed, the parallels, present on both a thematic and textual level, are striking.⁶² On a thematic level, Genesis 1–2 focuses on the theme of creation, while in Isaiah 27:1–6 the focus is new creation. While a major theme in Genesis 3 is the curse Adam and Eve received because of their disobedience, Isaiah highlights Yahweh's removal of the curse. The theme of cosmic combat permeates the story of the fall of man, culminating in the serpent's victory. Isaiah 27:1 presents a clear parallel when Yahweh, in an apocalyptic eschatological climax, defeats the serpent and achieves the final victory, thereby reversing the initial curse and victory of the enemy.

The textual parallels are even more impressive.⁶³ In Genesis 3, it is the “serpent” (נחש) that is more crafty than all the other animals, and thus approaches Eve and instigates the fall. In Genesis 3:14, God speaks directly to the serpent when he speaks of the “enmity” (איבה) between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; it is due to the serpent's treachery that cosmic combat is foretold (Gen 3:15). In Isaiah 27:1, it is foretold that Yahweh himself will “punish” (יפקד) the “serpent” (נחש). In Genesis, God put Adam in the garden to “work” (עבד) and to “keep” (שמר) it (2:15), while in Isaiah 27:3, it is Yahweh himself who will “keep” (נצר) it. The curse in Genesis 3 results in “thorns” (קוץ) and “thistles” (דרדר), while in Isaiah 27:4, Yahweh's vineyard is without “thorns” (שמיר) or “briars” (שית). In Genesis 3, it is because Adam ate the fruit “from the tree” that the ground was cursed, while in Isaiah 27:6 Jacob will “take root” and “fill the whole world with fruit.” In Genesis 3:15, the seed of woman will “crush” (שוף) the head of the serpent, and in Isaiah, Yahweh will “slay” (הרג) the dragon.

⁶²For an exhaustive and helpful discussion of intertextuality as it relates to the serpent/Leviathan motif, see Elaine A. Phillips, “Serpent Intertexts: Tantalizing Twists in the Tales,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10, no. 2 (2000): 233–45.

⁶³For a discussion of the textual parallels between Gen 3 and Isa 27:1–4, see Averbeck, “Ancient Near Eastern Mythography,” 352. In his article, Averbeck argues convincingly for the cosmic conflict motif in Gen 3 and its connection to Isa 27.

Finally, there are several parallels between the language of Isaiah 27:1–6 and Genesis 1–2. First, the eschatological phrase “in that day” (ביום) echoes the continual repetition of “day” in the creation account. Second, in Isaiah 27:3, Yahweh keeps the vineyard “night and day” (לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם) and in Genesis 1:5, God names the “Day” (יום) and the “Night” (לילה). Third, in Isaiah 27:3, Yahweh “causes [his vineyard] to drink” (שקה), and in Genesis 2:6, Yahweh “causes [the ground] to drink” (שקה). Fourth, Isaiah describes the vineyard as “pleasant” (חמד) in verse 2, and in Genesis 2:9, the trees of the Garden of Eden are “pleasant (חמד) to the sight.” Finally, the description of Israel in 27:6, which states she will “blossom” and “put forth shoots” and “fill the whole world with fruit,” alludes to the various descriptions of God’s original creation in Genesis 1 where he makes plants “sprout” and “spring up” and commands his creation to “be fruitful and multiply” (1:22, 28).

In conclusion, it may be confidently stated that Isaiah 24–27 is both apocalyptic and eschatological. It envisions a time of God’s final judgment upon sinful humanity when all wrongs will be made right and paradise will be restored. Also, Isaiah 27:1–6 indicates a complete reversal of the curse found in Genesis 3. It begins with a dramatic portrayal of the overthrow of the serpent (Leviathan) who tempted Eve, and then proceeds to describe the renewed creation as a vineyard kept by Yahweh himself. This renewal will be ushered in as Jacob/Israel take root and fill the whole earth with fruit. This reversal is not only seen in the intertextual connections mentioned above, but also when comparing the broad structure of the passages (see Figure 1 below). Thus, in Genesis 1–2, God creates everything good and creation is in proper relationship with him, but in Genesis 3 the serpent appears and is successful in overthrowing God’s good creation. Isaiah 27 begins with Yahweh overthrowing the serpent, and subsequently creation is set right. A visual representation of these connections might prove helpful:

Gen 1–2: Creation (עבד, שמר, יום, לילה, שקה, חמד)
Gen 3: Cosmic Battle: Serpent Victorious (נחש, איבה, שוף)
Isa 27:1: Cosmic Battle: Yahweh Victorious (נחש, יפקד, הרג)
Isa 27:2–6: Creation Renewed (נצר, שמיר, שית, יום, לילה, חמד)

Figure 1. Structural relationship between Genesis 1–3 and Isaiah 27:1–6

The first battle with the serpent resulted in the marring of creation, while the final battle results in the renewal of creation. As House states, “The one God who created history will also re–create it.”⁶⁴ The eschatological promises throughout Isaiah then hinge on Yahweh’s complete overthrow of that serpent dragon called Leviathan. Now that the connection between Isaiah 27:1–6 and Genesis 1–3 has been established, as well as the importance of the overthrow of Leviathan, the next question to ask is whether or not this idea appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

It is apparent that while Satan is specifically mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, those references do not constitute the extensive theology of the demonic found in later literature, including the NT. However, if the above understanding of Isaiah 27:1 is correct, then it might shed light on other passages which are similar in content and so help further illuminate this cosmic conflict motif woven throughout the pages of Scripture. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly examine other OT references to the Leviathan/Dragon found in Job, Psalm 74, and Psalm 104.

Leviathan in Job. God’s meeting with Satan in Job 1:6 sets the stage for all that follows. We learn from the start that Satan’s activity is not outside the realm of

⁶⁴Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 284.

God's control. The first reference to Leviathan is found in Job 3:8, where Job mourns the day he was born and wishes someone would have cursed that day and prevented his birth by awakening Leviathan.⁶⁵ Though Job is merely using poetic language to curse the day of his birth in light of the tragedies he has just experienced, his calling upon Leviathan to undo God's original creation suggests that Leviathan represents an ancient and powerful enemy of Yahweh.⁶⁶ Further, if one takes into account the canonical nature of Scripture and the discussion of Leviathan thus far, the irony in Job's statement is apparent. In Job 3:8, Job calls upon Leviathan to deliver him from the tragic circumstances which Leviathan (Satan) himself orchestrated in Job 1:6.

The next reference to Leviathan in Job is found in chapter 41 as God responds to Job. After affirming from the whirlwind the fact that he can never do wrong and demonstrating his absolute power over all of creation, Yahweh asks, "Can you pull out Leviathan with a hook or with a rope cause his tongue to sink?" He further declares "on the dust is not his likeness, the one made without fear. He sees all that is high, he is king over all the sons of pride." Leviathan is further described as spewing flaming torches from his mouth, and smoke from his nostrils (vv. 11–12). What (or who) is this beast? It seems unlikely that Yahweh is using this language to simply demonstrate his superiority over a crocodile, as some have believed.⁶⁷ While the language used here is clearly poetic, it is probably not hyperbolic. The sheer amount of time given to the description of this creature indicates the climactic nature of the passage. If the description were hyperbolic of a creature that could be

⁶⁵Duane A. Garrett, *Shepherd's Notes: Job* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1998), 325.

⁶⁶Similarly, Eric Ortlund, "The Identity of Leviathan and the Meaning of the Book of Job," *Trinity Journal* 34, no. 1 (2013): 23.

⁶⁷For example, Alden, *Job*, 400; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 17:1202; James A. Wharton, *Job* (Louisville: Westminster, 1999), 174–75; David J. Atkinson, *The Message of Job*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 151.

captured or killed by men, the passage might be somewhat anti-climactic. No, Leviathan is the final “creature” God sets before Job to demonstrate his ultimate authority, and its description defies any known animal.⁶⁸ Considering this and the previous discussion of Leviathan in Isaiah 27 and Job 3, it is best to see the description of Leviathan here as a symbolic portrayal of God’s absolute sovereignty over Satan, the serpent, who is the source of all evil, including that which Job has experienced. Thus, Job begins with an account of God’s authority over Satan and a reference to Leviathan, which Job ironically calls upon to relieve his suffering.⁶⁹ The book then ends with a dramatic description of God’s unsurpassed authority over Satan and a reference to Leviathan, the “king over all the sons of pride” (41:26). One finds “a subtle but powerful closure to the contest with which the book commenced; while Job could not restrain Leviathan, God does.”⁷⁰ Throughout the book of Job Satan has raged as the fierce Leviathan, proudly attempting to prove God wrong concerning Job, yet ultimately is reduced to utter silence as a mere tool in the hands of almighty God. In fact, Job’s account of Leviathan is “a resounding affirmation of the Lord’s complete control over Leviathan and so also over good and evil.”⁷¹

Leviathan in the Psalms: Seven-headed monster or playful beast? The first mention of Leviathan in the Psalms occurs in chapter 74:12–14:

But God my King is from old, accomplishing salvation in the midst of the earth.
You yourself shattered by your might the sea; you shattered the heads of the
dragons on the waters. You yourself crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave
him as food to the people of the desert.

⁶⁸So Garrett, *Job*, 90–91; Ortlund argues extensively for this understanding. Ortlund, “The Identity of Leviathan.”

⁶⁹For a detailed and fascinating discussion of the importance of irony in Job, see Day, *Satan in the Hebrew Bible*, 86–90.

⁷⁰Phillips, “Serpent Intertexts,” 240.

⁷¹Wolfers, *Deep Things out of Darkness*, 185.

Here the Psalter Describes God's absolute authority over evil and chaos in the world. The language could refer to God's act of creation,⁷² his deliverance of Israel from Egypt,⁷³ or his victory over all pagan kings and deities throughout history.⁷⁴ Verses 15–17 place the passage in the context of creation, yet verse 12 indicates an ongoing work of salvation wrought by God, the King. Thus, “The assumption behind 74:12 is that Yahweh, as King, gives victory to his people.”⁷⁵ It is likely then, considering the previously discussed references to Leviathan, that this text indicates God's continual demonstration of his authority over Satan and the forces of evil. The passage acknowledges Yahweh's sovereignty at creation, in Egypt, and throughout salvation history.⁷⁶ He alone is creator and his mighty acts prove that he alone is king over all his creation as they deal decisive blows to the head of Leviathan. The Psalter, like the author of Job, portrays Yahweh as absolutely sovereign, able to accomplish his purposes in spite of the ever-present activity of Leviathan, the Evil One, in the world. Thus, he continually crushes the heads of Leviathan because he is and always will be Lord over all.⁷⁷

⁷²John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 23; also Averbeck, “Ancient Near Eastern Mythography,” 342.

⁷³Plummer suggests the “heads of Leviathan” refer to the princes of Egypt. William S. Plummer, *Psalms*, Geneva Series Commentaries (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2016), 724–25.

⁷⁴VanGemeren mentions Egypt specifically but also states, “The psalmist chose the language of Canaanite mythology to celebrate Yahweh's victory over the nations.” Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 573.

⁷⁵Rebecca Sally Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of “Chaos” in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 163–64.

⁷⁶Wyatt similarly argues that in Ps 74 the crushing of Leviathan contains both ancient as well as historical elements and is ultimately tied to Yahweh's salvific redemption of his people. Nick Wyatt, *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 164–69.

⁷⁷Ramantswana sees Leviathan as an allusion to Egypt, yet argues that the conflict here refers primarily to creation. Still, he concludes, “in Ps 74, Yahweh's defeat of the primordial opponent is viewed as an act that had a salvific function, which is ground for hope that Yahweh will again defeat the contemporary political and military enemies to restore stability.” Hulisani Ramantswana, “Conflicts at Creation: Genesis 1–3 in Dialogue with the Psalter,” *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 2 (2014): 564.

In Psalm 104:24, the symbol of Leviathan is used in a different way. The entire Psalm pours forth praise to God because of his creative power. He “stretches out the heavens as a tent” (v. 2) and “set the earth on its foundations” (v. 5), “the mountains rose, the valleys sank” (v. 8), and he “made the moon to mark the seasons . . . the darkness and its night” (vv. 19–20). Verses 24–26 praise God for the creatures with which he has filled the earth. The sea “teems with creatures,” one of which is Leviathan, “which [Yahweh] formed to sport with (play in?) it.” It seems then that the point of this Psalm is to praise God for the wonder of creation and to glorify him for his authority over even the “great and wide” sea and creatures such as Leviathan.⁷⁸ Further, while in Psalm 74 God is praised for shattering the sea (יָם) by his might and crushing the heads of Leviathan, in Psalm 104 God is praised for creating the great and wide sea (יָם) and placing Leviathan within it. Day has pointed out connections between this text and that of Job 40, including verse 29, where Yahweh asks Job concerning Leviathan, “will you play with him as with a bird?”⁷⁹ This connection is significant, for, although Leviathan is a fierce monster, Yahweh’s rhetorical question suggests that he himself can “play with” the sea beast.⁸⁰ Thus, Leviathan in Psalm 104 likely functions similarly to that in Job. For such a fierce beast to be nothing but God’s plaything, which he formed and placed in the sea, demonstrates all the more his awesome power and sovereignty. Kwakkel is worth quoting here:

Verse 26b points out that even the maritime monster Leviathan is made by YHWH and is under his control . . . he has called it into being as his own toy,

⁷⁸Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 236.

⁷⁹Day, *God’s Conflict*, 73; Gert Kwakkel, “The Monster as a Toy,” in *Playing with Leviathan: Interpretation and Reception of Monsters from the Biblical World*, ed. Koert van Bekkum, Jaap Dekker, and Henk R. van den Kamp (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 77–89.

⁸⁰Also Kwakkel, who states, “The parallel [with Job 40:29] might suggest that Psalm 104:26b attributes to God the very thing that Job 40:29 denies to Job; that is, being able to play with Leviathan.” Kwakkel, “The Monster as a Toy,” 84.

“in order to play with it . . . in his dealings with Leviathan, YHWH shows his supreme power . . . By stating that YHWH has formed Leviathan to play with it, verse 26b provides a powerful argument in support of the central message of the psalm. YHWH really deserves to be served as the true God and to be praised forever.⁸¹

Therefore, one finds both similarities and differences when comparing Leviathan in Psalm 104 to that in Psalm 74 and Job 41, which, taken together, indicate that while differing aspects of Yahweh’s sovereignty are highlighted, the function of Leviathan remains the same.⁸² If this is the case, then God is praised in Psalm 74 for his ultimate defeat of chaos and the evil forces brought about by Leviathan, and God is praised in Psalm 104 for his authority over chaos and Leviathan even as part of his created order who only exist by God’s power (v. 27).⁸³

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible is most likely a symbolic reference to Satan himself, the Evil One behind all the evil throughout the earth. In Isaiah 27:1, his defeat is foretold as ushering in a renewed creation, a reversal of the curse that he wrought in Genesis 3. In Job, Satan, despite all his attempts to thwart God’s plan, is demonstrated to act within the realm of God’s sovereignty. Though he is Leviathan who brings about chaos in the world (3:8), he is yet a mere creature being led, as though writhing on a fishing hook, by God’s sovereign hand, subject to his purposes (40:25). In Psalm 74, Yahweh’s victory over Leviathan is demonstrated

⁸¹Kwakkel, “The Monster as a Toy,” 88–89. I stumbled upon Kwakkel’s reading of this text after formulating my own argument. His view is similar in that he views Leviathan as functioning similarly across all its usages in the Old Testament.

⁸²Pace Richard M. Davidson, “The Creation Theme in Psalm 104,” in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015), 168–69. Davidson argues for entirely different functions of Leviathan in these two texts, here its function being to highlight a “theology of divine play.” Also see Payne, who thinks Leviathan in Ps 104 is a whale or dolphin. J. Barton Payne, “לִיָּוִיָּתָן,” *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 476.

⁸³Day, *God’s Conflict*, 74; also E. Lipinski, “Liwyatan,” in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 504–9.

by language reminiscent of Genesis 3:15, for he “crushed the heads of Leviathan.” God’s victory over Pharaoh in Egypt, his continual salvation of his people, and that final eschatological death blow to Leviathan described in Isaiah 27:1 all demonstrate God’s sovereignty. Psalm 104 celebrates God’s authority over creation and even over the great sea and Leviathan, the ultimate symbols of chaos and evil, which are mere playthings in the hand of almighty God.

The apparent connections between Leviathan and the serpent of Genesis 3 suggest that the same great serpent deceived Adam and Eve in the garden, initiating the cosmic battle which raged throughout the OT between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Therefore, when read as a canonical whole, the OT depicts a cosmic battle between God and Satan in which, though God's ultimate victory is guaranteed via the “skull crushing seed of the woman,” it is the serpent who appears to continually have the upper hand. Boyd seems to recognize this when he states,

While [Satan] does not play a central role in the thinking of Old Testament authors, the raging cosmic sea and threatening sea monsters demonstrate an awareness, however dim, that one of the gods is particularly opposed to Yahweh’s rule.⁸⁴

This naturally leads to the discussion of this theme in Matthew's gospel; however, it is necessary to briefly highlight this motif in Jewish Literature of the Second Temple period.

Cosmic Conflict in Second Temple Literature

The period between the Old and New Testaments brings an intensification of the themes of cosmic conflict discussed so far. This is likely due to the severe oppression under foreign powers Israel faced during this time period. As Hellholm asserts, Apocalypses are “intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of

⁸⁴Boyd, *God at War*, 143.

exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority.”⁸⁵ What was a more covert presentation of demonic activity and warfare becomes overt and prolific as apocalyptic literature abounds. This section focuses on the development of a theology of cosmic conflict in Second Temple literature, focusing primarily on Jewish apocalyptic texts, as well as the Qumran documents.

Cosmic Conflict in Early Jewish Apocalypses

Angelology in this period is often complex and contradictory, and thus is a vast undertaking. An in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this project.⁸⁶ It will suffice for my purposes to focus on those texts which have likely points of reference with Matthew’s gospel, particularly those that indicate a prince or leader of demons.

⁸⁵D. Hellholm, “The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John,” in *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins, Semeia 36 (Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 27; also see discussion in John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 50–52.

⁸⁶For a helpful discussion of Apocalyptic as well as a catalogue of apocalyptic works, see J. Julius Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 181–93; many works deal with angels and demons in the literature of the Second Temple period. See James C. VanderKam, “Apocalyptic Tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Religion of Qumran,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 113–34; George A. Barton, “The Origin of the Names of Angels and Demons in the Extra-Canonical Apocalyptic Literature to 100 A.D.,” *JBL* 31, no. 4 (1912): 156–67; William Caldwell, “The Doctrine of Satan: II. Satan in Extra-Biblical Apocalyptic Literature,” *The Biblical World* 41, no. 2 (1913): 98–102; Christoph Berner, “The Four (or Seven) Archangels in the First Book of Enoch and Early Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings — Origins, Development and Reception* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 395–411; Stefan Schreiber, “The Great Opponent: The Devil in Early Jewish and Formative Christian Literature,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings — Origins, Development and Reception* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 437–57; Maxwell Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36; 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992). Several of these works as well as other helpful studies can be found in Friedrich Vinzenz Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, eds., *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings: Origins, Development and Reception*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

Tobit. According to Wahlen, “Tobit stands out as an early representative of popular demonology.”⁸⁷ In Tobit, Ἀσμοδαῖος τὸ πονηρὸν δαιμόνιον (Asmodeus the evil demon) continually visits the bedchamber of the godly woman, Sara, on her wedding night and kills her husband before the marriage is consummated (3:7).⁸⁸ We are not told what Asmodeus’ role is in the demon world, but there might be a hint that he represents the leader of demons in the articular construction τὸ πονηρὸν δαιμόνιον.⁸⁹ In the Babylonian Talmud, he is referred to as “the king of demons.”⁹⁰ As Zimmermann states, in Tobit, “The air was filled with demons, and the all-pervasive power of Asmodeus, the arch-demon.”⁹¹ In any case, it is possible that later ideas of

⁸⁷Clinton Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 30; Further, Moore states, “Here are mentioned for the first time in Scripture two supernatural creatures who will figure quite prominently in subsequent Jewish and Christian traditions: the archangel Raphael and the demon Asmodeus.” Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 40a (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 28.

⁸⁸All LXX citations, unless otherwise noted, are my own translation from Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta: Editio altera*, Accordance ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

⁸⁹However, note Beate Ego, “‘Denn Er liebt sie’ (Tob 6,15 Ms. 319) Zur Rolle des Dämons Asmodäus in der Tobit-Erzählung,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, ed. Lange Armin, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Diethard K. F. Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 309–17; J. Edward Owens, “Asmodeus: A Less than Minor Character in the Book of Tobit: A Narrative-Critical Study,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings — Origins, Development and Reception* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 277–88. Ego and Owens both argue that Asmodeus is not an evil being opposed to God, but rather a personification of things in the way of Israel’s deliverance, whether it be the personal sins of Israel (Ego) or the outward forces of chaos and death (Owens). Fröhlich suggests that Asmodeus is a “type of demon known as incubus” and is thus a further example of the type of sins committed by the demons of the Watcher accounts in Second Temple Literature. Ida Fröhlich, “Tobit Against the Background of the DSS,” in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology*, ed. Geza G. Xeravits and Jozsef Zsengeller (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 64. Further, Andrews and Pfeiffer call Raphael and Asmodeus Tobit’s “chief dramatis personae.” H. T. Andrews and Charles F. Pfeiffer, *An Introduction to the Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 38.

⁹⁰Pes. 110a reads: אמר רב יוסף אמר לי יוסף שידא אשמדאי מלכא דשידי ממונה הוא Adin Steinsaltz Even-Israel, trans., “The William Davidson digital edition of the Koren Noé Talmud, with commentary by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz Even-Israel” (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers), accessed November 27, 2017, <https://www.sefaria.org/Pesachim.110a?lang=bi>; see discussion in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 150–51.

⁹¹Frank Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*, Jewish Apocryphal Literature (New York: Harper, 1958), 28.

a prince of demons find their origin at least in part within this account. In is also noteworthy that Asmodeus meets his end when bound (δέω), and so “rendered ineffective and harmless,” in Egypt by the angel Raphael, who was sent in response to the prayers of Sara (Tob 8:3; cf. Matt 12:29).⁹²

1 Enoch. Perhaps the earliest non-canonical work of the intertestamental period to elaborate on evil angelic forces, Enoch is “the first great landmark of Jewish demonology.”⁹³ Chapters 6–16, known as the Book of the Watchers, comprise an expansion of the account of Genesis 6, where the sons of God intermarry with the daughters of men, leading to mankind's widespread rebellion. In Enoch, these sons of God are angelic beings led by Semyaza.⁹⁴ They say to one another, “Come, let us choose wives for ourselves from among the daughters of men and beget us children” (6:2).⁹⁵ These angels then taught mankind all kinds of wickedness to the point that

⁹²Fitzmyer, *Tobit*. Moore states, “The demon was incapacitated.” Note also Raphael similarly “binds” Azazel in *1 Enoch* 10:4 (see discussion below). Moore, *Tobit*, 40a: 237. Zimmermann suggests that the folk theme which has contributed to the formation of *Tobit* is that of “the Dragon Slayer,” with Asmodeus being the dragon slain. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*, 7–11. Note Bede’s allegorical reading: “While restrained from snatching away the faithful [the devil] is allowed by this Lord and redeemer of ours to have dominion over unbelievers.” S. J. Voicu, ed., *Apocrypha*, ACCSOT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 21.

⁹³Elaine H. Pagels, “The Social History of Satan, the ‘Intimate Enemy’: A Preliminary Sketch,” *Harvard Theological Review* 84, no. 2 (April 1991): 116; also VanderKam, “Apocalyptic Tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 122; Knibb states, “The Book of Watchers, dating from the end of the third-century B.C.E., is the oldest Jewish apocalypse that we possess.” Michael A. Knibb, “The Ethiopic Book of Enoch in Recent Research,” in *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 2411. Nickelsburg states, “Traditions collected in *1 Enoch* were composed between the fourth-century B.C.E. and the turn of the Common Era.” George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 1:1.

⁹⁴For a helpful discussion of the name Semyaza, see Siam Bhayro, “The Shemihazah and Asael Narrative of *1 Enoch* 6–11: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary with Reference to Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Antecedents,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 39, no. 3 (2008): 233–35. Bhayro concludes that the name means “Sem of Mount Hazzi [which] is where the angels descended” (22–23).

⁹⁵All citations from the Pseudepigrapha are from James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 2 vols (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011).

Michael and the other angels “observed carefully from the sky and they saw much blood being shed upon the earth” and so cry out “you see what Azaz'el has done; how he has taught all (forms of) oppression upon the earth” (9:1–6).⁹⁶ God then binds Azaz'el and casts him into prison until “the great day of judgment” (10:4–7; cf. Matt 12:29; Jude 6). Further, chapter 40 indicates that demons play a role in accusing those who are on the earth (40:7).

Satan is first mentioned in *1 Enoch* 41:9, where he appears to be the leader of the demons: “Surely neither an angel nor Satan has the power to hinder; for there is a judge to all of them.” In chapters 53 and 54, the victory of the Messiah, or Elect One, over the powers of evil is described. First Enoch 53:4 describes the place of judgment reserved for the wicked: “So I saw all the angels of plague co-operating and preparing all the chains of Satan.” Further, 54:5–6 contains a similar description: “And he said to me, 'These [chains] are being prepared for the armies of Azaz'el . . . so that the Lord of the Spirits may take vengeance on them . . . as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell upon the earth.’” Thus, in *1 Enoch* there seems to be a development of the identity of the leader of the demonic hosts, from Semyaza to Azaz'el.⁹⁷ Azaz'el is then referenced synonymously alongside Satan.⁹⁸ Regarding each of these, Sacchi states, “[this head ‘Satan’ figure] is the first

⁹⁶In contrast to Gen 6, the Enoch account intends to take the blame off of humans and place it upon angelic beings. See discussion in Bhayro, “The Shemihazah and Asael Narrative,” 25–28; also Helge S. Kvanvig, “Cosmic Laws and Cosmic Imbalance: Wisdom, Myth and Apocalyptic in Early Enochic Writings,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 156–57; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 40–41; George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth in *1 Enoch* 6–11,” *JBL* 96, no. 3 (1977): 386.

⁹⁷Nickelsburg explains this development by positing that chapters 6–11 of *1 Enoch* preserve an older story about Semyaza, and that material concerning Azaz'el was later interpolated. Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth.” Similarly Pagels, “The Social History of Satan,” 116–17.

⁹⁸Nickelsburg and VanderKam argue that Satan occurs here “as an evident synonym for the arch-demon, Azazel, under whose tutelage his hosts lead humanity astray.” George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch: Chapters 37–82*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 196.

dim image of the devil” found in Jewish literature.⁹⁹ In chapter 69, the names and misdeeds of fallen angels are listed. Verse 6 states, “The third was named Gader'el . . . who mislead Eve.” Another reference pertinent to the present work is the mention of Leviathan in *1 Enoch* 60, which states, “On that day, two monsters will be parted—one monster, a female named Leviathan . . . and (the other), a male called Behemoth” (60:7–8). We find in verse 24 that these two monsters will be served as food at the great eschatological banquet.¹⁰⁰ Finally, the Enoch Animal Apocalypse (1:85–90) describes the history of Israel in cosmic terms, as a falling of demonic beings who interfere with humanity and are then bound by the archangels until the final judgment.¹⁰¹ While the topic of angels and demons in the Enochian literature is complex, Nickelsburg sums it up nicely: “From the complex of roles emerges a picture of God the heavenly King, who administers the world through an immense array of agents, whose roles and activities imitate a variety of models.”¹⁰²

The book of Jubilees. In the book of *Jubilees*, the author seems to be grappling with the question of why so many Jews have turned from the true God.¹⁰³

⁹⁹In light of the discussion above, I would argue that *1 Enoch* begins to make more explicit the “dim image” found in the Old Testament literature.

¹⁰⁰See discussion in Nickelsburg and VanderKam (*1 Enoch* 2, 239–42). Ultimately they see a future banquet here despite certain textual difficulties.

¹⁰¹As Davila states, “The Animal Apocalypse sees human evil as originating in angelic rebellion.” James R. Davila, “The Animal Apocalypse and Daniel,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 35.

¹⁰²Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 44. Also, Isaac states, “Old Testament ideas and stories . . . are interpreted, elaborated, and presented through the paradigm of apocalyptic dualism wherein sharp distinctions are drawn between the opposing cosmic powers of good and evil.” E. Isaac, (“I [Ethiopic Apocalypse of] Enoch: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 9.

¹⁰³See VanderKam, “Apocalyptic Tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 125; John J. Collins, “Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 32–33. VanderKam and Collins both suggest that *Jubilees* should probably not be considered of the Apocalyptic genre. Nevertheless, there is enough apocalyptic material contained therein to warrant the present discussion.

As Pagels notes, the author turns to internal conflicts within the Jewish community “instigated by that most intimate of enemies . . . here most often called Mastema (“hatred”), Satan, or Belial.”¹⁰⁴ The Book of the Watchers in *1 Enoch* finds a parallel in *Jubilees* 5:1–11, which describes similar events. *Jubilees* 10 introduces שמטמ, the “chief of the spirits” (10:8) who led the children of Noah’s sons astray (10:1).¹⁰⁵ Henten argues that the name שמטמ is etymologically related to שטן, which refers to “one who is adverse” or “hostile.”¹⁰⁶ Caldwell also states, “This word Mastema is the equivalent of Satan etymologically and functionally.”¹⁰⁷ Mastema in *Jubilees* is parallel in some respects to Satan in the book of Job, for he challenges God to test Abraham’s faithfulness in a way that seems unjust (*Jub.* 17:16–18).¹⁰⁸ In *Jubilees*, שמטמ is subservient to God’s will in much the same way that Satan is in the book of Job (*Jub.* 10:8–9).¹⁰⁹ Similarly, in Matthew’s Gospel Jesus commands Satan to flee his presence and Satan obeys, and the demons recognize Jesus’ authority and ask to be cast into the pigs rather than face the torment Jesus could inflict (4:11; 8:28–32).

¹⁰⁴Pagels, “The Social History of Satan,” 121; also see her discussion in Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, 53; also see James VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees* (London: A&C Black, 2001), 127. Also Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*, trans. Batya Rabin and Chaim Rabin (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 232–34. Yadin argues that Mastema is not a proper name but rather “must be taken as describing the characteristic actions of Belial” (233).

¹⁰⁵Note in 19:28 that Abraham, in his blessing over Jacob, states, “And may the spirit of Mastema not rule over you or over your seed in order to remove you from following the Lord who is your God henceforth and forever.”

¹⁰⁶J. W. van Henten, “Mastemah,” in *DDD*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 553.

¹⁰⁷Caldwell, “The Doctrine of Satan,” 100; also George Herbert Box, “Introduction to the Book of Jubilees,” in *The Book of Jubilees: Or The Little Genesis*, trans. R. H. Charles (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), xxvi.

¹⁰⁸Huizenga notes several verbal and theological connections between *Jubilees* and Job. Leroy Andrew Huizenga, “The Battle for Isaac: Exploring the Composition and Function of the Aqedah in the Book of Jubilees,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13, no. 1 (April 2002): 38–39.

¹⁰⁹In light of this, Hanneken unnecessarily concludes that Mastema is “no enemy of God” but simply a servant of God carrying out his will in judging the nations and punishing Israel. Todd R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 77–78.

Jubilees soon tells us what has been apparent regarding the identity of שמטמ: “And we [righteous angels] acted in accord with all of His words. All of the evil ones, who were cruel, we bound in the place of judgment, but a tenth of them we let remain so that they might be subject to Satan upon the earth” (10:11).¹¹⁰ Thus, as VanderKam states, “We find in *Jubilees* extensive retellings of the stories in Genesis in which angels and demons are given a much more prominent role, particularly in those offending passages in which God tempts, hardens, or slays.”¹¹¹ Thus, “Mastema becomes the agent of actions that Genesis and Exodus had attributed to God but that *Jubilees* . . . viewed to be unfitting of a supremely benevolent God.”¹¹² In *Jubilees*, Mastema both leads Israel astray, providing a way for the author to reinterpret the more offending portions of Israel’s history, as well as rules over the nations as the prince of demons (15:29–34).¹¹³ In this role he very much resembles the figure of Satan found in Job, as well as in the Gospel accounts.¹¹⁴ Therefore, whether or not one concludes that Mastema, or other leading demonic figures in Second Temple literature, are equivalent to Satan, it can be confidently asserted that

¹¹⁰So Armin Lange, “SATANIC VERSES: The Adversary in the Qumran Manuscripts and Elsewhere,” *Revue de Qumran* 24, no. 1 (June 2009): 45; also Pagels, “The Social History of Satan,” 121. Note also in 15:33 the same individual seems to be equated with Beliar.

¹¹¹So it is Mastema who hardens Pharaoh, attempts to kill Moses, and incites Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 127; also Caldwell, “The Doctrine of Satan,” 100. Mastema is also behind the magic of the magicians and incites the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites (48:1–19).

¹¹²Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses*, 78.

¹¹³Hanneken also notes this dual function of Mastema in *Jubilees*. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses*, 77.

¹¹⁴Conversely, Hanneken argues there is no Satanic figure in the book of *Jubilees*. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses*, 81–82. Kugel perceives Mastema as “clearly hostile to God.” James L. Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 198. VanderKam sees Mastema as the leader of the forces of evil allied against God. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 43; 131.

“The roots of the New Testament ‘Satan’ can be located . . . in the data from the DSS.”¹¹⁵

Wisdom of Solomon and 2 Enoch. The Wisdom of Solomon, though not technically an apocalypse, was the first Jewish work of this period to identify Satan with the serpent of the Garden of Eden, saying “For God created man unto immortality . . . but in envy the devil (δίαβολου) brought death into the world” (2:23–24).¹¹⁶ In *2 Enoch* the same identification is made of Satan, who is also called the devil:

And the devil understood how I wished to create another world . . . And he will become a demon, because he fled from heaven; Satona, because his name was Satanail. And he became aware of his condemnation . . . And that is why he thought up the scheme against Adam. In such a form he entered paradise, and corrupted Eve (31:3–6).¹¹⁷

Second Enoch also speaks of an archangel seeking to place his throne “higher than the clouds” being “hurled out from the height, together with his angels” (29:4–5).¹¹⁸ While Satan is not explicitly mentioned, a secondary heading in P does

¹¹⁵Bennie H. Reynolds, “Understanding the Demonologies of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Accomplishments and Directions for the Future,” *Religion Compass* 7, no. 4 (April 2013): 108. Reynolds further states, “Even if Satan does not exist in any of the DSS, the theological and metaphysical building blocks for Satan are prominently on display” (109). I would argue, in light of the discussion above, that the roots for Satan are actually firmly planted in the OT, which are further elaborated in the DSS.

¹¹⁶So John P. Weisengoff, “Death and Immortality in the Book of Wisdom,” *CBQ* 3, no. 2 (April 1941): 104–33; John J. Collins, “Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age,” *Theological Studies* 60, no. 1 (1999): 148; Anoushavant Tanielian, *Archbishop Nerses Lambronac’i’s Commentary on Wisdom of Solomon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 43. While the name “Satan” is not used here, the LXX often translates ἰψ as διάβολος (1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6–7, 9, 12; 2:1–4, 6–7), and this is likely the intended meaning here. Pace Zurawski, who attempts to argue against the majority of scholars that διάβολος here does not refer to the devil and that the entire account does not refer to the fall of Gen 3. Jason M. Zurawski, “Separating the Devil from the Diabolos: A Fresh Reading of Wisdom of Solomon 2.24,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21, no. 4 (June 1, 2012): 366–99. Translation from David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 43 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979).

¹¹⁷See discussion in Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski, *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 443–44. They note the connection of Eve’s sin with that of the Watcher tradition.

¹¹⁸See discussion on the rebellion of Satan in 2 Enoch in Orlov, Boccaccini, and Zurawski, *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, 93–94; Orlov further notes that Satan’s fall was a result of his pride in refusing to bow down to the protoplast (Adam). Andrei A. Orlov, “On

identify this angel as “Satanail.”¹¹⁹ Further, Michael Stone argues convincingly that in *2 Enoch* 21, when God brings Enoch before the angelic hosts, and invites him to “stand in front of the face of the Lord forever” (21:3), he is testing them to see whether they will respond in jealousy as did Satan, or in obedience.¹²⁰ So Viallant insightfully quips, “Les Glorieux ne sont pas, comme Satan, jaloux de l'honneur que le Seigneur fait a un homme.”¹²¹

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Regarding demonology in general, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* echoes Enoch's understanding of the Watchers (*T. Reu.* 5:6; *T. Naph.* 3:5).¹²² It also presents a robust demonology of “the spirits of deceit” which are seven spirits who move throughout the earth influencing humanity (*T. Reu.* 2:1; *T. Jud.* 23:1–2; *T. Iss.* 7:7).¹²³ Most important for the present work are the references in the *T. 12 Patri.* to Satan. In 5 instances, the direct transliteration of the name Satan is utilized.¹²⁴ In *T. Dan* 3:6 the spirit of anger “μετὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ σατανᾶ πορεύεται (moves with falsehood out of the right

the Polemical Nature of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch: A Reply to C. Böttrich,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 34, no. 3 (2003): 286.

¹¹⁹See discussion James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 1:149n29f, h, i.

¹²⁰Michael E. Stone, “The Fall of Satan and Adam’s Penance,” in *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays*, ed. Gary Anderson, Michael E. Stone, and Johannes Tromp (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 47; also Gary Anderson, “The Exaltation of Adam and the Fall of Satan,” in *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays*, ed. Michael E. Stone, Johannes Tromp, and Gary Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 100–101.

¹²¹André Vaillant, *Le Livre des Secrets d’Enoch* (Paris: Le Jardin des Livres, 2005), 25n16.

¹²²See notes on the Watcher tradition in these texts in H. W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, eds., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 103, 307–8.

¹²³See discussion in Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 19–20.

¹²⁴Hollander and Jonge further note that “in all cases, he is the leader of one or more evil spirits.” Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments*, 49.

hand of Satan).¹²⁵ *T. Dan* 5:5–6 reads, “To the extent that you fall away from the Lord, you will live by every wickedness . . . and in all wickedness the spirits of deceit working in you. For I read in the Book of Enoch the Righteous that ὁ ἄρχων ὑμῶν ἐστὶν ὁ σατανᾶς (your ruler is Satan).”¹²⁶ Chapter 6 exhorts, “And now fear the Lord, my children, καὶ προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ καὶ τῶν πνευμάτων αὐτοῦ (and keep yourselves from Satan and his spirits; 6:1). In *T. Gad* 4:7 it is “by Satan” (τῷ σατανᾷ) that the “spirit of hatred works in all.” And finally, *T. Ash.* 6:4, speaking of the righteousness found in the commandments of God, says “For the end of men shows forth their righteousness, knowing the angels of the Lord and of Satan.”¹²⁷

The most common name given to Satan in *T. 12 Patri.* is Beliar (sometimes Belial).¹²⁸ In *T. Reub.* 2:2, the “spirits of deceit” are sent “against men from Beliar.” Thus, Beliar is considered a ruler or prince among evil spirits (cf. *T. Levi* 3:3; *T. Iss.* 7:7; *T. Dan* 1:7; *T. Ben.* 3:2). Beliar also tempts mankind to sin (*T. Reub.* 4:7, 11; 6:3; *T. Sim.* 5:3; *T. Ash.* 1:8, 3:2; *T. Jos.* 7:4; *T. Ben.* 3:4, 6:1, 7, 7:1–2). In spite of the evil activity of Beliar, *T. Levi* 18:10–12 speaks of a time when Paradise will be restored:

And he will open the doors of paradise, and he will stay the sword threatened against Adam; and he will give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and the Spirit of holiness will be upon them and Beliar will be bound by him, and he will give authority to his children to trample on the evil spirits.¹²⁹

¹²⁵All citations from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are my own translation from Marinus de Jonge et al., eds., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

¹²⁶See note on Satan and his spirits in Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments*, 287.

¹²⁷Here Charlesworth reads “Beliar” rather than “Satan.” Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:818. This is most likely a textual emendation due to the prolific use of Beliar to refer to the prince of demons in the *T. 12 Patri.*

¹²⁸Recall *Jubilees* 15:33, which appears to equate Azazel, who is also called Satan, with Beliar.

¹²⁹Cf. *T. Zeb.* 9:8: “And after these things the Lord himself will rise upon you, the light of righteousness, with healing and compassion in his wings. He will ransom every captive of the sons of men from Beliar, and every spirit of deceit will be trampled upon.”

Chapter 19 says, “And now, my children, you have heard everything; therefore, choose for yourselves either the darkness or the light, the law of the Lord or the works of Beliar” (19:1). Here, Beliar is in conflict with the Lord, and people are called to choose a side.¹³⁰ This clear division of power is found throughout the *T. 12 Patri.* (*T. Sim.* 5:3; *T. Jud.* 20:1–2; *T. Iss.* 6:1–2, 7:7; *T. Naph.* 2:6; *T. Ash.* 6:4; *T. Dan* 4:7, 5:1; *T. Jos.* 20:2; *T. Ben.* 3:8).¹³¹ Also in this passage, and pertinent to Matthew's gospel, is the association of the Spirit of Holiness with the binding of Beliar, and the promise that those who side with the light receive that Spirit.¹³² In *T. Dan* there is a prophecy in which one from the tribe of Judah will make war against Beliar.¹³³ Jonge provides an apt summary of the *T. 12 Patri.*, saying, “The struggle between Israel and its enemies assumes cosmic proportions; it is a struggle between the servants of God and the powers of Satan.”¹³⁴

Apocalypse of Abraham. Azazel features prominently in the *Apocalypse of Abraham's* demonology. He first appears in chapter 13 as an “impure bird” and is responsible for swooping down upon the carcasses of Abraham’s sacrifice (13:2–6; cf. Gen 15:11). We see in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* that Azazel has willingly traded his original heavenly abode for earth, and has authority over all those who desire evil, yet is powerless against the righteous (*Apoc. Ab.* 13:7–8, 10–11; 23:13).¹³⁵ In

¹³⁰Also Wahlen, who rightly asserts that this “Cosmic dualism underlies the Testaments’ ethical dualism.” Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 52.

¹³¹So Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 20.

¹³²So Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments*, 181–83.

¹³³See *T. Dan* 5:10–11: “And there shall arise among you from the tribe of Judah and of Levi the salvation of the Lord and he will make war against Beliar and he will take the captives from Beliar, the souls of the saints, and he will turn disobedient hearts to the Lord, and he will give eternal peace to those who call upon him.”

¹³⁴Marinus De Jonge, *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Text and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 246n1; also Aleksander R. Michalak, *Angels as Warriors in Late Second Temple Jewish Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 183.

¹³⁵So Kenneth R. Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.*

Apoc. Ab. 14:5, Yahoel, Abraham’s pteromorphic angelic guide, provides the following incantation to use against Azazel: “Say to him, ‘May you be the firebrand of the furnace of the earth! Go, Azazel, into the untrodden parts of the earth.’”¹³⁶ Present here is the apparently common tradition, also evident in *1 Enoch* 10, that Azazel’s final destination is a fiery abyss.¹³⁷ It is also possible that the author draws upon the scapegoat tradition of Yom Kippur, where the angel Yahoel functions as a heavenly high priest and Azazel is the scapegoat on which Israel’s sins are placed.¹³⁸

Further, in chapter 23, Azazel is described as a serpent-like figure who deceived Adam and Eve in the garden:

And I looked into the picture, and my eyes ran to the side of the Garden of Eden, and I saw there a man very great in height and terrible in breadth, incomparable in aspect, entwined with a woman who was also equal to the man in aspect and size. And they were standing under a tree of Eden, and the fruit of this tree was like the appearance of a bunch of grapes of the vine. And behind the tree was standing (something) like a dragon in form, but having hands and feet like a man’s, and on his back six wings on the right and six on the left. And he was holding the grapes of the tree and feeding them to the two I saw entwined with each other. And I said, “who are these . . . who is between them, and what is the fruit which they are eating” And he said, “this is Adam and this is Eve. And he who is between them is the impiety of their behavior unto perdition, Azazel himself.” (23:1–12)¹³⁹

70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 258–59.

¹³⁶For a discussion of the tendency of the Abraham Apocalypse toward pteromorphic descriptions of angels, see Andrei A. Orlov, “The Pteromorphic Angelology of the Apocalypse of Abraham,” *CBQ* 71, no. 4 (October 2009): 830–42.

¹³⁷We see this tradition also in the New Testament gospels, where Satan and his demons will be consigned to *γέεννα* to for all eternity. George Herbert Box and J. I. Landsman argue that “according to the peculiar representation of our Apocalypse, Azazel is himself the fire of Hell.” George Herbert Box and J. I. Landsman, *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), xxvi.

¹³⁸For a fascinating discussion of this connection, see Andrei A. Orlov, *Divine Scapegoats: Demonic Mimesis in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2015), 16–74. Orlov further argues for a connection between the scapegoat traditions and the early Jewish traditions regarding the “first” Messiah, which would be a sort of polemic against the notion of Jesus as the true Messiah, connecting him rather with the false Messiah, Azazel, who is a distraction for the heathen until the true Messiah arrives.

¹³⁹For the possible influence of Enochian literature on this apocalypse, see Orlov, “Pteromorphic Angelology,” 836–39.

The author of this Slavonic apocalypse identifies the fallen angel Azazel with the serpent of Genesis 3, also identified as Satan, Satanael, and the evil angel.¹⁴⁰

Apocalypse of Moses. In the *Apocalypse of Moses*, the Greek version of *The Life of Adam and Eve*,¹⁴¹ Satan is referred to in three ways. He is called Διάβολος (15:3; 16:1–2:5; 17:4; 21:3), which is common in Second Temple texts due to the LXX rendering of the Hebrew term יָצָן.¹⁴² He is also referred to as Σατανάς in 17:1. Finally, he is called ὁ ἐχθρός (2:4; 7:2; 15:1; 25:4; 28:3), which is common in the Qumran documents and appears in the Gospel accounts as well (Matt 13:24–28; Luke 10:19).

The *Apocalypse of Moses* begins with an account of the death of Abel, in which “the enemy” (ὁ ἐχθρός) seduces Cain to kill Abel (*Apoc. Mos.* 2:4). Adam and Eve are promised another son, Seth, who is born as a replacement for Abel. The story then transitions to Adam falling sick, which raises the question of the origin of sickness and death.¹⁴³ Eve then recounts to all their children her and Adam’s deception in the garden of Eden. In this account, Satan first comes to the snake, tempting him to be the vessel by which he could deceive Adam. The reason for his hostility toward Adam is revealed in the Latin version of the account, where Satan’s

¹⁴⁰Jones states, “A vision of the fall of Adam and Eve, under the influence of Azazel, prompts Abraham to ask God that perennial question of apocalyptic: Why does God allow Azazel (who is synonymous with Satan, Satanael, or the evil angel) to have dominion over men.” Jones, *Jewish Reactions*, 249.

¹⁴¹For an overview of the textual traditions as well as the history of research regarding the Life of Adam and Eve, see Wanda Zemler-Cizewski, “The Apocryphal Life of Adam and Eve: Recent Scholarly Work,” *Anglican Theological Review* 86, no. 4 (September 2004): 671–77; Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, Early Judaism and Its Literature 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

¹⁴²So Pinero, “Angels and Demons,” 203.

¹⁴³See discussion in Michael D. Eldridge, *Dying Adam with His Multiethnic Family: Understanding the Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 16 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 202. Eldridge notes that “The entire plot turns on where the protagonists are situated in relation to Paradise.”

fall is recalled. In this account Satan explains to Adam that God commanded all the angels to “worship you in the sight of God” and so Michael commanded all the angels to “worship the image of God,” and when Satan refused due to his envy and pride, he was cast out of heaven (*L.A.E.* 15:1–2).¹⁴⁴ Satan chose the serpent as his instrument because of his craftiness and because he was cast out because of Adam (*Apoc. Mos.* 16:3). Three points should be noted regarding Satan in this work. First, it was envy of the worship Adam received from angels, as well his prideful refusal to do the same, that led to the fall and subsequent temptation of Adam.¹⁴⁵ Second, Satan does not approach Eve in the form of a serpent but rather convinces a serpent to tempt the woman.¹⁴⁶ Finally, Satan, also called the devil, is clearly the leader of the rebellious angelic hosts. No other name is given to him throughout the Books of Adam.

Cosmic Conflict in Qumran Literature

The Qumran documents have much to say about spiritual forces and cosmic combat. This discussion will focus on 3 primary texts which provide a glimpse into its apocalyptic worldview. These texts include the Damascus Document (CD), the Rule of the Community (1QS), and the War Scroll (1QM). Within these texts certain motifs emerge which provide a window into the apocalyptic thought of the Qumran community. Most notable is the dualistic framework in which good and evil oppose one another.¹⁴⁷ This framework portrays a ruler of the evil realm and a

¹⁴⁴A similar account is found also in the Armenian and Georgian versions as well as in the *Cave of Treasures*. See discussion in Eldridge, *Dying Adam*, 23–24.

¹⁴⁵While the *Apoc. Mos.* does not contain this account specifically, it hints at it in 16:3 when Satan says to his hosts, “Arise, let us cause him to be expelled from Paradise, *just as we were expelled because of him*” (emphasis mine). Also Stone, “The Fall of Satan and Adam’s Penance,” 54–56.

¹⁴⁶Eldridge, *Dying Adam*, 228.

¹⁴⁷So Reynolds, “Demonologies,” 106.

chief prince of that which is good. Also present are hints of an eschatological end in which good triumphs over evil.¹⁴⁸

The Damascus Document. The Damascus Document sets forth the laws governing the sectarian community at Qumran. Its two main sections include the Admonition (1:1–8:19) and the Laws (9:1–16:20). The admonition begins as the author recounts the history of Israel’s rebellion, with a view to “make plain to you the ways of the wicked” (2:2–3).¹⁴⁹ Foundational to CD is the idea that there are two peoples, the remnant of God, whom he calls by name and who are always upon the earth, and those he has rejected and so “caused to stray” (2:11–13). The ones who have strayed were led by their “sinful urge” (יצר אשמה) and “went about in their willful heart” (2:16–17). This process of following the sinful urge began when the “guardian angels of heaven fell and were ensnared by it” which led to a long line of humans going astray (2:17–3:12). These are contrasted with the “chosen of Israel, the ones called by name, who are to appear in the Last Days” (4:4).

The author elaborates on the sinful urge of Israel, indicating that there is a deeper spiritual force behind it:

But in the present age Belial is unrestrained in Israel, just as God said by Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, saying, “Fear and pit and snare are upon thee, dweller in the land” (Isaiah 24:17). The true meaning of this verse concerns the three traps of Belial about which Levi son of Jacob said that Belial would catch Israel in, so he directed them toward three kinds of righteousness (4:13–17).

According to CD, the sins of Israel find their origin in the schemes of a

¹⁴⁸For discussions of eschatology in the DSS, see Michael A. Knibb, “Eschatology and Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 327–51; Philip R. Davies, “Dualism and Eschatology in the Qumran War Scroll,” *Vetus Testamentum* 28, no. 1 (January 1978): 28–36.

¹⁴⁹All Qumran citations, unless otherwise noted, are from Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg, Jr., and Edward M. Cook, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New English Translation*, Accordance ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 2005).

powerful, deluding force named Belial.¹⁵⁰ Thus, CD 12:1 states, “Everyone who is controlled by the spirits of Belial and who advises apostasy will receive the same verdict as the necromancer and the medium.” As will be shown, Belial is the preferred name for the Satan figure throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹⁵¹ We see further in CD that there is a contrast between the Prince of Lights and Belial, the prince of darkness: “For in times past Moses and Aaron stood in the power of the Prince of Lights and Belial raised up Yannes and his brother in his cunning when seeking to do evil to Israel the first time” (5:18).¹⁵² CD 8:1 indicates that those who were not true to the covenant in Israel were “handed over to the sword . . . condemned to destruction by Belial” (cf. 19:14). Thus, as evidenced in the Damascus document, behind the wickedness in the world and the sinful actions of Israel is the prince of darkness, Belial, who ensnares people with his cunning and destroys them when they stray.¹⁵³ Belial is further contrasted with the Prince of Lights to whom belong the remnant of God.

The Rule of the Community. The Rule of the Community introduces the time of the dominion of Belial which to the Qumran sect was the present.¹⁵⁴ The law

¹⁵⁰Qimron calls Belial “evil personified, as in 1Sam 2:12.” Elisha Qimron and James H. Charlesworth, *Rule of the Community and Related Documents*, in vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 19n36.

¹⁵¹In his study of Belial in the DSS, Yadin concludes, “The sect’s name for this angel was Belial and that all the other names are simply titles describing his character and actions.” Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 234.

¹⁵²See Daniel R. Schwartz and Joseph M. Baumgarten, *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents*, in vol. 1 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 15n14. It is interesting that Schwartz draws the comparison between this text and the “Treatise on the Two Spirits” in 1QS, but then states, “But our passage has no corresponding teaching about cosmic spirits.” However, he recognizes the parallel here between the Prince of Lights and the Angel of Darkness found in 1QS 3:20–21. It seems likely that here we do see a teaching about cosmic spirits implied at the very least.

¹⁵³So Ryan E. Stokes, “The Origin of Sin in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 53, no. 1 (September 2010): 62–63.

¹⁵⁴So Davidson, *Angels at Qumran*, 165.

given are for “regulating their actions during the time of Belial’s dominion” (1QS 2:19).¹⁵⁵ Chapters 1–3 deal with entry into the covenant community. The document gives the procedures for those being inducted into the covenant, while pronouncing damnation on those “foreordained to Belial” (1QS 2:4). During all the “days of Belial’s dominion” the people of the community are to be evaluated that “each may know his proper standing in the Yahad of God” (1QS 2:19–23). The Rule of the Community continues with what is commonly known as the Treatise on the Two Spirits (1QS 3:13–4:26), which discusses two ways in which people may walk, the way of truth and the way of falsehood. It is here that “The fundamental dualism of the Community is presented.”¹⁵⁶ We read in 1QS 3:17–22:

[God] created humankind to rule over the world, appointing for them two spirits in which to walk until the time ordained for His visitation. These are the spirits of truth and falsehood. Upright character and fate originate with the Habitation of Light; perverse, with the Fountain of Darkness. The authority of the Prince of Light extends to the governance of all righteous people; therefore, they walk in the paths of light. Correspondingly, the authority of the Angel of Darkness embraces the governance of all wicked people, so they walk in the paths of darkness. The authority of the Angel of Darkness further extends to the corruption of all the righteous.

The Treatise here contains a creation account of sorts, where the creation of humanity and the ways in which they may walk are revealed. Stokes notes the terminological connections between this account and the creation account in Genesis, including the language of “creation,” “light,” “darkness,” and “*toledoth*.” While the text is not based solely on an exegesis of Genesis 1–2, it is apparent that the view of creation, good, and evil found in the Treatise is in part found in this text.¹⁵⁷ It is likely then that the Angel of Darkness is a reference to the Satan figure

¹⁵⁵Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 232–33.

¹⁵⁶Qimron and Charlesworth, *Rule of the Community*, 2:15n56.

¹⁵⁷So Stokes, “The Origin of Sin in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 64; also A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, New Testament Library (London: S.C.M. Press, 1966), 148.

of Genesis 3, the “cosmic adversary,” named Belial in the Treatise.¹⁵⁸ The document goes on to state: “Moreover, all the afflictions of the righteous, and every trial in its season, occur because of this Angel’s diabolic rule. All the spirits allied with him share but a single resolve: to cause the Sons of Light to stumble (1QS 3:23–24).”

Finally, the Treatise ends by acknowledging that it is in God’s sovereign wisdom that these two spirits exist:

All the hosts of humanity, generation by generation, are heirs to these spiritual divisions, walking according to their ways; the outworking of every deed inheres in these divisions according to each person’s spiritual heritage, whether great or small, for every age of eternity. God has appointed these spirits as equals until the last age, and set an everlasting enmity between their divisions. (1QS 4:15–17)¹⁵⁹

So von Weissenburg rightly state, “The rule of Belial, which is the present reality for the Qumran movement, will last only as long as God allows it to continue. . . . The dominion of evil forces, and how long it lasts, is predetermined by God in his wisdom.”¹⁶⁰

In chapter 10, the author indicates that Angel of Darkness, who is over the way, or spirit, of destruction is Belial. In 10:20–21, as part of a pledge to the path of righteousness, the covenant members are to neither love nor comfort any who “rebel against the Way” for to do so would be “to give refuge to Belial.”¹⁶¹ And so, like in CD, the Rule of the Community separates the world into two camps, one being the remnant chosen by God who follow the Prince of Lights, and the second being those rejected by God, who follow the Angel of Darkness, Belial. As Stokes states,

¹⁵⁸Leaney states, “He is no doubt the same as Beliar . . . or Belial . . . His other names are well-known, Satan and Mastema. Like Satan he is the cosmic adversary.” Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran*, 149.

¹⁵⁹For a discussion of the tension between the dualism of Qumran and their belief in a supreme God, see Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran*, 44–45.

¹⁶⁰Hanne von Weissenberg, “God(s), Angels, and Demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Charlotte Hempel and George J. Brooke (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 494.

¹⁶¹Leaney states, “The author will entertain no secret hankering to join the world and to use worldly means to gain even divine ends.” Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran*, 249.

Whatever the precise meaning of "spirits" in this text, the Treatise clearly teaches that there is a superhuman dimension to the conflict between good and evil and that this conflict is played out to some degree within the human heart.¹⁶²

The War Scroll. The War Scroll, known commonly as 1QM, describes the eschatological victory of the sons of light over the sons of darkness.¹⁶³ While it clearly contains apocalyptic elements, Duhaime's understanding of 1QM as an "eschatological rule" of war seems an accurate description of its genre.¹⁶⁴ In 1QM 1:1, the work is summarized as follows: "For the Instructor, the Rule of the War. The beginning¹⁶⁵ of the dominion of the Sons of Light shall be undertaken against the forces¹⁶⁶ of the Sons of Darkness, the army of Belial."

The document describes elements and events leading up to the final war, including preliminary battles (1:1–15; 2:6–15; 9:10–19), ritual observance (1:16–2:6), articles of warfare (2:16–5:2), the deployment and equipment of the army (5:3–6:17), ritual and piety observed by soldiers, the priests and Levites, and the High Priest (7:1–9:9; 10:1–8), prayers of the High Priest and leaders (10:8–14:18). It concludes with a description of the final battle (15:1–17:16),¹⁶⁷ followed by a recounting of the final, decisive encounter (18:1–8), and its aftermath, including prayers of

¹⁶²Stokes, "The Origin of Sin in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 65.

¹⁶³Disagreement exists as to the genre of 1QM. It has long been considered an apocalyptic work, but such an understanding has recently been criticized primarily due to the lack of a revelatory element which is widely considered definitional of the apocalyptic genre. For example, see Mathias Delcor, "Livre de La Guerre", in Art. 'Qumran,'" *Supplément Au Dictionnaire de La Bible* 9 (1978): 929; see further discussion in Jean Duhaime, *The War Texts: 1QM and Related Manuscripts*, Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 6 (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 53–60.

¹⁶⁴Duhaime, *The War Texts*, 61.

¹⁶⁵Yadin argues that this word has a temporal sense as well as "of the most important" and so "The enemies enumerated here are the principle ones." Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 256.

¹⁶⁶Or "lot," referring to a preordained group (see discussion in Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 256).

¹⁶⁷For a detailed discussion of the battle sequence, see Brian Schultz, *Conquering the World: The War Scroll (1QM) Reconsidered*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 76 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 314–17.

thanksgiving (18:10–19:14).¹⁶⁸

As verse 1 of the War Scroll indicates, the major theme of the document revolves around the final battle of good versus evil. The sons of light are the elect of God, their commander-in-chief, and the sons of darkness follow the one who leads the armies against God, namely, Belial. Chapter 1 describes the results of this final battle: “Then there shall be a time of salvation for the People of God, and time of dominion for all the men of His forces, and eternal annihilation for all the forces of Belial . . . There shall be no survivors of all Sons of Darkness (1QM 1:5–7).”

Subsequent descriptions of the battle portray the dualistic worldview of the War Scroll as it is ultimately God warring against Belial. Verses 14–15 read, “In the seventh lot the great hand of God shall overcome Belial and all the angels of his dominion, and all the men of his forces shall be destroyed forever.” Chapter 4:1–2 further reads, “On the banner of the thousand they shall write, ‘The Anger of God is loosed against Belial and all the men of his forces without remnant.’” In the prayers of the priests, Levites, and all the elders they are to bless the God of Israel and “curse Belial and all the spirits of his forces . . . for his contentious purpose . . . and guilty dominion” (13:1–4). This contrast is continued in 13:10–11, which states,

You appointed the Prince of Light from of old to assist us, for in His lot are all sons of righteousness and all spirits of truth are in his dominion. You yourself made Belial for the pit, an angel of malevolence, his dominion is in darkness and his counsel is to condemn and convict.

This reference to the Prince of Light, likely referring to Michael the archangel mentioned in 17:6–8,¹⁶⁹ makes it clear that this is not a battle of equals since Belial

¹⁶⁸Duhaime notes that the text for this prayer, found at the bottom of column 19, is now lost. He surmises that the War Scroll likely ends with this prayer and a “description of the return to Jerusalem for a triumphal celebration of victory.” Duhaime, *The War Texts*, 20.

¹⁶⁹So Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 322; Collins states, “The identification with Michael is significant. It shows that the War Scroll is adapting the tradition of Daniel and attempting to correlate the dualism of the Treatise . . . with established Jewish traditions.” John J. Collins, “Powers in Heaven: God, Gods, and Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids:

was created by God to serve his sovereign purpose.¹⁷⁰

The remainder of the document describes the final battle and its aftermath. We learn that God himself will finally “remove Belial to his place of destruction (Abaddon)” (15:16–17). Further, 17:5–6 states that “today is his appointed time to subdue and humiliate the prince of the realm of wickedness” (cf. Matt 12:22–29). Chapter 18:1–8 describes the final of seven battles, in which God decisively overthrows Belial. It reads,

And in the seventh lot, when the great hand of God shall be lifted up against Belial and against all the forces of his dominion for an eternal slaughter . . . and the shout of the holy ones when they pursue Assyria. Then the sons of Japheth shall fall, never to rise again, and the Kittim shall be crushed without remnant and survivor. So the God of Israel shall raise His hand against the whole multitude of Belial. (18:1–3)¹⁷¹

Thus, in the War Scroll, as in the Qumran literature examined above, there is present a clear dualistic framework in which the people of God war against the people of the Prince of Darkness, also known as Belial.¹⁷² Ultimately, however, “Belial and his multitude cannot drive the Sons of Light away from God’s covenant.

Eerdmans, 2000), 17–18.

¹⁷⁰So John J. Collins, “Mythology of Holy War in Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll: A Point of Transition in Jewish Apocalyptic,” *Vetus Testamentum* 25, no. 3 (July 1975): 608. Collins argues that the War Scroll possesses at least some form of Persian influence in that the sides of light and darkness are on equal footing until the very end. Whether we grant Persian influence, Collins is correct that in the War Scroll Belial “has an equal power with Michael up to the time when God intervenes.” For a rebuttal of Collins’ argument, see Davies, “Dualism and Eschatology.”

¹⁷¹See discussion of “Kittim” in Philip R. Davies, *IQM, the War Scroll from Qumran: Its Structure and History*, *Biblica et Orientalia* 32 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977), 89. Davies suggests that the Kittim are the Romans, “the human counterpart of the dominion of Belial.”

¹⁷²For a full discussion of the dualism of 1QM, see Davies, “Dualism and Eschatology”; also Davies, *IQM, the War Scroll from Qumran*, 68; Collins calls the dualism of Qumran a “qualified dualism” in which the world is divided between “two evenly balanced forces subject to the ultimate authority of one God.” Collins, “Powers in Heaven,” 17. This assessment is correct to a point. What should be emphasized is that one side is fighting for Yahweh and thus is destined for victory. The Prince of Darkness and his minions will fall to the Prince of Light in the end. See also Annette Stuedel, “Der Teufel in den Texten aus Qumran,” in *Apokalyptik und Qumran*, ed. Jörg Frey and Michael Becker, Einblicke 10 (Paderborn, Germany: Bonifatius, 2007), 191–200. Stuedel agrees with Collins, calling the dualism of Qumran a relative dualism since Belial is always subject to God.

Instead, the evil ones are brought low, slain, and devoured by the mighty hand of God (1QM 14:9, 15; 17:5–6; 18:1–3).¹⁷³

Summary and Conclusion

Second Temple literature brings within it an eruption of texts concerning the demonic realm and cosmic conflict between good and evil. Throughout the early Jewish apocalypses as well as the Qumran literature, demons are active in the lives of humans, seeking to entice humanity to transgress God's law and do evil. Also evident throughout the literature is the presence of a leader of the demonic realm, whose sole purpose is to incite mankind against Yahweh, the God of Israel. Thus, there is a cosmic dualism of good versus evil, and ultimately God verses the prince of darkness, known by various names, including Mastema, Satan, and Belial.¹⁷⁴ Boyd notes the importance of reading the New Testament in light the intertestamental literature. Particularly regarding the fact that "in this present age their conviction was that Satan had stolen the world."¹⁷⁵ Thus, as Collins concludes, "The evidence of the scrolls . . . reminds us that both Jewish and Christian traditions had common

¹⁷³Jean Duhaime, "War Scroll: Introduction," in *Damascus Document, War Scroll and Related Documents*, vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 86.

¹⁷⁴So Annette Steudel, "God and Belial," in *Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20–25, 1997* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, in collaboration with The Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2000), 332–40; Theodore J. Lewis, "Belial," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Philip S. Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 331–53; Weissenberg, "God(s), Angels, and Demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls." For a complete catalogue of the various names of the leader of the demonic realm with references, see Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 24; however, Dimant argues that Belial and Mastema are two different entities in the Qumran literature. Devorah Dimant, "Between Qumran Sectarian and Non-Sectarian Texts: The Case of Belial and Mastema," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, vol. 93, ed. Adolfo D. Roitman, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Shani Tzoref (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 235–56.

¹⁷⁵Boyd, *God at War*, 179.

roots in the rich and varied world of Second Temple Judaism.”¹⁷⁶

Conclusion

I have attempted in this chapter to summarize the theme of cosmic conflict as present in Jewish literature up to the Second Temple Period. While the language of such conflict is more explicit and pervasive in the Second Temple literature, it is not lacking in the Old Testament. Further, although the language and pervasiveness of this conflict in Second Temple literature finds a strong parallel with the Gospel of Matthew, and thus the clarity of Satan’s identity naturally develops from Second Temple literature, the *narrative* of Matthew regarding this motif more naturally follows from that of the Old Testament.¹⁷⁷ This is evidenced by the fact that Matthew reaches back to Genesis 3 to explain the origin of sin, which fits the narrative of the OT, rather than the preferred origin stories of Genesis 6 found throughout Second Temple literature. In any event, we now will address cosmic conflict in Matthew’s Gospel.

¹⁷⁶Collins, “Powers in Heaven,” 28.

¹⁷⁷See discussion in Farrar and Williams, who, when speaking of Satan in Second Temple literature, state, “Even in collections of texts in which a leading figure of evil features significantly (e.g., the DSS), references are intermittent and inconsistent. The inter-relatedness of terms can be questioned, as there is not the overt consolidation of Satan language that one finds in the NT.” Farrar and Williams, “Talk of the Devil,” 80–81. While I would agree with this statement to an extent, they perhaps overstate their conclusion: “In that sense, NT coherence witnesses to a new departure in its own right, the roots of what would become a distinctly Christian concept.” I have suggested that the New Testament, particularly the Gospel of Matthew, builds upon what we learn of Satan in the Old Testament canon, even if going into much greater detail.

CHAPTER 3

COSMIC CONFLICT: HUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Ulrich Luz writes, “The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of a conflict.”¹ Two aspects of this statement will inform how this project proceeds. First, because Matthew is a story, I examine the Gospel through the lens of narrative categories, specifically the characters which provide the primary means by which that story is told. Second, because Matthew is a story of conflict, the lens by which the characters will be discussed will be that of their relationship to Matthew’s story of conflict, which centers on Jesus.² The characters—the antagonists and protagonists—give body to the plot of Matthew’s narrative, and move his story from its beginning, through its turning point and climax, to its resolution. I begin by examining the human antagonists of Matthew’s gospel.

Herod

Herod is the first great antagonist of Matthew’s narrative. Matthew sets up this conflict by contrasting two kings.³ Thus, “in the days of Herod the king

¹Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 11.

²Bauer states, “The recognition that Matthew is a story *about Jesus* suggests both that Jesus is the central character in the Gospel and that the reader must understand all other characters in terms of their relationship to him (italics original).” David R. Bauer, “The Major Characters of Matthew’s Story: Their Function and Significance,” *Interpretation* 46, no. 4 (1992), 357. It should be noted here that because Jesus is the main character in Matthew’s gospel, I do not include a separate section on Jesus as the primary protagonist, simply because this entire dissertation is essentially such a study.

³So Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 26; Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press), 62. Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 155.

(βασιλεύς),” the “king (βασιλεύς) of the Jews” was born (2:1–2).⁴ Upon hearing this, Herod was “greatly troubled” (ταράσσω). Herod’s response to this troubling news is to seek to destroy the baby Jesus. The account concludes with the divine intervention of God through angels, by which he brings Jesus and his parents safely to Nazareth.

The account of Herod’s opposition to Jesus is brief, but there are some key elements to consider in ascertaining the type of conflict with which Matthew introduces his narrative. It is my contention that though Herod is a human enemy opposed to Jesus, the context and details Matthew includes point to a cosmic conflict that goes beyond Herod himself. First, regarding the context of the passage, Matthew has already opened his Gospel with a genealogy which points his readers to Genesis (cf. Gen 5:1; 2:4).⁵ In doing so, he presents a new creation type of beginning which is being brought about by the birth of Jesus.⁶ As Warren Carter rightly

⁴All New Testament citations will be my own translation from the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

⁵Lachs notes the connection to Genesis when he states, “This superscription is formed on the analogy of Gen. 5:1.” Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1987), 3. Also Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952), 1; M. D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies: With Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 149. Stanton argues in light of this connection that the phrase must refer to either the genealogy or the account of the origin of Jesus. Graham Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, ed. David Lincicum and Markus Bockmuehl, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 309 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 91–92 (also Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP 1 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991], 28). Scholars who view it as referring to the entire birth narrative include Barclay M. Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (London: United Bible Societies, 1988), 10; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and James Dixon Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984); Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 52; Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 55. Scholars who view it as covering only the genealogy include Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC, vol. 33a (Dallas: Word Books, 1993); John Nolland, “What Kind of Genesis Do We Have in Matt 1.1?” *NTS* 42 (1996): 463–71.

⁶See helpful discussion in Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, EGGNT (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 13–14; so R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 73; Ben Witherington III, *Matthew*, SHBC, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 40; for an in-depth and convincing argument regarding Matthew’s allusions to Genesis, see Jonathan T. Pennington, “Heaven, Earth, and a New Genesis: Theological Cosmology in Matthew,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough, LNTS 355 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 36–40. Pennington states, “Matthew’s frequent use of Genesis, including the heaven and earth theme, is a key that Matthew wants us to

suggests, “Matthew's opening phrase evokes the story of God's creative and sovereign purposes for the whole world as the initial context for hearing the story of Jesus.”⁷ In the Genesis narrative, it is only shortly after God’s creation of Adam that Satan attacks and the downward spiral of humanity begins. From that point on history told the story of a cosmic battle between the serpent and the seed that would one day crush his head. So too in Matthew’s narrative, just shortly after the announcement of Jesus’ birth and the fulfillment of the promises of God, brutal conflict emerges in the form of Herod seeking to destroy the promised Messiah.

Further, there is a clear parallel here between Herod and Pharaoh.⁸ This is most clearly seen in their slaughtering of infants. In the account of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt, Pharaoh seeks to halt the multiplying of the Israelites and so thwart the fulfillment of God’s promises to his people by destroying the means by which the

understand the work of Jesus Christ as constituting a complement to the Genesis story, indeed a new creation.” Also see detailed defense in W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 149–55; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 19. Turner recognizes the possibility of this interpretation, but is hesitant to accept it and suggests the account of Jesus’ origin (1:2–25) is primarily in view. David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 56. Wilkins also recognizes this as a legitimate interpretation. Wilkins, *Matthew*, 55. Of the genealogy, Luz states, “The genealogy puts Jesus at the center of Israel’s history. He is Abraham’s son and royal Messiah and thus the bearer of all of Israel’s Messianic hopes in accordance with God’s plan.” Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 82.

⁷Warren Carter, “Matthew and the Gentiles: Individual Conversion and/or Systemic Transformation?” *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (March 2004): 262; Carter here utilizes Foley’s work on “traditional referentiality” in which a partial citation brings to mind through cultural conditioning a much larger text. John M. Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). Albright and Mann state of the genealogy, “It called attention also to the birth (genesis) not only of Jesus, but of the whole new order to which that birth gave rise.” W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, AB, vol. 26 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 2.

⁸Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 12; Franz von Holzendorff, *A Short Protestant Commentary on the Books of the New Testament: With General and Special Introductions*, trans. Frances Henry Jones (London: Williams and Norgate, 1884), 56; John Legg, *The King and His Kingdom: The Gospel of Matthew Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2004), 32; Gundry, *Matthew*, 33; Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 44, 46–47; Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 62; contra Witherington, *Matthew*, 55–57. Witherington dismisses Exodus parallels in the narrative, saying, “It is a mistake to read this story too much in light of the story of Moses” (55).

promised Messiah would himself arrive. In this regard, Senior states,

The evangelist encases this scene in a marvelous Old Testament tapestry. The scenario of a wicked king seeking the death of the Messiah, the killing of the firstborn to ensure his murderous intent, and the saving of the child through miraculous intervention places on Jesus' shoulders the mantle of Moses, who was also destined by God to save his people.⁹

It is also noteworthy that the story of Moses in extra-biblical Jewish tradition provides additional material that makes this parallel even more pronounced.¹⁰ For example, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 2.9), Pharaoh slaughtered the Hebrew infants not merely to control Israel's population, but because of a prophecy which came to Pharaoh through a sacred scribe that Israel's liberator would be born.¹¹ So also in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, Pharaoh is warned by his magicians of a coming liberator "by whose hand will be destruction to all the land of Mizraim."¹² This is precisely Herod's reason for wanting to destroy Jesus. Further, in these traditions Moses' father was prompted to rescue Moses because of a dream in which he was told Moses would deliver Israel. In both instances, God sovereignly intervenes to rescue Moses, the promised deliverer.¹³ These parallels, which were likely extant in Matthew's day, explicitly highlight the Moses/Exodus typology in the birth narrative of Matthew and the parallel between Herod and Pharaoh.¹⁴ Thus, "The worst of all tyrants, an enemy

⁹Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, IBT (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 91.

¹⁰Lachs notes this when he says, "The comparison is strengthened when rabbinic sources are examined" (12). Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 12–13. Also France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 85; Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 91.

¹¹Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books 1–3*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL 242 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 252–53.

¹²*Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, trans. Martin McNamara and Michael Maher, in *The Aramaic Bible: The Targums 2* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994).

¹³Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 252–53.

¹⁴See R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1989), 188; also see extensive defense of Moses typology in Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 46–50. Further, see table 1. in Luz, where he notes each of these parallels (and others) as likely background material for this portion of Matthew's narrative. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 76.

of God and people alike, is represented as engaged in a vain struggle with the true king of the people and Son of God.”¹⁵ Herod feared an earthly king, yet the serpent feared a heavenly King, and so Herod “was bound and dragged by the chains of the devil” as he attempted to stamp out the seed of woman.¹⁶

To take the argument a step further, in the Old Testament Pharaoh is likened to a “great dragon” (τὸν δράκοντα τὸν μέγαν; Ezek 29:3; 32:2), which is the same terminology used in the New Testament to refer to Satan (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). This language also harkens back to the language of Isaiah 27:1, in which Leviathan is called “dragon” (דָּרָק; τὸν δράκοντα LXX). Thus, it is likely that Matthew is connecting Herod’s attempt to stamp out the seed of woman with Pharaoh’s attempt to do the same in Exodus.¹⁷ And these two worldly kings are subservient to the ultimate force behind all evil, Leviathan.¹⁸ As Legg notes, “These verses introduce another, and vital, instalment in the age-long conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).”¹⁹ In the Exodus account, the Pharaoh’s wicked rage is demonstrated in his willingness to stop at nothing to defeat the Israelites. In Matthew’s narrative the wickedness of Herod is evident as well in his slaughtering of the infants in order to defeat a new threat to his kingship. Behind both narratives stands the Evil One who will do whatever it takes to defeat the promised Messiah and true king of all. Though the enemy violently rages, in both instances he fails to accomplish his end and God’s plan of redemption moves forward. As Ridderbos rightly states, “[Just as] Israel could not be overcome by the

¹⁵Holzendorff, *Short Protestant Commentary*, 58.

¹⁶James A. Kellerman and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew (Opus Imperfectum)*, ACT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 34.

¹⁷Kellerman and Oden, *Incomplete Commentary*, 34.

¹⁸See section on Leviathan in chap. 2.

¹⁹Legg, *The King and His Kingdom*, 32.

world and by the serpent's offspring Christ escaped from Herod's grasp."²⁰

The Jewish Leaders

The Jewish leaders²¹ have often been recognized as the primary antagonists in Matthew's gospel.²² Their antagonism toward Jesus can be seen from the beginning of the narrative. For example, in 2:3 when Herod learns of the birth of Jesus, he is "greatly troubled and all of Jerusalem with him" (ἐταράχθη καὶ πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα μετ' αὐτοῦ) and so "gathers together all the chief priests and scribes of the people" (συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ). It is not satisfying to say that the news of the birth of Jesus and Herod's angst trickled down, and thus all the people of Jerusalem were troubled because of their fear of Herod.²³ Rather, Jerusalem is likely a synecdoche representing the obstinate Jewish leadership.²⁴ Jerusalem in Matthew is "the stronghold of Jewish leadership, and,

²⁰Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, trans. Ray Togtman (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 42.

²¹My characterization of the religious leaders reflects the fact that they are for the most part portrayed as a homogenous group in Matthew. This, however, does not deny the distinctions between the various factions at the time the Gospel was written (similarly Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*, JSNTSup 91 [Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994], 98; Turner, *Matthew*, 111). Further, see Anderson for a helpful chart outlining all of Matthew's references to the Jewish leaders (99–101).

²²For example, Kingsbury argues that the religious authorities are second only to Jesus in their influence on the plot of Matthew's narrative. He further states, "The religious leaders . . . as [Jesus'] principle opponents . . . are the antagonists." Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 18, 115. Also see Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict Between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary and Critical Study," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 57–73; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 30. Sim states, "The evangelist tends to blur the distinct groups which comprise the Jewish leadership, and presents them as one homogenous force which is totally united in opposition to Jesus." David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 185. Luz says, "In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus' conflict with Israel's leaders becomes the main conflict that leaves its imprint on the story of Jesus." Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 11.

²³Several scholars suggest the phrase is probably an exaggeration and refers to many people in Jerusalem (so Carson, *Matthew*, 86; Osborne, *Matthew*, 88; Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 36).

²⁴So Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 49–52; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 238; Turner, *Matthew*, 81; Witherington, *Matthew*, 61; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 97; contra John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 112n119; Quarles, *Matthew*, 25; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 42; Morris,

despite its being 'the holy city' (4.5; 27.53), it represents corrupt political power and corrupt political authority."²⁵ Further, Matthew often shows sympathy for the Jewish crowds; however, rarely is such a sentiment found with regard to the Jewish authorities. The crowds are often chided for their unbelief and little faith; however, it is most often the Jewish leaders who instigate the conflict with Jesus. Thus, in the next verse Herod gathers together the chief priests and scribes "of the people." While their antagonism in verse 4 is implicit, it likely foreshadows the hostility to come.²⁶

Such hostility is further foreshadowed when John the Baptist is preparing the way for the coming Messiah, preaching a baptism of repentance, and "Jerusalem and all Judea and all the surrounding region of the Jordan" were coming to John and being baptized by him. However, when many "Pharisees and Sadducees"²⁷ come to him John says,

You offspring of snakes, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath . . . do not think to say among yourselves 'we have Abraham as our father' . . . the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree not bearing good fruit will be cut off and thrown into the fire. (Matt 3:7–10)

John, as the precursor to Jesus, recognizes the evil intent of the Jewish leadership, going so far as to suggest they are the offspring of snakes.²⁸ This description will be

Matthew, 37. Gundry appears to toe the line here, suggesting that all Jerusalem is in view but also that it is hyperbole and the true blame is reserved for the Jewish leaders. Gundry, *Matthew*, 28.

²⁵Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 238.

²⁶Kingsbury states, "By thus assisting Herod, the chief priests and the scribes make themselves complicit in Herod's plot to kill Jesus. In so doing, they signal the reader that, later in the story, they will prove themselves to be deadly opponents of Jesus." Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," *Interpretation* 46, no. 4 (October 1992): 348.

²⁷On this coupling, see Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 66. They state, "These two groups in Matthew's Gospel represent the collective leadership of Israel in its opposition against Jesus."

²⁸So Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," 348; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 55–56. Turner says "They view themselves as the children of Abraham, but John has a very different idea of their spiritual ancestry." Turner, *Matthew*, 112. Ridderbos further states, the "meaning in this probably was not merely that their behavior was deceitful and treacherous . . . but, above all, that they were tools of the devil, that ancient

validated by their continued hostility towards Jesus, the seed of the woman, and his message of the coming kingdom. I now discuss in greater detail passages which demonstrate this conflict.²⁹

Matthew 9:2–8

This passage is part of a larger section spanning from 8:2 through 9:34 which is fast-paced and includes many miracles.³⁰ In this familiar passage, a group of friends brings a paralytic to Jesus, and he says to him, “Fear not, child, your sins are forgiven” (9:2).³¹ Some scribes were present and they “said within themselves, ‘this one is blaspheming.’”

[Jesus] perceiving their thoughts, said, 'why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say: your sins are forgiven, or to say rise and walk? But in order that you may know the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins upon the earth'—then he said to the paralytic, 'arise, take up your mat, and go to your house. And he arose and departed to his house. (vv. 4–7)

In this early account of the Jewish leaders' interaction with Jesus, Matthew does not

serpent.” Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 45. Also Osborne states, “he means they are spreading poison . . . like the serpent in the garden (Gen 3).” Osborne, *Matthew*, 113. In this regard, see helpful discussion in Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 83–90.

²⁹For a generally helpful discussion of the form of conflict stories in the synoptic gospels, see Arland J. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries: The Form and Function of the Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 52–59.

³⁰For a helpful analysis of the overall composition of this section, see William G. Thompson, “Reflections on the Composition of Mathew 8:1–9:34,” *CBQ* 33, no. 3 (July 1971): 365–88. In his article, Thompson presupposes H. J. Held's work, but approaches the question of the miracle passages from a different angle (see H. J. Held, “Matthäus als Interpret der Wundergeschichten,” in *Überlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 1 (Neukirchener: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975), 155–287. Also see C. Burger, “Jesu Taten nach Matthäus 8 and 9, *ZTK* 70, no. 3 (1973): 272–87; Kingsbury has written a helpful article responding to these three articles. He prefers Burger's structure, which divides the chapters into four sections on Christology (8:1–17), discipleship (8:18–34), separation from Israel (9:1–17), and faith (9:18–34). Jack Dean Kingsbury, “Observations on the 'Miracle Chapters' of Matthew 8-9,” *CBQ* 40, no. 4 (October 1978): 559–73.

³¹Albright and Mann state, “The breaking of the power of sin and of the dominion of evil is one of the signs of the dawning of the Kingdom.” Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 103.

tell a story of open hostility.³² Rather, they “speak within themselves (εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς). However, while some have argued that there is no hostility in Matthew's account at this point, the use of οὗτος³³ coupled with the accusation of blasphemy (βλασφημέω)³⁴ suggests that already there is hostility in the hearts of the Jewish leadership toward Jesus.³⁵ This accusation of blasphemy is important, for it will be the very same accusation that will lead to the pronouncement of Jesus' death sentence by the Jewish leaders in Matthew 27. Jesus then confronts the scribes for what they are thinking. It is noteworthy that even though Jesus goes on to provide what would seem to be the necessary proof of his claim of authority to forgive sins, there is no indication that the scribes respond in a favorable way.³⁶ In fact, while the crowds “feared and glorified God” for what they had seen, the scribes fade obscurely into the background, not mentioned by Matthew again.³⁷

³²So Kingsbury, “The Plot of Matthew's Story,” 350. Of this passage, Osborne notes, it “begins the theme of conflict with the Jewish authorities that will continue through the rest of Matthew's portrayal.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 324.

³³See discussion in LSJ, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), s.v. οὗτος, 1276. It states οὗτος “is used emphatically, generally in contempt [and] is commonly applied to the opponent” in legal settings.

³⁴βλασφημέω is used 3 times in Matthew. Here and in 26:65, the religious leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy. In 27:39 Jesus is being blasphemed by the crowds while on the cross. It seems that when Jesus is accused of blasphemy it is because he is taking on himself the divine prerogative (so Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 121; Osborne, *Matthew*, 327; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 180). See discussion in H. W. Beyer, “βλασφημέω,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984): 622. Of βλασφημέω Beyer states “In the NT the concept of blasphemy is controlled throughout by the thought of violation of the power and majesty of God.” Hultgren suggests that Jesus is here presented as “the New Torah” and that when Jesus makes this declaration “divine authority is asserted.” Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 108–9.

³⁵So Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 233; Osborne, *Matthew*, 328.

³⁶Plummer states, “We gather from [the Jewish hierarchy's] continued hostility on subsequent occasions that they were baffled rather than convinced.”³⁰ Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 137.

³⁷Osborn similarly says “Instead of telling how the scribes reacted to the miracle, Matthew contrasts their reaction in v. 3 with that of the crowds here.” Osborn, *Matthew*, 329.

Matthew 9:9–34

These verses continue the broader section of Matthew 8–9 and recount a series of stories regarding Jesus' actions, the first and last of which incur hostility from the Pharisees. The first two stories involve actions of Jesus which result in the questioning of those actions.³⁸ The remaining stories involve miraculous works.

First, the Pharisees see Jesus reclining with “many tax collectors and sinners” (9:10), and so question Jesus' disciples, asking why Jesus would do such a thing.³⁹ While the hostility of the Pharisees is more open than that of the scribes in verses 2–8, they still do not question Jesus directly, but come to his disciples.⁴⁰ Even so, Jesus hears them and answers that healthy people do not need a doctor, but rather those who are sick. He then scolds the Pharisees saying, “Go learn the meaning of this: I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” This quotation is drawn from Hosea 6:6 which states, “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” This sentiment is repeated throughout the OT

³⁸While each of the stories is important for Matthew's narrative, the pericopes in which the Pharisees engage Jesus will be my focus here. I will note however that Jesus' answer to John's disciples in 9:15 indicates that his presence presupposes the presence of the Messianic kingdom, which is a cause for joy, rather than grief. Elsewhere in Matthew, the great banquet is associated with the Messianic kingdom (22:1–8; 25:1–10). For the phrase οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος, see G. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 162. The phrase is a Semitism for “wedding guests” (so Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 107; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 185; Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. [New York: Scribners, 1963], 52n14). Osborne notes that in the OT Yahweh is the bridegroom of Israel (Isa 54:5; 62:5; Jer 3:14; Hos 2:16–20). Osborne, *Matthew*, 342. Zeitlin suggests that this controversy “centers on the point that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah,” from the house of David. Solomon Zeitlin, *Who Crucified Jesus?* (New York: Bloch, 1964), 131. Also Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 127; Witherington, *Matthew*, 20.

³⁹See helpful discussion in S. Scott Bartchy, “Table Fellowship,” in *DJG*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 796–800. Bartchy notes that meals were an important social construction in the ancient world which indicated acceptance and alliance. Indeed, “To share a meal is to share life” (also Osborne, *Matthew*, 335).

⁴⁰So Witherington, *Matthew*, 199; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 126; Kingsbury, “The Plot of Matthew's Story,” 350. Ridderbos suggests they were intimidated by Jesus and “felt more confident questioning the disciples [whom] as religious authorities they could easily embarrass.” Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 183. Thompson suggests that there is no hostility from the Pharisees here, but rather they are first depicted as hostile in 9:34, when they accuse Jesus of being in league with the prince of demons. Thompson, “Reflections,” 386.

Scriptures with regard to Israel (Amos 5:21–24; Isa 1:12–17; Micah 6:6–8; Ps 51:16–17), who had a tendency “to settle for a mechanistic, ritual–dependent religion of ‘motions’ rather than of godly actions.”⁴¹ Jesus here suggests that the letter of the law (sacrifice) is null if rent from the heart of the law (mercy), thus revealing the Pharisees’ hypocrisy.⁴² This encounter echoes Satan’s attempt to utilize the words of Scripture against Jesus in the wilderness. Satan quotes Scripture in an attempt to trap Jesus in sin, and Jesus points out his folly by quoting another text which reveals Satan’s hypocrisy.

In the final miracle story, a demon–oppressed man who is mute is brought to Jesus. Matthew gets straight to the point: “and when he had cast the demon out, the man spoke” (9:33).⁴³ Matthew depicts two different responses to this incident, both of which represent opposite spectrums.⁴⁴ First, the crowd marvels and proclaims that “never was this seen in Israel!”⁴⁵ However, on the opposing end of the spectrum, the Pharisees claim that “by the Prince of demons, he casts out demons” (9:34).⁴⁶ This is the deepest opposition the Pharisees have offered so far; indeed, it is

⁴¹Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, WBC, vol. 31 (Waco, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 110. Note that *m. Tohoroth* 7:6 states “if tax collectors entered a house, the house is deemed unclean” (quoted from *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Tohoroth*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. I. Epstein [London: the Socino Press, 1948], 397). If the Talmud here reflects Jewish thought in Jesus’ day, then the Pharisees would never enter the house of a tax collector for fear of ritual impurity and so stringently upheld the cleanliness code. Despite its later date, the idea is consistent with the behavior of the Pharisees in Matt 9. See Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 111, who also cites Toharot 7:6 in this regard.

⁴²So Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 183; Osborne, *Matthew*, 337; contra Plummer who suggests that Jesus is not pronouncing judgment on what is likely a “righteous abhorrence of sin” among the Pharisees. Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 139 (similarly, Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 167–68).

⁴³That the request and the healing itself are presupposed centers the account on the results and ensuing confrontation (so Osborne, *Matthew*, 359; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 192).

⁴⁴So Thomson, “Reflections,” 385.

⁴⁵The crowd’s response is climactic, “almost as if even Elijah could not match such deeds” (Osborne, *Matthew*, 359).

⁴⁶Osborne, *Matthew*, 359. In attributing Jesus’ work to the devil they are showing themselves to be opposed to the work of God and thus on Satan’s side of the cosmic conflict (so Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 192). Here Kingsbury seeks to minimize the opposition to Jesus in

the deepest opposition to Christ that they could possibly offer.⁴⁷ Rather than marvel at Jesus' miraculous work among them, they accuse him of being in league with the Prince of demons, Satan himself.⁴⁸ It should be noted that in the previous healing narrative, the two blind men call out to Jesus as the "son of David," which refers to the kingly, Messianic son of God figure of 2 Samuel 7:12–16, of whose kingdom there would be no end.⁴⁹ Though blind, they recognize Jesus as king, as the ruler (or prince) of the Messianic kingdom which God was bringing to his people. Their recognition of Jesus as king demonstrates their loyalty to his kingdom. However, the Pharisees, who as teachers of the law should see the most clearly, have a different response.⁵⁰ They do indeed recognize a kingdom, one which appears to them to be present also in the works of Jesus. Yet this kingdom is that of the "prince of demons."⁵¹ The implication then in attributing the works of the true king to that of

this account because the Pharisees did not address Jesus directly. He suggests that in this first half of Matthew the opposition is lessened as it escalates into the second half where it is made clear that the Jewish leaders are out to "destroy" Jesus. Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," 350. This point is well taken, however, even in recognizing further escalation of the conflict, the depth of the accusation here should not be minimized.

⁴⁷See instructive discussion in Dwight D. Sheets, "Jesus as Demon-Possessed," in *Who Do My Opponents Say That I Am? An Investigation of the Accusations Against the Historical Jesus*, ed. Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, LNTS 327 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 35. Sheets rebuts the notion that Jesus is being accused of sorcery, and rather argues that "Something much more serious underlies the accusation." He continues to argue that Jesus' opponents are likely viewing him as an "antichrist figure" or "eschatological antagonist" opposed to the kingdom of God.

⁴⁸Harrington suggests that the main purpose of this pericope is "the notice of the split between the crowds and the Pharisees in their assessment of Jesus' miracles." Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 134. Porter notes that the imperfect *ἔλεγον* after the aorist emphasizes this statement, placing it in the foreground of the action. Stanley Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 23–25.

⁴⁹So Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 253; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 135; Kingsbury, "Observations", 155. Kingsbury further connects this notion of sonship with what has already been established at Jesus baptism and temptation (565).

⁵⁰Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 190; Osborne, *Matthew*, 355.

⁵¹Plummer suggests that the two-fold theme of Jesus' increased fame as Messiah, as well as the Pharisees' increased hostility is the purpose of this account in the narrative. Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 143–44. Lachs suggests this and the preceding miracle accounts have as their background Exod 4:11. Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 175.

the prince of darkness is that they are on a different side than that of the blind men. They are on the very side of the one with whom they associate Jesus, namely, Satan.⁵² Thus, in these miracle stories Jesus is the wonder working Son of God whose kingdom is coming against that of Satan.⁵³

Matthew 12

In Matthew 12, there is an extended account of Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees which culminates with the Beelzebul controversy. In 12:1, Jesus' disciples are found plucking and eating heads of grain as they are going through a grain field on the Sabbath. This incurs indignation from the Pharisees who say to Jesus, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is not right to do on the Sabbath" (12:2). Unlike previously, the religious leaders now challenge Jesus directly, indicating an escalation of the conflict.⁵⁴ Jesus then responds by pointing to two Old Testament accounts. First, drawing from 1 Samuel 21:1–6, Jesus recounts how David and his men ate the holy bread from the temple when they were hungry. The point is that in that instance, human need trumped strict observance to the law.⁵⁵ There is also an implicit argument involved here. The Pharisees would have believed that David and his men were hungry to the point of starvation and so ate the bread to save their

⁵²It seems Matthew desires to draw attention to this truth, for in the first passage, it is the Pharisees who question Jesus. They do not interact with him again until this final passage, where they accuse him of being in league with Satan. This sandwiching of the section by reference to the Pharisees, as well as the increased hostility of their interaction, highlights this final text, particularly what it says regarding the Pharisees. Thompson argues that this interaction "sets the tone for future confrontations in which they become increasingly hostile (12:2, 14)." Thompson, "Reflections," 386.

⁵³Kingsbury states, "As a present reality in Jesus Son of God the Kingdom of Heaven has entered eschatological conflict with the kingdom of Satan . . . the miracle stories reflect this conflict." Kingsbury, "Observations," 571.

⁵⁴Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 229.

⁵⁵Thus, as Plummer states, "He points out that every rule has its limitations, and that ceremonial uncleanness regulations must yield to the higher claims of charity and necessity." Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 172. Also Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 175; Witherington, *Matthew*, 241.

lives, thus it would seem to them that this contrasts with the less severe circumstances of Jesus and his disciples.⁵⁶ David was Israel's king par excellence and so this exception could readily be made. However, in pointing to this situation as justification for what Jesus had allowed, the implicit argument is that his presence among them is even greater than that of David. Indeed, one greater than David is here.⁵⁷ As Hultgren states,

Freedom of Sabbath conduct was conditioned by the realization that the Son of man . . . is lord of the Sabbath, and that even his infractions, like those of David, were determined by human need and were performed in anticipation of eschatological fulfillment.⁵⁸

The second justification Jesus gives is more directly relevant to the current situation, for it involves the “desecrating” (βεβηλόω) of the Sabbath by the priests, who do their work on the Sabbath in order that the functioning of the temple may continue. Jesus makes explicit what was only implicit in his previous account by arguing from minor to major.⁵⁹ If the functioning of the temple was so important that the priests could violate the Sabbath in order to perform their temple duties, *how much more* is this the case when τοῦ ἱεροῦ μεῖζόν ἐστιν ὧδε (12:6)?⁶⁰ This account ends with what would surely be a condemning statement by Jesus in the minds of the Pharisees: “But if you had known what this means: ‘Mercy I desire and not sacrifice,’ you would have not condemned (καταδικάζω) the innocent. For the Son of

⁵⁶So Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 198; Zeitlin, *Who Crucified Jesus?*, 129.

⁵⁷So France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 203; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 229; Osborne, *Matthew*, 452; Carson, *Matthew*, 280; Gundry, *Matthew*, 221; Turner, *Matthew*, 311.

⁵⁸Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 115.

⁵⁹Krister Stendahl, *School of St. Matthew & Its Use of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 784; Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 112; Osborne, *Matthew*, 453.

⁶⁰On the neuter μεῖζόν, see Osborne, *Matthew*, 453. Osborne suggests that the form indicates that Jesus is not only referring to his person, but also to his “kingdom ministry and Messianic office.” Further, Carson adds the service/worship of God and the command to love to the obvious reference to the person of Jesus. Carson, *Matthew*, 281–82.

Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

A few points should be made here. First, ἐγνώκειτε is a pluperfect indicative and with εἰ forms the protasis of a second-class conditional construction, which followed by an aorist indicative with ἄν in the apodosis indicates a past condition assumed to be false.⁶¹ The context suggests that the perfect aspect indicates ongoing implications for their actions. The Pharisees have condemned the disciples, whom Jesus by his arguments has shown to be innocent of the accusations.⁶² However, there may be a subtle foreshadowing here, for in condemning the disciples actions they are surely including Jesus, their teacher.⁶³ From this point on in Matthew’s narrative, much is made of Jesus’ innocence in the face of those who accuse him. In Matthew 26:60, after Matthew explains that the Jewish leaders were seeking false testimony against Jesus “that they might put him to death,” he states, “but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward.” After Judas betrays Jesus over to the religious authorities, he changes his mind and attempts to return the money saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood!” (27:4). Also, when the Jewish leadership brings Jesus before Pilate, he attempts to release him multiple times asking, “what wrong has he committed?” (27:23).⁶⁴ Instead of answering him, the Jewish leaders and the crowd simply shout louder. In Matthew 20:18, Jesus predicts his own death, saying, “Look! We are going up into Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes,

⁶¹So Quarles, *Matthew*, 124; Morris, *Matthew*, 303n17; for ἄν with the aorist indicative see *BDAG*, 56.

⁶²However, France notes that they are not guiltless in breaking scribal regulations, but in that they did so under the authority of the one who is Lord of the Sabbath. France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 204.

⁶³So F. Scott Spencer, “Scripture, Hermeneutics, and Matthew’s Jesus,” *Interpretation* 64, no. 4 (October 2010): 317.

⁶⁴It should be also noted that Pilate is hesitant because his wife was given a troubling dream and so said to Pilate, μηδὲν σοὶ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ (27:19).

and they will condemn (κατακρίνω) him to death.”

It is also important that Jesus declares himself the “Lord of the Sabbath.” In the minds of the Pharisees this likely would have been considered language that could only have been reserved for Yahweh.⁶⁵ Over and again the OT describes the Sabbath in relationship to Yahweh. It is “a Sabbath to Yahweh” (Exod 16:23, 25; 20:10; Lev 23:3; 25:2, 4; Deut 5:14) and it is the Yahweh who has given the Sabbath (Exod 16:29). The Sabbath is a “holy day of Yahweh” (Isa 58:13). For Jesus to claim absolute authority over the Sabbath is no less than to claim the divine prerogative for himself.

The narrative continues with Jesus going out from there εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν (v. 9). The phrase is likely distancing Jesus further from the Pharisees in referring to the synagogue as “their synagogue.”⁶⁶ The contrast is made because the confrontation is not over. He had just made a statement about the importance of mercy on the Sabbath and his authority over it. Now by his actions he will demonstrate both principles. In verses 9–14, the Pharisees initiate a situation based on his previous statements regarding the Sabbath. The continued use of the third-person plural demonstrates the contrast argued for in verse 9. It is now “they” (Pharisees) versus “him” (Jesus). They bring to him a man with a withered hand and

⁶⁵In the final stages of my research I came across several scholars who note this: Quarles states, “κύριος may serve in some instances as a mere title of authority, but used in connection with the Sabbath prob. serves as the Gk. substitute for the divine name Yahweh.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 124. Also, Witherington notes, “Something greater than Elijah, greater than Solomon, greater than the temple is in their midst. But what could be greater than these things except the direct presence of God in the person of Jesus?” Witherington, *Matthew*, 242. Further, Osborne states, “In the OT God is master of the Sabbath, and here Jesus has that authority.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 454.

⁶⁶So Osborne, *Matthew*, 458; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 486; Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, NIBCNT, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Paternoster, 1995), 113; Gundry, *Matthew*, 225; France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 204; contra Morris, who suggest it simply refers to the Synagogue “of the local people.” Morris, *Matthew*, 305. Further, Carson and Hagner both take a more general reading, with Hagner suggesting it refers to the Synagogue of the Jews and Carson suggesting it refers to apostate Israel (Carson, *Matthew 1–12*, 284; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 333).

ask if it is lawful to heal him on the Sabbath.⁶⁷ After asking a question in the form of a parable which demonstrates their hypocrisy, Jesus simply speaks, ἔκτεινόν σου τὴν χεῖρα, and the man stretches out his hand. The Pharisees' response to this healing is striking: ἐξελθόντες δὲ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συμβούλιον ἔλαβον κατ' αὐτοῦ ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν. Without a word, the Pharisees depart, taking council together on how they might destroy Jesus.⁶⁸

The word for “destroy” (ἀπόλλυμι) is used 19 times in Matthew.⁶⁹ It is, however, the first and the last instance that should be expounded, each of which refer to the desire of Jesus' enemies to destroy him. The first is found in Matthew 2:13, where an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph and warns him to flee to Egypt, for “Herod is about to search for your child, to destroy (ἀπόλλυμι) him.” A case has already been made for Matthew's intention in connecting Herod to the cosmic battle which began in Genesis 3 and spanned the entirety of the OT, with Pharaoh being an archetypal figure in that regard. The last use of the term ἀπόλλυμι is found in Matthew 27:20, where Pilate presents Jesus and Barabbas to the crowd, hoping that they will ask for the execution of Barabbas and the release of Jesus. Instead, “The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy (ἀπόλλυμι) Jesus.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷Hultgren notes here that Pharisaic law allowed for the suspension of Sabbath law to preserve life, but that this instance of healing would not fit this exception. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 83.

⁶⁸See discussion in Yong-Eui Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel*, JSNTSup 139 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 208–9. Yang notes that Jesus here breaks neither the OT Law nor the rabbinic traditions, for he does not lift a hand toward the man. He simply speaks. This highlights the opposition of the religious leaders to an even greater degree.

⁶⁹In several places it simply means “to loose” (5:29, 30; 10:6, 39, 42; 15:24, 25). It takes on the meaning of “destroy” or “perish” with regard to the disciples' fear of the storm (8:25), the effect of putting new wine in old wineskins (9:17), the destruction of the body and soul in hell (10:28), the will of the Father that no little one should perish (18:14), the death of tenants who killed the son of the vineyard owner (21:41; also 22:7), and Jesus' teaching that those who live by the sword will also perish by the sword (26:52).

⁷⁰Thus, Sigal's view that ἀπόλλυμι here means to excommunicate, or place under “the synagogue ban” seems unlikely. He is forced to this conclusion in seeking to deny that

It is not unlikely then that Matthew is demonstrating that throughout Jesus' life there has been a consistent attempt on behalf of Satan to destroy Jesus, the promised seed, and that this seemingly culminates in victory in which Jesus is condemned to be destroyed by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. All along the way, the Jewish leaders are the primary instruments used by Satan to bring this about. They were troubled along with Herod, they seek to accuse him and plot to destroy him, and in chapter 27 they succeed, when Pilate releases Barabbas and crucifies Jesus.

This leads to the Beelzebul Controversy, which contains one of the lengthiest and most involved interactions between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.⁷¹ Although Jesus has clearly demonstrated his authority over disease and the demonic, the Pharisees accuse him of casting out demons by “Beelzebul, the prince of demons.”⁷² The meaning of Βεελζεβούλ has been very much contested, and will be discussed in more detail below. It should be noted, however, that it is often suggested that the name is connected to the temple, and should be translated as

the Pharisees' concerns stem from anything other than disputes over Halakah. Phillip Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew*, rev. ed., SBL/SBL (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 150–52; 170–72. France suggests the plot was not for death at this point and thus renders it as “get rid of.” R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 454, 466. Hagner argues, contra Sigal and France, that it is precisely the Pharisees' zeal for their traditions that spawn their desire to kill Jesus. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 334 (also Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching*, trans. Herbert Danby [New York: Macmillan, 1949], 9). Carson views the Pharisees' hostility toward Jesus as resulting from his “fundamental Messianic claims.” Carson, *Matthew*, 284–85.

⁷¹See chap. 4 below for a further discussion of this passage as it relates to Satan as Beelzebul.

⁷²As Lichtenberger states, in the logic of the Pharisees, the demons “have Satan as their archon, and whoever would expel them must do this with Satan's help—and therefore seemingly must himself be possessed by Beelzebub.” Hermann Lichtenberger, “Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,” in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 278. Quarles suggests that δὲ here is “mildly adversative, contrasting the crowds' affirmation of Jesus' possible Messianic identity with the Pharisees' emphatic denial.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 129.

“Lord of the high house/temple.”⁷³ Thus, in light of Jesus’ statement in 12:6 that he is greater than the temple, it may be that Jesus’ opponents here group him with those in Jewish history who have threatened or desecrated the temple.⁷⁴ Sheets argues that the accusation here made by Jesus opponents could also be linked to the false prophet traditions throughout Jewish literature and particularly in the Qumran documents. For example, CD 9:2–3 indicates that the one whom the “spirit of Beliar dominates” will be judged as a false prophet. So, as with the Pharisees’ accusation of Jesus, “Beliar possesses the false prophets, and his deceptive signs operate through them” and so Jesus’ opponents likely interpreted his miracles and exorcisms as standing within this tradition.⁷⁵ Jesus’ response makes it very clear that he views himself as bringing the kingdom of God upon the world, and is thus a response not to the accusation of his being a magician or witch, but to the accusation that he was a latter-day false prophet type figure.⁷⁶ However, he does not deny that he is an eschatological figure, but rather that he is one in league with the prince of demons. Quite the contrary, he is bringing in the kingdom of God. This kingdom is opposed by another kingdom, led by Satan, to whom the Pharisees, by their accusations of Jesus, are pledging their allegiance.⁷⁷ This is made plain when he says, “The one who

⁷³Witherington, *Matthew*, 245; Osborne, *Matthew*, 396; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 205; Turner, *Matthew*, 320. MacLaurin argues for this in light of Beelzebul being called “master of the house” in Matt 10:25. E. Colin B. MacLaurin, “Beelzeboul,” *Novum Testamentum* 20, no. 2 (April 1978): 156.

⁷⁴Sheets comes to a similar conclusion: “Jesus, therefore, like Antiochus IV may have been seen as an Endtyrant figure who with Beelzebul wished to be “lord of the temple.” Sheets, “Jesus as Demon–Possessed,” 44.

⁷⁵Sheets “Jesus as Demon–Possessed,” 49.

⁷⁶Twelftree states, “The charge relates not to being a magician, but to what Jesus was saying in his message, more specifically on his relationship to God.” Graham H. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now*, Hodder Christian Paperbacks (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1985), 76.

⁷⁷Poythress states, “The polarity between the two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, is vividly underscored . . . Jesus warns the Pharisees that their very words condemn them. They are themselves on the wrong side of the conflict.” Vern S. Poythress, *The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior’s Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 176.

is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me, scatters” (12:31). Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, is the kingdom of God as brought in by Christ pitted against that of Satan, or Beelzebul, the prince of demons.⁷⁸ As France rightly states, “There is a *kingdom of Satan* as well as a kingdom of God, and this passage reveals the two as locked in mortal combat in the ministry of Jesus.”⁷⁹ At the same time, it is here, perhaps more than anywhere else, that the religious leaders are truly shown to be opposed to the kingdom of God as brought in by Christ, and in league with that of Satan.⁸⁰ Plummer correctly asserts, “Because the Pharisees had placed themselves on the side of Satan, Christ gives them a solemn warning.”⁸¹ The Jewish leaders are not simply opposed to Jesus as impartial religious leaders, rather, they are tools in the cosmic battle being waged between Christ and Satan.

Matthew 12 has been called a turning point in Matthew’s Gospel for several reasons, perhaps the most poignant is the intensification of the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders leading to the climax of the crucifixion.⁸² One part of this escalation that has perhaps been overlooked is the connection Matthew makes between the religious leaders and Satan. It is this point that I focus on here.

⁷⁸See Quarles, who rightly suggests that the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ “forms a [greater] contrast with ‘kingdom of Satan’ . . . than the phrase ‘kingdom of heaven,’ which Matthew normally preferred.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 130.

⁷⁹France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 208.

⁸⁰So Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 343; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 184; Witherington, *Matthew*, 247; Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 122–23.

⁸¹Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 178; also Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 185.

⁸²Schreiner also calls chapter 12 the turning point of the narrative: “Most commentators and scholars concur that although the opposition to Jesus has already surfaced, Chapter 12 represents a decisive moment in the narrative where the hostility becomes heightened.” Patrick Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew* (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 62–63. This escalation of hostility is also noted by C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 41; Turner, *Matthew*, 307; Gundry, *Matthew*, 204.

First, note 12:31–32, where Jesus states that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, “neither in this age, nor the coming one.” Much has been written as to what the blasphemy of the Spirit actual refers; however, what should be noted here is that the result of this blasphemy is the impossibility of redemption. Though not explicit, this clearly puts the Pharisees in the same camp as Satan and his demons, for whom there will never be the possibility of forgiveness. It could further be argued that Satan’s tempting of Jesus be considered a blaspheming of the Holy Spirit, for it was in direct opposition to the Spirit’s affirmation of Jesus as the Father’s “beloved son” that he utters his mocking refrain, “if you are the son of God.” Calvin rightly states,

In this manner they purposely and maliciously turned light into darkness; and, indeed, it is in the manner of the giants, as the phrase is, to make war against God . . . and who, with Satan, their leader, are avowed enemies of the glory of God.⁸³

The second connection is perhaps subtle but is still apparent. In 12:38 some of the religious leaders ask Jesus for a sign (*θέλομεν ἀπὸ σοῦ σημεῖον ἰδεῖν*). Their question provokes a stern rebuke from Jesus who answers, “An evil and adulteress generation seeks a sign (12:39)! Why does Jesus give such a stern rebuke here? Matthew 4:6–7 helps answer this, for there it is Satan who seeks a sign from Jesus. He asks, *εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, βάλε σεαυτὸν κάτω*. The conditional sentence implies that Satan is seeking a sign to demonstrate Jesus’ sonship through a display of power. Satan even draws upon Scripture to add weight to his temptation. Jesus’ response is telling, “Again it is written, you shall not *ἐκπειράσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου*.” Why is this important? Because the religious leaders, much like Satan in the wilderness, are

⁸³John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke*, trans. William Pringle, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 2:75. Witherington does not go far enough in suggesting that the Pharisees were “in the danger zone, in danger of being so hard–hearted that when they criticized the work of Jesus they were in fact blaspheming God.” Witherington, *Matthew*, 247. It seems apparent that they had already crossed that line.

tempting Jesus to prove his sonship and thus utilize his power and authority in a way inconsistent with God's will. The point is reinforced in Matthew 16:1, where the Pharisees and Sadducees come to Jesus again seeking a sign "to test" (πειράζω) him. Before Matthew 16, the verb πειράζω is only used in chapter 4 of Satan's testing Jesus. In Matthew 16, and several times thereafter, it is used of the Pharisees attempts to test Jesus, or trap him in his words so that he might be shown to be a fraud (see Matt 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35).⁸⁴

Further, the reference to the religious leaders as "evil" should be highlighted. This is expressed several times in Matthew, beginning in 9:4, where Jesus asked the scribes, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" However, in chapter 12, the notion of the religious leaders as evil becomes much more pronounced. In 12:34, Jesus asks, "You offspring of serpents! How are you able to speak good, being evil?" Jesus then continues his indictment: in contrast to the good, "The evil man from the evil treasure casts forth evil" (v. 35). The thrice-repeated descriptor of the religious leaders, of whom Jesus is still speaking, emphasizes his condemnation of them as evil. Previously the Pharisees were described as evil because they asked for a sign in 12:39 (cf. 16:1), and as noted it is used in connection with their testing of Jesus, just as Satan also tested him. Similarly, at the pinnacle of the Sermon on the Mount, at the apex of the Lord's prayer, Jesus petitions the Father, "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One" (6:13).⁸⁵ This is certainly a reference to Satan, and further his temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.⁸⁶ Because

⁸⁴Anderson emphasizes this parallel and concludes that "The use of the word does align them with Satan" (116n2). Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 116–17. See also David Mathewson, "The Apocalyptic Vision of Jesus: Reading Matthew 3:16–4:11 Intertextually," *Tyndale Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (2011): 107.

⁸⁵So Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," 348.

⁸⁶So Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 228.

Christ overcame, his people may now pray for deliverance from such temptation (see discussion of this in chap. 4).

Therefore, the connections between Satan and the religious leaders in these texts are multifaceted. Satan, who is the Evil One, tested Jesus in the wilderness. The religious leaders, who are also evil, tested Jesus by seeking a sign. They are beyond forgiveness because of their words against the Holy Spirit, for the evil one, from the evil treasure, casts forth only evil. As Sim notes, “Both the scribes (9:4) and the Pharisees (12:34; 22:18) are singled out as being evil (*πονηρός/πονηρία*) which means in the context of Matthew’s dualism that they belong on the side of Satan.”⁸⁷

One more layer may be added to this assessment. At the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel, John the Baptist referred to the religious leaders who approached him as “offspring of serpents” and asked “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath?” Such a description is not repeated until Matthew 12, which, as argued above, is the turning point in this cosmic conflict.⁸⁸ In 12:34 Jesus indicts the religious leaders, saying, “You offspring of serpents! How can you speak good, being evil.” Not only are they evil, but they are no better than sons of snakes! The phrase is next used in the midst of the “woe passages” (23:33).⁸⁹ There Jesus says, “Snakes! You offspring of serpents! How can you flee from the judgment of Hell?” This passage is clearly parallel to John’s indictment of the Pharisees in chapter 3.⁹⁰ Thus, with this

⁸⁷Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 185; also S. van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 45.

⁸⁸See discussion of this phrase in Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 102–3. Anderson argues that this repetition is significant in bringing the role of the religious leaders as the enemies of Jesus to its climax.

⁸⁹See discussion in David E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 170–71.

⁹⁰See similar language in CD 19:22.

particular phrase Matthew brackets the rising tension between the promised Messiah, who would crush the serpent's head, and the religious leaders, and so highlights their conflict. In doing so Matthew indicates to his readers that the religious leaders are of that line of the seed of the serpent, who is always opposed to the seed of the woman.⁹¹ Indeed, in the woe passages this is precisely the point. The religious leaders are in a long line of those opposed to the promised seed, for they "close the kingdom in people's faces (23:13–15), make a man "double the son of hell as them," and are "sons of those who murdered the prophets (23:21)."⁹² Thus, the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders is striking. From beginning to the end, the Gospel portrays their continuous and ever-heightening opposition to the plan of God being fulfilled in Christ. Perhaps even more striking is how Matthew progressively weaves into his narrative the notion that this conflict is actually subservient to an even greater conflict. He does this primarily by his association of the religious leaders with Satan himself.⁹³

⁹¹See Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23*, 171n29. Garland notes, "The serpent was widely viewed as the one on whose account death entered the world. In context, the Jewish leaders are the serpents on account of whom death came to Israel" (also Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 51; Osborne, *Matthew*, 113).

⁹²It is noteworthy that Jesus uses similar language in Matt 13:38–39 where the weeds in his parable are "the sons of the Evil One" left alongside the wheat until the coming judgment. In light of this "sons of" language used in connection with the religious leaders, it is likely that Jesus has them in mind in that parable, though the weeds likely represent all who are opposed to God at the final judgment. Further, we find very similar language in the Qumran text 4Q286: 7.2–6, which recounts the curses of the people of God, saying, "Cursed is Belial because of his malevolent purposes . . . and damned are the sons of Belial . . . until their annihilation."

⁹³So Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2011), 245. Strauss states, "They are implacably opposed to Jesus and are so aligned with Satan, who himself is the 'Evil One.'" Also, Kingsbury states, "Since the religious leaders stand forth in the human realm as the principle antagonists of Jesus, Matthew aligns them with Satan and paints them in the darkest of colors." Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, xii. However, note the discussion in Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 39–40. Black tweaks this understanding of the Jewish leaders by suggesting their relationship to Satan is similar to that of Jesus and God. Though not equated with the one, each one's choices more closely align them. Black argues this by pointing to the few examples of religious leaders who are commended (e.g., 8:19; 9:18). These examples, however, should be seen as the exceptions which prove the rule. Based on the arguments given above, it is apparent that Matthew is aligning the religious leaders as a whole decisively on the side of Satan. Thus, as Luz states, "All the Jewish leaders are opponents of Jesus, pure and simple." Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, 27n9.

The Disciples

The status of the disciples as antagonistic or friendly to the mission of Jesus can be difficult to discern. Jesus called his disciples (4:18–22), taught his disciples (5:1), and sent his disciples (10:1–16), and refers to his disciples as his brothers and friends (12:46–9; cf. John 15:5). Indeed, he states that the knowledge of the kingdom has been given to them and veiled from his enemies (13:10). Just a cursory glance of the gospels would seem to suggest that not only are the disciples protagonists in the story, but they are on the front lines with Jesus as he carries out his mission. Yet perhaps the role of the disciples is not so simple. The ambiguity of the characterization of the disciples has often been recognized in Mark’s gospel. For example, Strauss recognizes this ambiguity and states, “Yet despite this special status and responsibility, the Twelve are more often examples of failure than success.”⁹⁴ While Strauss recognizes Mark as the most negative Gospel toward the disciples, and also notes that Mark is the only Gospel to not describe their recovery, Matthew does portray the disciples in such a way as to leave their status as friends of Jesus’ mission ambiguous at times.⁹⁵ This aspect of Matthew’s portrayal will be analyzed here.

ὀλιγόπιστος

Matthew’s negative portrayal of the disciples is first ascertained in his description of the disciples as ὀλιγόπιστοις (having little faith). In 8:23–27, as Jesus and his disciples are crossing the sea on a boat, a great storm arises and the disciples are terrified. Jesus, on the other hand, is fast asleep. The disciples awaken him crying out for help in fear of their lives. Jesus, upon seeing their fear, states, “Why are you

⁹⁴Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 197–98; see also Frank S. Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 75. Thielman recognizes this negativity in Mark yet emphasizes the fact that the disciples are never construed as enemies of Jesus.

⁹⁵So Wright, who states, “[Jesus] came to see and experience the disciples . . . as ambiguous; allies after a fashion, but also a potential threat.” N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 462.

so fearful? You of little faith!” (8:26).⁹⁶ Jesus then commands the storm and it subsides, demonstrating that the disciples have no need to fear.⁹⁷ The disciples are amazed and ask “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?” (8:27). Early in the narrative, the disciples fail to grasp the fullness of who Jesus is and the extent of his authority. Contrast this with the next passage, where demons instantly recognize not only who Jesus is, but his absolute authority as well.⁹⁸

The word *ὀλιγόπιστος* occurs again in 14:31, but this time it is only used of Peter. Here the scenario is the same, and again the disciples are portrayed as being afraid for their lives because of a storm. Their fear increases exponentially as they see a figure, whom they think might be a ghost, walking by them on the water. Jesus calms their fears and Peter, upon realizing it is the Lord, requests that Jesus command him to walk out on the water. As Peter steps out onto the sea, he becomes afraid and begins to sink. Jesus saves him and rebukes him, “You of little faith, why do you doubt?” (14:31). This account is very much parallel to the previous, except that it zooms in on Peter’s actions.⁹⁹ One significant difference, however, is that after

⁹⁶Many scholars suggest that Matthew here softens Mark’s “Do you still have no faith?” (cf. Osborne [*Matthew*, 311]). Interestingly, Osborne later seems to indicate that this is actually not the case and that Matthew emphasizes the disciples lack of faith “in much the same way” as Mark (314). van Aarde is likely correct that Matthew reinterprets Mark’s “disbelief” as meaning “little faith.” Andries van Aarde, “Little Faith: A Pragmatic-Linguistic Perspective on Matthew’s Portrayal of Jesus’ Disciples,” *In Die Skriflig* 49 (April 2015): 2.

⁹⁷Perhaps it is noteworthy that Jesus’ rebuke of the sea is a technical term for the command of a demon, as argued by Howard Clark Kee, “The Terminology of Mark’s Exorcism Stories,” *New Testament Studies* 14, no. 2 (January 1968): 232–46; also Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 160. McNeile states, “Jesus rebuked the winds and the lake as though they were conscious beings possessed with demons . . . the incident is . . . an instance of the subduing of the powers of evil, which was one of the signs of the nearness of the Kingdom.” A. H. McNeile, *Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Baker Book House, 1980), 111.

⁹⁸Van Aarde argues that “little faith” is synonymous with fear in Matthew’s gospel, which would strengthen the connection to demons who always respond to Jesus with fear. van Aarde, “Little Faith,” 1–5.

⁹⁹It is possible that the present tense *λέγει* following two aorist verbs puts Jesus’ rebuke of Peter in the foreground of the action (see discussion in Porter, *Idioms*, 23–25). However, Wallace and others have argued that this is likely not the case, at least in the narrative genre. Stephen Wallace, “Figure and Ground: The Interrelationships of Linguistic

this episode the disciples do not wonder about who Jesus is, but rather they worship him as the Son of God (14:33).¹⁰⁰

The next use of *ὀλιγόπιστος* is found in Matthew 16:8. Here Jesus had just multiplied seven loaves of bread and a few fish to feed four thousand men plus women and children (15:32–39). Jesus then departed on boat and came ashore at Magadan. Once there Jesus had a brief altercation with the Pharisees, in which Jesus rebuked them as an “evil and adulterous generation” because they asked him for a sign. Jesus states, “The appearance of the heavens you know how to interpret, yet you are unable [to interpret] the signs of the times” (16:3). After this encounter, the disciples come to Jesus, and Matthew, in a narrative aside, notes that they had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus exhorts the disciples to “discern and be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees” (16:6). The disciples then discuss amongst themselves Jesus’ meaning, concluding that he said this because they forgot to bring bread. Jesus’ stern rebuke is worth quoting at length:

Why do you discuss amongst yourselves, you of little faith (*ὀλιγόπιστος*), the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand? Neither do you remember the five loaves of the five thousand, nor the seven loaves of the four thousand? How do you not understand that I spoke not concerning bread to you? Rather, be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Several important lenses through which to view this passage shed light on what Matthew’s intends to communicate regarding the disciples. First, it is

Categories,” in *Tense-Aspect: Between Semantics and Pragmatics*, ed. Paul J. Hopper, 201–23 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1982), 208–9; Paul J. Hopper, “Aspect and Foregrounding in Discourse,” in *Discourse and Syntax*, ed. Talmy Givón, *Syntax and Semantics* 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 213–41; Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 174. Regardless of which view is correct, it could be argued from either one that Matthew is highlighting Jesus’ rebuke of Peter, whether in the imperfective *λέγει* or the perfective use of *ἐδίστασας* in Jesus’ question, “Why did you doubt?”

¹⁰⁰While it is perhaps true that the exclamation here places Jesus as Yahweh’s equal (so Osborne, *Matthew*, 577; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 282), it is unlikely that the disciples grasped this to any true extent at this point in the narrative.

important to consider this passage *contextually*. Just before this encounter, Jesus had a similar encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees in which they asked for a sign, and he rebuked them as an adulterous generation, saying they will not receive the sign they are seeking (16:1–4). The disciples, however, not only received a sign in the miraculous feedings, but had received numerous demonstrations of the power of Jesus, yet like the religious leaders they are plagued by lack of faith.¹⁰¹ Thus, Matthew is drawing a connection between the disciples and the clearly antagonistic religious leaders. As Versepunt states, “At the very moment that Jesus warns his disciples against the ἀπιστία of the Pharisees and Sadducees, their ὀλιγοπιστία ironically demonstrates the pertinence of his words.”¹⁰² Although it is apparent that Matthew’s intent is not to cast them in the same light, the character of the disciples remains ambiguous, and at times leans toward that of Jesus’ enemies rather than his allies. As David Garland notes,

While on the one hand the disciples in Matthew’s Gospel comprehend who Jesus really is, they are yet, on the other hand, inclined to make common cause with the Jewish leaders, the opponents of Jesus. The disciples as leaders are susceptible to the same cataracts that blinded the scribes and Pharisees.¹⁰³

Matthew’s fourfold repetition of οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ Σαδδουκαῖοι throughout the narrative ties the lack of belief of the Jewish leaders to the little faith of the disciples.¹⁰⁴ Thus,

¹⁰¹The difference between ἀπιστία and ὀλιγόπιστοι is of course important, and clearly distinguishes between the lack of faith in the disciples and that of Jesus’ enemies (cf. Donald Versepunt, “The Faith of the Reader and the Narrative of Matthew 13:53–16:20,” *JNT* 46 [June 1992]: 20). However, such a distinction should not be overstated, especially in light of Jesus’ combining of the two in Matt 17:17, which is discussed below.

¹⁰²Versepunt, “the Faith of the Reader,” 20. Carson similarly states, “Jesus’ charge (v.11) against the disciples ran deep. Jesus had already denounced the Pharisees and Sadducees for their particular ‘teaching’ that demanded manipulative signs instead of believing in the bountiful evidence already supplied. And now the disciples are perilously close to the same unbelief in Jesus’ person and miracles.” Carson, *Matthew*, 362–63.

¹⁰³Garland, *The Intention of Matthew*, 23, 38.

¹⁰⁴Versepunt states, “A vital clue to the significance of the incident (Jesus’ waring in verse 6) for Matthew lies in the obvious link which the Evangelist has forged with the immediately preceding episode by means of the common expression οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ Σαδδουκαῖοι (vv. 1, 6, 11, 12).” Versepunt, “The Faith of the Reader,” 19–20.

in both the ἀπιστία of the Jewish leaders and the ὀλιγοπιστία of the disciples lies a failure to adequately grasp the nature of Jesus' authority.

Second, this passage should be considered *intratextually*, that is, considering the allusion to or foreshadowing of other passages within Matthew. One passage that the present text could allude to is found in Matthew 13. There, Jesus explains that his parables serve to conceal the truth from the crowds, for it has not been granted that they should understand them. It should also be noted that the Pharisees had in Matthew 12 accused Jesus of being in league with Satan, and Jesus went on to rebuke them, saying that their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit could not be forgiven. Jesus then quotes Isaiah, who prophesied that “you will indeed hear, yet never understand; you will indeed see, but never perceive. And with difficulty they hear with their ears, and their eyes they have closed” (13:14–15). This is a prophecy concerning a people with obstinate and unbelieving hearts, yet here Matthew uses similar language to rebuke the disciples and their lack of understanding. He states, οὐπω νοεῖτε . . . πῶς οὐ νοεῖτε (Do you not yet perceive/understand? . . . how do you not understand?). The semantic domain of νοέω includes both the concepts of συνίημι (to understand or perceive) and ὁράω (to see clearly or perceive). It is likely, therefore, that while Matthew does not want to place the disciples in the same category of those with unbelieving hearts from whom the truth is withheld, there are times when their clear lack of understanding resembles the unbelief of Jesus' enemies.¹⁰⁵

That this is Matthew's intention is perhaps heightened in looking at the text *intertextually*. In the parallel passage in Mark 8, the rebuke of Jesus is much

¹⁰⁵Schreiner says of the disciples, “They were not blind in the same way as the religious leaders . . . nor were they opposed to him as the demons were . . . yet their hearts were impervious and resistant to the Lord.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 464.

harsher and includes an allusion to Jeremiah. Jesus states, “Why do you discuss amongst yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand (νοέω) nor perceive (συνίημι)? Have your hearts become hard? Having eyes, do you not see, and having ears to you not hear?” (8:17–18). As in Matthew, Mark here alludes to an earlier passage in which Jesus explains that parables are meant to keep the truth from those whose hearts have been hardened (Mark 4:11–12). Again, as in Matthew, Mark has recently recounted the indictment of Jesus against the Pharisees, who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and so demonstrated their hard hearts. Strauss points this out as well:

They could no longer comprehend what their ears heard or their eyes saw. The similar language here suggests that the disciples are in danger of the same thing, going the way of the Pharisees and turning their backs on the kingdom of God. Their fate hangs in the balance.¹⁰⁶

In light of the above, Matthew’s parallel with Mark, his allusion to Matthew 13, and by extension to Isaiah 9 and Jeremiah 5:21, it is apparent that in this passage Matthew links the disciples’ ὀλιγόπιστος with the ἀπιστία of those whose hearts are hardened.

Finally, this connection is further explicated in the account of the epileptic boy in Matthew 17:14–21. While this text was discussed above, what it reveals concerning the disciples is important here. Here the disciples are unable to heal the epileptic boy possessed by a demon. Jesus’ response is telling: ὧ γενεὰ ἀπίστος καὶ δειστραμμένη, ἕως πότε μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν (v. 17).¹⁰⁷ Jesus

¹⁰⁶Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 197.

¹⁰⁷For a helpful discussion of the intertextuality of the phrase γενεὰ ἀπίστος καὶ δειστραμμένη, see Dale C. Allison, *The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 57–59. Allison’s discussion highlights the gravity of this statement, particularly how γενεὰ language became attached to the wicked generations of both Noah’s day and the Israelites in the wilderness. Allison states, “Jesus’ generation, which has not heeded his proclamation, resembles the generation of the wilderness, which grumbled and rebelled . . . despite God’s mighty salvific acts.” Thus, that Jesus groups the disciples in that phrase here is striking.

condemns them as part of a "unbelieving and perverse generation."¹⁰⁸ This statement provides a stark contrast to what Jesus revealed to the disciples on the mountain. In verse 20, after asked why they were ineffective, Jesus tells the disciples, διὰ τὴν ὀλιγοπιστίαν ὑμῶν. In this text the ὀλιγόπιστος of the disciples is directly connected to the ἄπιστος of those who have opposed Jesus. Further, the statement regarding faith the size of a mustard seed further confirms just how strong of an indictment against their faith Jesus is making (Matt 17:20).¹⁰⁹ Therefore, though perhaps stated too strongly, Ridderbos seems justified in stating that the disciples had “succumbed to the influence of the demon or to the arguments of Jesus' adversaries . . . they too were therefore serving the devil more than Jesus, and they in effect had become His enemies.”¹¹⁰

ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου

Matthew 16:13–28 is an important passage for the present discussion, for it most clearly illustrates this tension observed in Matthew’s characterization of the

¹⁰⁸There is disagreement as to whether the disciples should be included in this indictment. Some argue that the words themselves are never used to describe the disciples and so it should be seen as referring to the crowd (so Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 408; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC, vol. 33b [Dallas: Word Books, 1995], 504). However, because the phrase is not only introduced by a reference to the failure of the disciples, but also is followed by an indictment on their faith, it seems likely that they are at least included in Jesus’ statement, if not the primary referent (Nolland states, “Here the disciples represent the present generation in its failure to respond to the ministry of Jesus, much as ‘some of the scribes and Pharisees’ do in Mt. 12:38–39.” Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 712. Also Morris, *Matthew*, 447). See especially the discussion in Held, “Matthäus als Interpret,” 181. Held states, “so kann man deutlich wahrnehmen, wie diese Klage Jesu über das ungläubige Geschlecht eingerahmt wird durch die beiden Erwähnungen des Jungerversagens das von Jesus auf den Kleinglauben zurückgeführt wird. Es kann nicht anders sein, als dass Matthäus diese Worte Jesu auf die Jünger bezieht.” Twelftree argues that the disciples are included in the indictment and that their failure is the purpose of the narrative. Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism Among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 171. Also note that while Luz does argue that the rebuke does not include the disciples, he concedes that “The context most naturally suggests the disciples, since mention has just been made of their failure.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 408.

¹⁰⁹Twelftree states, “The magnitude of Jesus’ criticism . . . is seen in light of the saying that ‘faith the size of a mustard seed’ is sufficient to do even the impossible.” Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 171.

¹¹⁰Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 324; similarly, Osborne states, “The disciples have joined the rest of the Jewish people in their unbelief and perversity.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 656.

disciples. Verse 13 begins with Jesus asking the disciples to articulate common views concerning his identity. After suggesting several, Jesus asks, “And who do you say I am?” Peter, seemingly without hesitation, states, σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος! (16:16). Jesus commends Peter as having received this revelation from the Father. It should be noted that here it appears Peter speaks for the disciples as a whole, for the passage ends with Jesus exhorting the disciples not to reveal his identity as the Christ (16:20).¹¹¹ This is a big step forward for the disciples, who up to this point seem to have failed to grasp the true extent of Jesus’ identity in both their fear and their little faith.

Sadly, this high point does not last. After Peter’s true confession regarding Jesus’ identity, Jesus further explains what this entails. He outlines how he must suffer in Jerusalem at the hands of the religious leaders, be killed, and rise on the third day (16:21). As Matthew recounts, “And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke (ἐπιτιμᾶν) saying, “[God] be merciful to you (ἰλέως σοι), this shall never happen to you!”¹¹² As in Peter’s confession above, he here speaks on behalf of the disciples as a group.¹¹³ Jesus then offers a stern rebuke of Peter: “Get behind me Satan (ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ), you are a stumbling block (σκάνδαλον) for me, because you are not minded toward the things of God, but rather the things of man” (16:23). The word σκάνδαλον is used throughout the New Testament, and it always has to do with temptation to sin.¹¹⁴ It carries with it the idea of setting a trap, or an

¹¹¹Here see helpful discussion in Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 92–95; also Michael Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 141–43; Osborne, *Matthew*, 626; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 468; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 301; France states, “Simon Peter articulates a conviction that was no doubt at least embryonic in all of them.” France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 253. Also Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 68; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 31.

¹¹²See discussion of this translation on page 104 below.

¹¹³Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 465.

¹¹⁴Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 311.

obstacle in the way of the fulfillment of an intended goal.¹¹⁵ It is “an action or circumstance that leads one to act contrary to a proper course of action or set of beliefs.”¹¹⁶ In attempting to stand in the way of Jesus’ suffering, Peter’s actions are identical to that of Satan, who attempted the very same thing in Matthew 4 when Jesus began his ministry.¹¹⁷ In Matthew, the name *σατανᾶς* appears in only two other places: the temptation account (4:10) and the Beelzebul Controversy (12:26), two passages which as we’ll see in chapter five are of primary importance to the plot of Matthew’s narrative.

The connection Matthew makes between this passage and the temptation account is apparent.¹¹⁸ First, Peter’s confident assertion *σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος* harkens back to Satan’s conditional refrain *εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ* in the temptation account. In both accounts, the one speaking indicates that Jesus is truly the Son of God.¹¹⁹ In Matthew 4, *εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ* is a first-class conditional sentence, which perhaps indicates that the condition is stated as a reality.¹²⁰ In other words, it is assumed to be true by the one making the statement. As Robertson

¹¹⁵So Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 480; Osborne, *Matthew*, 636.

¹¹⁶*BDAG*, 926.

¹¹⁷Thus, “Standing in opposition to the will of God is to be on the side of Satan, even to be doing his work” (Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 200).

¹¹⁸So Witherington, *Matthew*, 318; see also discussion in S. Garrett, *The Temptation of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 82. Garrett, commenting on this text in Mark’s Gospel (8:33), states, “The severity of Jesus’s rebuke of Peter . . . corresponds to the magnitude of Jesus’ temptation here: the rebuke is sharp because the temptation is profound.”

¹¹⁹Also note that Peter’s affirmation echoes the words of the Father at Jesus’ baptism (see Witherington, *Matthew*, 318).

¹²⁰So Quarles, *Matthew*, 39; Kristian A. Bendoraitis, *Behold, the Angels Came and Served Him: A Compositional Analysis of Angels in Matthew*, LNTS 523 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 55; Turner, *Matthew*, 127; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 84; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 361; Carson, *Matthew*, 112; Gundry, *Matthew*, 55. However, see n. 35 above on Boyer, who calls into question this understanding. Boyer, “First Class Conditions.” Thus, while caution should be exercised in automatically assuming a first class condition is assumed true, the context here indicates that Satan is not doubting Jesus’ sonship but rather tempting him to misuse it.

states,

The temptation, to have force, must be assumed as true. The devil knew it to be true. He accepts that fact as a working hypothesis in the temptation. He is anxious to get Jesus to prove it, as if it needed proof for Christ's own satisfaction and for his reception.¹²¹

A second connection lies in the intention of both Satan and Peter to keep Christ from the cross. Satan, on the one hand, tempts Jesus to utilize his power as the Son of God in order to prove his identity and thus avoid his crucifixion. Similarly, Peter, in recognizing Jesus' divine sonship, suggests to Jesus that in light of his identity he should not suffer the humiliation of death. Thus, "in Peter's plausible suggestion the evil one was again tempting the Messiah to abandon the path of duty and suffering and take a short and easy course to success."¹²² Peter rebukes Jesus, saying, "God forbid it, Lord; this shall never happen to you!" (16:22). The phrase *ἰλεώς σοι* reads quite literally "mercy to you."¹²³ Always in the LXX and mostly in the NT the adjective *ἰλεώς* is used of God, and in a few places has the sense of "far be it for me/you!"¹²⁴ Thus, here Peter is calling upon God to not allow this to happen to Jesus, for Peter cannot conceive of the Son of God suffering in such a way by the hand of his enemies.¹²⁵ There is perhaps a slight echo in this phrase and Satan's calling upon Jesus to prove his sonship by hurling himself off the temple in front of all his enemies, for surely God will rescue him from such harm. In any case,

¹²¹A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1934), 1007.

¹²²Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 43; also Harrington states, "Those who deny Jesus' passion and death are on the side of Satan (see 4:10) . . . Jesus indicates that [Peter's] false interpretation of Jesus' messiahship is a temptation." Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 248–49.

¹²³Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 248.

¹²⁴See discussion in *BDAG*, 474; Quarles notes that in the LXX the phrase sometimes translates the expression "may it never be!" and that this is its sense here. Quarles, *Matthew*, 191.

¹²⁵So Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 232; France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 259.

it is clear that in both texts the one speaking to Jesus is antagonistic towards his fulfilling of the Father’s will that he suffer and die on the cross. As France states, “Peter himself is cast in Satan’s role as the tempter (cf. 4:10).”¹²⁶

Another important connection lies in Jesus’ rebuke of both Satan and Peter.¹²⁷ Notice the parallel in Table 1:

Table 1. Narrative links between Matthew 4:10 and 16:23

	Matthew 4:10	Matthew 16:23
Address	τότε λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς	ὁ δὲ στραφεὶς εἶπεν τῷ Πέτρῳ
Rebuke	ὑπάγε, [ὀπίσω μου] σατανᾶ	ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ·
Reason	γέγραπται γάρ· κύριον τὸν θεόν σου προσκυνήσεις	ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ

In each case, then, the antagonist makes a claim regarding Jesus’ identity followed by a statement meant to thwart Jesus’ mission. Jesus then addresses each one, commands them to cease in their attempts to keep him from the Father’s will, and then gives a reason for not giving into to their temptation. In addition to the overall structure, I want to focus in on Jesus’ rebuke. The only difference between what Jesus says to Satan and what he says to Peter is the insertion of *ὀπίσω μου* in 16:23. Interestingly, there is a textual variant present at 4:10. This variant inserts *ὀπίσω μου*, making the text exactly parallel to that of 16:23.¹²⁸ While it is possible that

¹²⁶France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 260.

¹²⁷Osborne, *Matthew*, 636; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 311.

¹²⁸Texts which include the variant are Codex Ephraemi (corrector; C04c), Codex Bezae (D05), along with several other codices, the Majority Text, and several Latin manuscripts. See discussion in Phillip Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008); also Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 10.

some scribes inadvertently harmonized 4:10 to 16:23, recalling Jesus' words in the latter text, it is also possible that scribes noticed the parallel and added the words to make Matthew's intention clear to the reader.¹²⁹ In either case, the variant shows that early scribes and readers recognized the clear parallel between the two texts.¹³⁰

It therefore seems apparent that Matthew intended his readers to observe the similarities between both Satan's and Peter's temptation of Jesus on his way to fulfilling his Father's mission.¹³¹ Thus, they can each rightly be called a *σκάνδαλον* to Jesus with regard to the fulfilling of his mission on earth.¹³² Jesus both points to their errors with regard to his identity and mission, and rebukes them for attempting to dissuade him from obedience to the Father. As Schreiner notes, "It was not enough for the disciples to . . . understand that he was the Messiah . . . such a view was satanic if it also denied that his destiny as the Messiah was also suffering and death."¹³³ Closely following this passage is another which serves to sharpen Matthew's portrayal of the disciples, namely, the transfiguration.

¹²⁹Also see Harrington, who notes further that the Lukan parallel "does not contain the phrase, suggesting that Matthew saw a connection between the two incidents." Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 67.

¹³⁰So Leroy Andrew Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 224; Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 96.

¹³¹Neudecker notes that in rabbinic Judaism, "If a disciple quarrels with his master it is as though he quarreled with God; if he expresses resentment against his master, it is as though he expressed it against God; if he imputes evil to his master, it is as though he imputed it to God (bSan 110a)." Reinhard Neudecker, "Master-Disciple/Disciple-Master Relationship in Rabbinic Judaism and in the Gospels," *Gregorianum* 80, no. 2 (1999): 258.

¹³²In light of this fact, Barclay's understanding of Jesus' meaning of *ὀπίσω μου* as essentially "become my follower again" seems unlikely. Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, *The New Daily Study Bible* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 1:175. Rather, Jesus tells Peter to get behind him because he is indeed a stumbling block before him on his way to the cross. Here Witherington and Keener seem to agree with Barclay. Witherington, *Matthew*, 321; Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 275. Stoutenburg suggests the phrase contains both the positive and negative senses. Dennis C. Stoutenburg, "'Out Of My Sight!', 'Get Behind Me!', Or 'Follow After Me!' There Is No Choice in God's Kingdom," *JETS* 36 (1993): 173-78.

¹³³Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 465-66.

μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν

Matthew 17:1–13, also known as the account of Jesus’ transfiguration, has been the subject of much interpretive attention, however, the focus here will be on the connection of this text to Matthew 16:13–28. In fact, it is likely that these two accounts should be viewed as a unit. The time indicator Καὶ μεθ’ ἡμέρας ἕξ is a rare occurrence in the gospels and perhaps indicates that this pericope should be connected with the previous, with the latter shedding light on the former.¹³⁴ Further, there are structural, thematic, and textual parallels that make this connection clear. In each text there is a recognition or demonstration of Jesus identity (17:2, 5; 16:16),¹³⁵ a misunderstanding of that identity on the part of the disciples (17:4; 16:22),¹³⁶ and a divine rebuke (17:5; 16:23). Following the rebuke, there is further explication concerning Jesus’ mission (17:9–13; 16:24–28). There are also several textual and thematic parallels here. First, note that it is Peter who represents the disciples throughout both texts (17:4–5; 16:16–19, 22–3).¹³⁷ Second, Jesus’ sonship is emphasized in both passages. In 16:16, Peter testifies that Jesus is the Christ, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, and in 17:5, the Father says to Peter οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός. Also, in both 17:9, 12 and 16:13, 27–28, Jesus refers to himself as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.¹³⁸ Third, in both passages, Jesus’ suffering and his resurrection are

¹³⁴So Morris, *Matthew*, 437; Carson, *Matthew*, 183; A. D. A. Moses, *Matthew’s Transfiguration Story and Jewish-Christian Controversy*, JSNTSup 122 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 114; Benjamin Wisner Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1930), 111; Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 259–60; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 316. Quarles suggests the phrase “prob. means six days after Jesus made the promise in 16:28 that some disciples would soon see him come as a king.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 195.

¹³⁵Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 316; Osborne, *Matthew*, 652.

¹³⁶Ridderbos says of Peter in 17:4, “He was not giving honor to the Lord but was rather working against Him.” Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 319.

¹³⁷So Wilkins, *Matthew*, 31.

¹³⁸It is perhaps significant that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου occurs in 16:13 and 17:12 forming an inclusio around the entire pericope (so also Moses, *Matthew’s Transfiguration Story*, 115).

highlighted. In 17:9–12, Jesus commands his disciples not to tell what they saw until he νεκρῶν ἐγερθῆ and that he was about πάσχειν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν (i.e., οἱ γραμματεῖς, v. 10). So also in 16:21, he explains to his disciples that he must “suffer many things” (πολλὰ παθεῖν) at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and the scribes (γραμματέων) and be put to death, and “be raised on the third day” (τῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι). Thus, not only do these passages bear structural similarities, but there is woven through them a “network of ideas,” both at a linguistic as well as a thematic level, which “bind 16:13–17:13 together as a unit.”¹³⁹

In conclusion, we have seen the connection between the incident at Ceasarea Philippi with both the temptation account as well as the transfiguration (see Table 2 below). It is likely that Matthew views the latter two as further developing the first. In other words, Satan’s temptation, designed to keep Jesus from fulfilling his Father’s mission, is not only carried out by Jesus’ enemies (i.e., the demons, and the religious leaders), but also his closest confidants, the disciples.¹⁴⁰ It would be simplistic then to conclude that “The disciples are ‘with Jesus,’ the Jewish leaders are ‘against Jesus.’”¹⁴¹ Peter, as representative of the entire group has become a stumbling block before Jesus on his way to the cross, and by extension his

¹³⁹So Moses, *Matthew’s Transfiguration Story*, 115; also Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 224. For the importance of paying attention to the network of ideas as well as the use of language, see J. Riches and A. Millar, “Conceptual Change in the Synoptic Tradition,” in *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study*, ed. A. E. Harvey (London: SPCK Publishing, 1985), 42–48.

¹⁴⁰So Witherington, who states, “Peter unwittingly serves as Satan’s tool here, ironically at the precise moment he also gained a partial insight into Jesus’s identity.” Witherington, *Matthew*, 321. Cf. Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 242. Strauss states, “While Mark’s disciples may be regarded almost as antidisciples, starkly contrasted with Jesus by their lack of faith and understanding, Matthew’s may better be called disciples in process.” In light of the above, I would differ with Strauss in that Matthew does indeed seem to present the disciples as antidisciples, at times opposed to Jesus’ true mission. Indeed, like the religious leaders the disciples are portrayed as having Satan’s interests in mind rather than God’s. The difference then has more to do with Jesus’ view of and purpose for the disciples, rather than their natural response to him.

¹⁴¹Wilkins, *Discipleship*, 231.

resurrection, victory over death, and the redemption of the cosmos.¹⁴² The conflict is apparent, and that it is cosmic in nature is clearly ascertained from a careful study of Matthew’s intricate use of linguistic and thematic parallels.¹⁴³

Table 2. Links between 3:16–4:11, 16:13–28, and 17:1–13

	Matt 3:16–4:1–11	Matt 16:13–28	Matt 17:1–13
Structural	Jesus’ identity (4:3, 6) Misunderstanding (4:6) Rebuke (4:10)	Jesus’ identity (16) Misunderstanding (22) Rebuke (23) Explanation (21, 24–28)	Jesus’ identity (17:2, 5) Misunderstanding (17:4) Rebuke (17:5) Explanation (17:9–13)
Textual	υἱὸς εἰ τοῦ θεοῦ (4:3, 6) χειρῶν ἀροῦσίν σε (4:6) βασιλείας (4:8) δόξαν (4:8) φωνὴ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν (3:17) οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα (3:17) ὄρος ὑψηλὸν λίαν (4:8)	ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος (16) ἐγερθῆναι (21) υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (13) παθεῖν ἀπὸ (21) βασιλεία (28) δόξη (27)	οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (5) νεκρῶν ἐγερθῆ (9) υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (12) πάσχειν ὑπ’ (12) ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα (5) οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα (5) ὄρος ὑψηλὸν (1)
Thematic	Divine disclosure sonship Misunderstanding Divine approval Kingdom Suffering Satan Testing	Divine disclosure sonship Misunderstanding Divine approval Kingdom Suffering Death, resurrection Satan Peter as representative Testing	Divine disclosure sonship Misunderstanding Divine approval Kingdom Suffering Death, resurrection Peter as representative

¹⁴²Wilkins, *Discipleship*, 222.

¹⁴³Kingsbury seems to agree with this assessment of the disciples when he suggests that Matthew’s characterization of the disciples “confronts the reader with a choice between undivided fealty to God and feckless capitulation to Satan’s authority.” Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 131–42 (also Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 43).

The character of the disciples is complex in Matthew's gospel. What has been argued for here is that often they are presented as antagonists to Jesus' mission.¹⁴⁴ In Matthew's gospel, the disciples often fail to believe, misunderstand Jesus and his mission, and even prove a stumbling block as he seeks to fulfill his mission. They often look more like the enemies of Jesus than they do his followers. Even so, ultimately the disciples are protagonists in Matthew's gospel, and so a more complete assessment of their character will be presented in chapter 5.

Judas

Judas is perhaps the most infamous of the human antagonists in Matthew's gospel.¹⁴⁵ When he is first introduced in the narrative the reason for this infamy is plain. As Matthew is naming the disciples of Jesus he describes Judas as the one "who betrayed him" (10:4).¹⁴⁶ The very next time Judas is named he is doing just that: "Going to the chief priests, Judas Iscariot said "What will you give to me if I (καὶ γὰρ)¹⁴⁷ will deliver (παραδίδωμι) him over to you" (26:14).¹⁴⁸ As the narrative continues, Judas is reclining at the table with the twelve and Jesus predicts that one

¹⁴⁴Marulli states, "In Matthew, the servants embody a certain *ambiguity*: they are protagonists and potential antagonists simultaneously." Luca Marulli, "The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew XVI, 26-30) – a Quest for Its Original Formulation and Its Role in the Preaching of the Historical Jesus," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 2 (2010): 70.

¹⁴⁵Osborne notes that Judas is "mentioned more than any other disciple except Peter." Osborne, *Matthew*, 373. Further, it is only Judas and Peter whose futures are foretold—the one the rock of the church and the other the betrayer of Jesus.

¹⁴⁶Plummer states, "Like the reproach, 'who made Israel to sin,' which clings to the memory of Jeroboam . . . so the terrible indictment, 'who also betrayed him,' clings in some form or other to the memory of Judas Iscariot." Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 148.

¹⁴⁷For an interpretation of καὶ γὰρ as introducing a conditional protasis, see *BDAG*, 487; Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 951; however, Quarles does not read it as conditional, but rather states, "The betrayal is not the condition for the payment. The payment is the condition for the betrayal." Quarles, *Matthew*, 312.

¹⁴⁸Senior notes the emphasis placed on Judas being "one of the twelve" which further highlights the wickedness of the betrayal. Donald Senior, *The Passion Narrative According to Matthew: A Redactional Study*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 39 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1982), 43.

of them will betray him. The disciples begin to ask, “Is it I, Lord?” Jesus says the betrayer is the one who dipped his hand in the bowl μετ’ ἐμοῦ.¹⁴⁹ Jesus then ominously states that what is about to happen to him is already determined, however, “Woe to the man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed (παραδίδωμι); better were it for him if that man had not been born” (26:25).¹⁵⁰ As Plummer rightly notes, “Judas is the instrument, in one sense of the Divine decree that the Messiah must suffer, in another of Satan’s desire that he should commit this sin.”¹⁵¹ At this point Judas speaks up, “Is it I, Rabbi?”¹⁵² Jesus’ answer is somewhat ambiguous, yet is clearly meant to be affirmative: σὺ εἶπας.¹⁵³ Judas appears next as Jesus is speaking to his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, where he leads “a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people” (26:47). Here again Judas is linked to the Jewish leaders and is shown as the one leading them in their plans to kill Jesus. In an ironic gesture, Judas points Jesus out by a kiss and says, “Greetings (χαῖρε), Rabbi!”¹⁵⁴ In this way Judas becomes the one who betrayed

¹⁴⁹See discussion in F. Charles Fensham, “Judas’ Hand in the Bowl and Qumran,” *Revue de Qumran* 5, no. 2 (April 1965): 259–61. Fensham argues that μετ’ ἐμοῦ suggests that Judas went out of turn and so denied Jesus’ leadership and demonstrated himself to be a rebel. However, Carson argues the purpose of the statement is not to identify the exact identity of the betrayer, but only that he is a close friend and thus “highlights the enormity of the betrayal.” Carson, *Matthew*, 534. Also Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 481; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 767; Osborne, *Matthew*, 965.

¹⁵⁰Some have argued that Judas is somehow exonerated by the fact that he is actually fulfilling God’s plan by his actions; however, the context clearly does not support this. See B. J. Oropeza, “Judas’ Death and Final Destiny in the Gospels and Earliest Christian Writings,” *Neotestamentica* 44, no. 2 (2010): 348; Witherington, *Matthew*, 483; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 480.

¹⁵¹Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 360.

¹⁵²See discussion in Senior, who notes that Rabbi here is meant to be contrasted with “Lord” which Matthew places on the lips of the disciples. This places Judas firmly in the camp of the opponents of Jesus. Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 70–71 (see discussion below).

¹⁵³So Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 406; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 768; Carson, *Matthew*; Quarles, *Matthew*, 315; Osborne, *Matthew*, 966. See also Plummer, who suggests that Jesus intends to be vague rather than directly affirm the identity of the betrayer. Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 361.

¹⁵⁴Hagner argues that Judas’ use of “Rabbi” indicates he has “gone over to the opponents of Jesus.” Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 7881. Also Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*,

Jesus.¹⁵⁵ As Plummer notes, “Judas is now wholly on the side of the enemy.”¹⁵⁶

The above account of Judas’ betrayal of Jesus is well known. However, there are a few points of note. First, each time Judas is mentioned, Matthew points out he is one of the twelve, and that he is the one who would betray Jesus.¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates clearly that from the beginning Judas’ purpose was one of enmity with Jesus.¹⁵⁸ While other Gospel writers make this point even more explicit, it is not hidden by Matthew. Second, Matthew links Judas to the religious leaders, who feature prominently throughout the narrative as in league with Satan in the cosmic battle.¹⁵⁹ This is apparent when Judas initiates his betrayal by going to the chief priests (τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς), as well as when he is the one leading the religious leaders as they approach the garden to arrest Jesus (26:14; 47–8). Further, Jesus’ pronouncement of woe upon Judas echoes the woes against those religious leaders who have continually rejected their Messiah (23:13–15).¹⁶⁰ Notice in those woes Jesus condemns the Jewish leaders for making those who follow them “a double son

166; Quarles, *Matthew*, 314–15; Osborne, *Matthew*, 966. Harrington notes this is how the religious leaders refer to Jesus. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 256. Witherington notes both that Judas is the only disciple to use this term for Jesus, and that using this term puts Judas in the camp of the religious leaders. Witherington, *Matthew*, 483 (also Osborne, *Matthew*, 983).

¹⁵⁵Lachs notes that “a disciple is not permitted to greet the teacher first, since it would imply equality and hence an insult to the master.” Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 416. For this and other rules of conduct between disciple and master, see Moses Aberbach, “Relations between Master and Disciple in the Talmudic Age,” in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday* (London: Soncino Press, 1966), 8–17; also Neudecker, “Master–Disciple/Disciple–Master Relationship,” 258. That this precise rule was present at the time of Jesus is uncertain due to the later date of the Talmudic literature.

¹⁵⁶Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 373.

¹⁵⁷Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 761; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 494.

¹⁵⁸*Pace* Plummer, who argues that Jesus sought to bring Judas to repentance until the very end. Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 148, 358–59.

¹⁵⁹So Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 166–67; Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 376.

¹⁶⁰So Quarles, *Matthew*, 314; Osborne, *Matthew*, 965.

of hell” (v. 15).

However, there is a third aspect of Matthew’s characterization of Judas that requires some attention, for, in a surprising turn of events only recorded by Matthew, Judas appears to repent of his evil deed, confess his sin, and declare Jesus to be innocent. It may be that Matthew wants to portray Judas’ final state as one of genuine sorrow and return to true discipleship, for all the elements of genuine repentance seem to be present.¹⁶¹ Judas “changed his mind” (*μεταμέλομαι*) and confessed his sin (27:3–4). He also returned the money, showing he no longer desired that which enticed his betrayal and he even declared Jesus’ innocence (v. 4). Further, his remorse is so great he seeks to make restitution by taking his own life, thus in the words of James Tabor and Arthur Droge, “Judas was his own judge *and* executioner. Matthew shows no trace of disapproving of the means of death as such. On the contrary, the implication is that Judas’s act of self–destruction was a result of his remorse and not an additional crime.”¹⁶²

However, there are elements of Matthew’s narrative that don’t comport with this reading. First, as mentioned above, Matthew never refers to Judas without referencing his betrayal or referring to him as “the betrayer.” This would seem to be at cross–purposes with an intention to exonerate Judas in a story of true repentance. Second, the strong language Jesus himself uses of Judas mitigates against this. Jesus’ woe upon Judas is a declaration of judgment upon him in the same vein as those religious leaders who rejected Christ and proved to be in league with Satan. Indeed, Jesus’ statement of woe followed by “it would have been better if he had never been born” is reminiscent of the woes on the religious leaders in chapter 23.¹⁶³ It could be

¹⁶¹Such seems to be the view of Witherington, *Matthew*, 501.

¹⁶²Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 113.

¹⁶³See especially 23:33, where, after pronouncing the woe, Jesus asks “How can you flee from the judgment of hell?” The pronouncement of woe followed by the prediction

argued that the woe upon Judas described his current state, and included a subtle invitation to repentance, which Judas in the end takes advantage of as demonstrated in his contrition. However, it is more likely that Judas' remorse and taking of his own life are likely the fulfillment of the woe pronounced upon him.¹⁶⁴ Judas realized the woe to be true and recognized his life to be in a state of desolation and destruction, and so he hung himself, not out of genuine, heart changing repentance, but out of severe loathing over the perpetual state of his wicked soul.¹⁶⁵

Although Matthew's narrative alone does not determinatively speak to the final state of Judas, his role as antagonist is clear. He is the betrayer throughout and it is by his hand that Jesus is delivered over to the authorities and ultimately crucified at the hands of sinful men.

Pilate

The final human to discuss as an antagonist in Matthew's narrative is Pontius Pilate. It has often been suggested that Pilate is a neutral character, seeking to exonerate Jesus, but whose hands are tied.¹⁶⁶ While at first blush this seems plausible, it is perhaps overly simplistic.¹⁶⁷ First, note the progression of the

that a fate worse than death is coming casts Judas in the same light as the Jewish leaders. Further, in chap. 12, as discussed above, the religious leaders are shown to be outside of the purview of repentance as evidenced by their blaspheming of the Holy Spirit, a state that Jesus seems to be assigning to Judas here as well.

¹⁶⁴Thus, "With this act the terrible prophecy of 26:24 is fulfilled." Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 384.

¹⁶⁵So Calvin, who states, "If Judas had listened to the warning of Christ, there would still have been place for repentance; but since he despised so gracious an offer of salvation, he is given up to the dominion of Satan, that he may throw him into despair." Calvin, *Harmony*, 3:270–71. Also Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 512; Keener, *Matthew*, 380; Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 375.

¹⁶⁶For example, Helen Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 132, 136; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 808–28; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 388–93. Witherington suggests that Pilate's hesitations are simply meant to "tweak the noses of the high priests and make clear he himself was in control and would decide the issue." Witherington, *Matthew*, 503.

¹⁶⁷For a comprehensive argument for the antagonistic nature of Pilate's character

narrative. Judas delivers (παραδίδωμι) Jesus over to the religious leaders, who in turn deliver (παραδίδωμι) him over to Pilate the governor (27:2). Pilate, even after declaring Jesus to be innocent, then delivers (παραδίδωμι) Jesus over to be crucified (27:26). The parallel progression here clearly puts Pilate at the end of a line of antagonistic characters which directly leads to his crucifixion.¹⁶⁸ The dialogue between Pilate and Jesus, his attempt to release Jesus instead of Barabbas, and even his symbolic hand washing declaration of Jesus' innocence cannot in the end "veil his own complicity, even if reluctant and passive, in the death of Jesus."¹⁶⁹

Also, an additional parallel between Pilate, Judas, and the Jewish leaders should be noted. Judas and Pilate both declare Jesus' innocence before the religious leaders, who ignore their expressions of his innocence.¹⁷⁰ It is noteworthy in this regard that Pilate responds to the Jewish leaders in a way that harkens back to their response to Judas. Thus, when Judas attempts to return the money the Jewish leaders respond by saying σὺ ὄψη (27:4), and similarly, when the Jewish leaders call for Jesus' crucifixion, Pilate responds ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε (27:24).¹⁷¹ Further, in response, they both take action which they believe will relieve them of their guilt. Judas returns the

as representing the evil empire of Rome, see Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 145–68;

¹⁶⁸Osborne, *Matthew*, 1021; Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 218; Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 151; especially Keener, who states, "That Pilate handed him over or 'delivered' him up to the soldiers links him to Judas and the chief priests, who had also 'handed Jesus over.' Far from escaping responsibility, Pilate forms the next link in the chain of guilt in which members of all involved parties participated." Keener, *Matthew*, 384.

¹⁶⁹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 827. While Hagner has argued thus far that Pilate is indifferent to the matter and would rather release Jesus, ultimately he concludes that because Pilate was willing to crucify a man whom he considered innocent, he cannot escape guilt.

¹⁷⁰As Osborne states, "Two aspects flow out of this—Jesus's supreme innocence and the guilt of both the Jews and the Romans for Jesus's death." Osborne, *Matthew*, 1020.

¹⁷¹Carson states, "So when Pilate says, 'It is your responsibility' (27:24), Matthew intends his readers to remember the same words spoken by the chief priests and elders to Judas (v.4)." Carson, *Matthew*, 570. Also Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 391; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 827; Osborne, *Matthew*, 1020; Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 382.

money and hangs himself, while Pilate washes his hands of the matter and declares his innocence.¹⁷²

Further, in verse 11 Matthew states that Jesus “stood before the governor (ἡγεμῶν), and the governor (ἡγεμῶν) questioned him.” Notice this is exactly what took place when Jesus was arrested by the religious leaders. He was brought before the high priest and was asked if he indeed was the Christ, the Son of God. Similarly, Pilate questions Jesus, asking “Are you the king of the Jews” (27:11). Jesus responds to Pilate with the only two words he will say to him: σὺ λέγεις. Notice the similarity in Jesus’ interaction with Pilate and how he responded to the religious leaders in chapter 26. Matthew recalls in both cases that Jesus remained silent when accused. Further, Jesus words here echo what he said in response to the high priest’s question regarding his identity. In both cases Jesus’ response affirms his identity as king.

This brief interaction of Jesus with Pilate relates to cosmic conflict in several important ways. First, it highlights Jesus’ authority over Pilate. Note that Matthew uses ἡγεμῶν in describing Pilate. While this word is certainly rightly translated as governor here, it might also allude to the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel where he quotes Micah 5:2: “And you Bethlehem, of the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers (τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν) of Judah; for from you will come a ruler (ἡγούμενος), who will shepherd my people Israel.” Thus, as Jesus stands before a worldly ruler, he in quiet confidence affirms his position of authority and the fact that it is he who gives up his life by his own authority. Second, we see the solidarity between Pilate, Judas, and the religious leaders. They all deliver Jesus over to his death. They all question Jesus and misunderstand his authority. Further, note in Table 3 the language Jesus uses in response to questions from all three characters:

¹⁷²Quarles, *Matthew*, 336; Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 255–56.

Table 3. Parallel in Jesus' response

	Judas	Religious Leaders	Pilate
Question	μήτι ἐγώ εἰμι, ῥαββί;	εἴπης εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ	σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων;
Response	σὺ εἶπας.	σὺ εἶπας...	σὺ λέγεις

In summary, Jesus' interaction with Pilate emphasizes Jesus' true authority in contrast to Pilate's lack thereof. Further, because Pilate's interaction parallels that of Judas and the religious leaders, whom the author identifies as minions of Satan in their opposition to Jesus, he clearly stands in opposition to Jesus in the cosmic conflict. Jesus' response to this opposition betrays a quiet confidence, indicating his control over the situation. Pilate, despite seeming ambivalence and even sympathy towards Jesus, is portrayed in Matthew's narrative as an antagonist who takes action that directly supports the Jewish leaders in their attempt to crucify their Messiah.¹⁷³

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the human antagonists in Matthew's gospel. From Herod, to the religious leaders, the disciples, Judas, and Pilate, we find attempts to thwart Jesus' mission on every front. While each of these characters may on the surface have differing motives for their antagonism toward Jesus' mission, such should not be considered disconnected or isolated from one another. Indeed, what has become apparent is that behind each of these attempts, lies a more sinister

¹⁷³So Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 199. Further Quarles notes an interesting parallel between the statement of Pilate's wife with the two demon-possessed men in 8:29. "The elliptical clause *μηδὲν σοὶ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ* is difficult . . . the closest parallel is the statement of the demon possessed men in 8:29 . . . so the command urges Pilate to have no association with Jesus whatsoever." Quarles, *Matthew*, 334. In light of this parallel, it is further interesting to note that both Pilate's wife and the demon possessed men recognize something about Jesus' identity that the Jewish leaders fail to see. Carter says, "The description of Pilate as governor, and of Jesus as governor/ruler . . . reveals a fundamental conflict between the two. One is a representative of the Roman emperor . . . the other is anointed by Israel's God and attacks the imperial order as a representative of Satan's false claims." Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 159.

antagonist whose primary mission is to thwart the purposes of God in the mission of Christ. This enemy will be discussed in the following chapter, which will analyze the non-human antagonists in Matthew's narrative.

CHAPTER 4

COSMIC CONFLICT: NON-HUMAN ANTAGONISTS

In the previous chapter, we discussed the human antagonists in Matthew's narrative. Matthew paints a picture of open and subtle hostility to Jesus' ministry and mission, such hostility coming most explicitly from the Jewish leaders, but also seen in Herod, Pilate, Judas, and even the disciples. In the present chapter we will uncover non-human antagonists opposed to Jesus' mission and see that Matthew points to an even more fundamental and hostile antagonist who undergirds all other secondary conflicts throughout his narrative.

Demons

Having demonstrated at the outset that cosmic conflict plays a significant role in Matthew's gospel, the reader is not surprised to find that demons feature prominently as antagonists throughout the narrative. Demons are referred to on 19 occasions. Often Matthew mentions these encounters in passing, stating generally that Jesus casts out demons. At other times, Matthew zooms in on individuals who are oppressed by demons, elaborating on the encounter. Such encounters often appear at crucial junctions within the gospel. The following sections will therefore be divided accordingly.

Demonic Oppression—General References

The first reference to demons appears at an important place in Matthew's gospel. After the temptation account in Matthew 4:1–11, Jesus leaves the wilderness and immediately calls his disciples. He begins teaching and proclaiming the "Gospel

of the kingdom” and healing those with diseases. Matthew 4:24 recounts the spread of his fame throughout the region of Syria so that people “brought all those sick, those afflicted with various diseases and torments, those being demonized, and epileptics and paralytics, and he healed them.” This account sets the stage for Jesus’ ministry, specifically his interaction with demons. As Ridderbos notes, “The curing of the demon–possessed thus immediately revealed Jesus’ sovereign power over Satan and his hosts.”¹ In 8:16–17, many come to him who are oppressed by demons and “he cast the spirits out with a word and healed all those having sickness.” In this text, Jesus’ casting out of demons is closely related to his healing of sickness, and is said to be a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4, “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.” Another mention of demons is when Jesus sends out his disciples to proclaim the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 10. In verse 8, he commands them to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.” Thus, Jesus grants to his disciples the same power and authority over the demonic realm that he has exhibited.²

Several important points can be made regarding these general demonic references. First, demons appear on the scene at the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry. As soon as Jesus calls his disciples, many demonized people are brought to him and he casts the demons out. It is apparent that Matthew and the early church understood exorcism to be “a distinctive and important part of his ministry.”³ This leads to the second point: Jesus never struggles in his conflict with the demonic

¹Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, trans. Ray Togtman (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 80.

²So Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 140; Ben Witherington III, *Matthew*, SHBC, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 217–18; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 155, 157.

³Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 129. Twelftree’s conclusion that the summary statements can be set aside as ahistorical solely on the basis that they find their origin in Mark’s hand rather than earlier tradition is unwarranted.

realm.⁴ As in 8:16, Jesus never falters in his ability to exorcise demons, but he “cast out the spirits with a word.”⁵ Third, demons are often closely associated with sickness, and are many times directly responsible for sickness, a fact that will be important when considering sickness and how it relates to cosmic conflict in a later section.

Demonic Oppression—Individual Encounters

In four instances Matthew elaborates on Jesus' conflict with demons. In these instances, individuals who are oppressed by demons seek Jesus for help. Each of these more detailed accounts are important for understanding cosmic conflict in Matthew.

Matthew 8:28–34. In the first of these encounters Jesus enters into the region of the Gadarenes,⁶ and immediately upon entering, “two demon-oppressed men came out to meet him from the tombs” (8:28). These men are described as

⁴So Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 115–16; Osborne, *Matthew*, 156.

⁵Cf. Amanda Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist: His Exorcisms in Social and Political Context* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 149. Witmer argues that the brevity of Jesus' exorcisms in Matthew perhaps indicate “a level of discomfort with the way they might negatively affect Jesus's image as a Jewish wisdom teacher.” This, however, is an unnecessary conclusion. In light of the importance of cosmic conflict, the likely reason for Matthew's brevity is to demonstrate Jesus' clear authority over the demonic realm. He does not need to go through drawn out rituals like the exorcists of antiquity (see Graham H. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now*, Hodder Christian Paperbacks [London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1985], 68); rather, he commands his enemies with a word. Bell notes this authority along with several other aspects that distinguish Jesus' exorcisms from the exorcists of other ancient Jewish writings. Richard H. Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil: Interpreting the Redemption from the Power of Satan in New Testament Theology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 72–77 (see also N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 453). Similarly, Luz argues that the phrase “with a word” highlights Jesus' sovereign authority. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 14.

⁶For a discussion of the textual issues related to the location of this pericope, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002), 18–19; also see Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist*, 166–68. Luz suggests that Matthew amends Mark here for the theological purpose of highlighting that “The time for the proclamation to the Gentiles has not yet come.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 24.

“exceedingly fierce” (χαλεποὶ λίαν) to the extent that no one was able to pass on that road. The demons cry out to Jesus, saying “What is your quarrel with us (τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί; Heb. אַתָּה וְיָיִנוּ), Son of God?” The Greek, literally “what to us and to you,” is a Septuagintism that is often translated as “what do we have to do with you?” and indicates no commonality between the two parties.⁷ However, this meaning does not seem viable in the various contexts in which the phrase is used. In this instance, it does not explain the emphasis of the violent nature of the demons, as well as their hostile approach of Jesus. They seem to recognize impending conflict and act accordingly.⁸ It is clear that demons themselves are directly addressing Jesus because they address him as υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ. Other than by the narrator (1:23; 2:15; 3:17), Jesus has only been referred to as the Son of God by Satan himself in the temptation account (4:3, 6). As Söding correctly notes, “Die Dämonen sind in den Evangelien nicht, wie sonst oft, Häretiker, sondern auf teuflische Weise orthodox.”⁹ The

⁷So Quarles, who states the phrase is “an idiom of the LXX . . . denying that the parties have anything in common.” Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, EGGNT (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 87. Also John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 375. Nolland states that the phrase “represents a denial that the parties have anything in common: ‘We don’t belong together; how can contact with you be in our interest?’” Bauer seems to prefer this sense, yet includes the gloss “leave me alone” which gets closer to the notion of conflict that appears to be present. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2001), 275. Albright and Mann get even closer with their gloss, “why are you interfering with our proper preserve?” W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, AB, vol. 26 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 101. Harrington seems to combine the two understandings by connecting the demon’s belief that they “yet have no business together” with the expectation that the kingdom is yet future. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 120.

⁸So Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 25. See the extensive discussion of this phrase in Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 43–47.

⁹Thomas Söding, “Wenn ich mit dem Finger Gottes die Dämonen austreibe . . .” (Lk 11,20),” in *Die Dämonen—Demons: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, ed. Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 525. Yet at the same time, the statement by the demons is combative, for “in the ancient world it was believed that everyone had a hidden name that expressed their true essence . . . to discover that name was to gain a certain power over a person” (Osborne, *Matthew*, 321). Twelftree, states, “The demons attempted to disarm Jesus by exposing his allegiance and special relationship with God.” Graham H. Twelftree, “Demon, Devil, Satan,” in *DJG*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 166.

antagonistic spiritual forces in this cosmic conflict recognize who they are dealing with, and thus their kingdom is threatened by his presence.¹⁰ This is made clear when they ask, “Have you come before the [appointed] time to torment us? (8:30). The word βασανίζω (torment) is used throughout the NT to mean any sort of pain or torment, whether spiritual, physical, or emotional. In Revelation, the word is used both of demons tormenting the earth's inhabitants (Rev. 9:5), as well as God's people tormenting the unrighteous (Rev. 11:10). In Revelation 12:2, it is used metaphorically of birth pangs to represent the persecution of God's people. Finally, and perhaps most relevant to the current passage, is Revelation 20:10, which states that the Dragon will be thrown, along with the beast and false prophet, into the lake of fire to “be tormented (βασανισθήσονται) day and night forever.” This is relevant because Matthew discusses this in 25:41, where he calls this fire “the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” It seems then that these demons are aware that this is their fate, and that the time for their torment is yet future.¹¹ It is also important that they recognize Jesus as the one able to sentence them to this fate.¹² Indeed, Matthew's phrase πρὸ καιροῦ (“before the time”) is not found in the other gospels and it is likely Matthew's intention to highlight the fact that Jesus' present defeat of demons indicates a final, eschatological defeat of all demonic powers.¹³

Though the reason for the demons' request to be cast into swine, as well as Jesus' granting such requires some speculation, perhaps a couple of points can be

¹⁰So Franz von Holzendorff, *A Short Protestant Commentary on the Books of the New Testament: With General and Special Introductions*, trans. Frances Henry Jones (London: Williams and Norgate, 1884), 77; Witmer calls this phrase a “defense mechanism.” Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist*, 179.

¹¹So Quarles, *Matthew*, 87; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 176; Osborne, *Matthew*, 320.

¹²Perhaps it is noteworthy that in Second Temple literature it is God who has the authority to bring judgment to bear upon demons (cf. *Jub.* 10:9–9; *T. Levi.* 18:12; 1QM 1:1–20).

¹³Also Witmer, *Jesus, The Galilean Exorcist*, 182; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 163–64.

made.¹⁴ First, the first-class condition εἰ ἐκβάλλεις ἡμᾶς does not necessarily indicate uncertainty, but is rather a construction that could rightly be understood to assume the condition to be true.¹⁵ Just as they know Jesus has the authority to torment them, the demons know they must heed his authority and that their place is lost.¹⁶ Second, Jesus' one word response, ὑπάγετε, again demonstrates his supreme authority over the demonic realm (cf. 8:16).¹⁷ As Davies and Allison note, “The sovereign power of Jesus could not be more effectively presented. His word is compulsion.”¹⁸ Third, pigs were considered unclean to Jews, yet when the demons go into them, even the unclean swine cannot handle it and rush to their deaths.¹⁹ This highlights not only

¹⁴Plummer suggests that “A visible effect of the departure of the demons was necessary to convince the demoniacs and their neighbours of the completeness of the cure.” Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952), 133. Twelftree rejects the notion that the pigs are proof of the cure, and rather argues that the pigs were themselves “an integral part of the cure.” His argument is in part based on the ancient practice of transferring demons from their host to some other object in order to affect the cure. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant*, 67.

¹⁵However, note James L. Boyer, “First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?,” *Grace Theological Journal* 2, no. 1 (1981): 75–114. Boyer, after an exhaustive study of first-class conditions in the NT, concludes that they may not carry the meaning “since” after all. In Matthew he found 8 clearly true instances, 4 clearly false, and 16 were difficult to determine.

¹⁶As Quarles notes, “The context clearly shows that Jesus is the one giving the orders.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 87.

¹⁷So Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism Among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 168; Quarles further notes that the combination of ἐξελεθόντες and ἀπῆλθον “emphasizes the complete nature of the exorcism.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 87–88. Further, Osborne notes that it was the practice of exorcists to “prattle on and on, finding out the name of the demon and its territory of operation, and using various incantations to try to get it to leave.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 321. That this is the first time Jesus speaks in the narrative and that he utters only one word sets him apart as an absolute authority over the demonic realm. However, Ridderbos thinks this is still a victory for the demons who are “driven by a ceaseless desire to destroy God’s creation.” Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 177.

¹⁸W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, *Commentary on Matthew 8–18*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 84.

¹⁹Poythress suggests that the uncleanness of the pigs represent sin and death, and that their rushing into the sea foreshadows the demon’s final destination in hell. Vern S. Poythress, *The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior’s Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 140. Holzendorff says they are “driven with [the swine] into the water, thence to descend into hell.” Holzendorff, *Protestant Commentary*, 77. Regarding the pigs’ uncleanness, Witherington suggests the Jews might have seen this account as humorous, for “Unclean people are helped when Jesus sends the spirits packing by allowing them to inhabit unclean animals that were worthless”

the destructive power of demons, but also the filth and foolishness of those who oppose the very Son of God.²⁰ The primary point of this account, however, is Jesus' absolute authority over the demonic realm, and the demons' recognition of his person and his authority.²¹ John Chrysostom gets to the heart of the passage when he states, "They who kept others from passing are stopped at the sight of him who blocks their way."

Matthew 12:22–28. This passage, commonly referred to as the Beelzebul controversy, is a turning point in Matthew's gospel.²² In this account, a demonized man who was both blind and mute is brought to Jesus. Again, Matthew highlights Jesus' absolute authority by simply stating "and he healed him, so that the mute man both saw and spoke" (12:22).²³ Matthew then contrasts the reaction of the crowds and that of the Pharisees (cf. 9:32–34).²⁴ The crowds were amazed and said, "could this really be the son of David?" The Pharisees, however, suggest that "He does not cast out demons except by Βεελζεβοὺλ, the prince of demons" (12:24).²⁵ This contrast

unclean spirits and unclean animals would have been seen as deserving each other's company." Witherington, *Matthew*, 192–93 (also Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 121).

²⁰So Osborne, *Matthew*, 321.

²¹Davies and Allison state, "In every way the First evangelist is bent on stressing Jesus' authority." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 84.

²²So Wahlen, who states that in the Beelzebul controversy, "Jesus announces the bringing in of God's eschatological kingdom through the overthrow of Satan's kingdom." Clinton Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 126. See further chap. 6, n. 66 below.

²³So Osborne, *Matthew*, 472. Contra Luz, who states that the exorcism is "brief and without its own point." Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 199.

²⁴So Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 199.

²⁵Allison notes the tradition in Second Temple literature that the chief demon aided the magicians Jannes and Jambres in the opposition to Moses. Dale C. Allison, *The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 55n149. See CD 5:18–19 where Belial raises them up, and *Jub.* 48:9 where Mastema helped the sorcerers.

implies the presence of a demonic kingdom, which Jesus further makes explicit when he responds to the Pharisees accusation:

Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste . . . and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Βεελζεβοὺλ, by whom do your sons cast them out? . . . But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has overtaken you. Or how can someone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his possessions, except first he bind the strong man? And then he may plunder his house. The one who is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me scatters (12:25–30).

There are several important points regarding Jesus' words. First, there is an evil demonic kingdom, and the ruler over that kingdom is Satan, who is also named Βεελζεβοὺλ.²⁶ Second, there is a dividing line between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan.²⁷ To be against Christ is to be fighting for Satan's kingdom.²⁸ Third, Jesus' exorcisms demonstrate his authority over the demonic kingdom.²⁹ He is in essence bringing the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Satan, and so effectively binding the strong man and plundering his goods.³⁰ As Meier states,

The implication of the double parable is that the exorcism of demons means that the kingdom or royal house of the prince of demons is being destroyed—certainly not by the prince himself, which would be absurd—but by the

²⁶As demonstrated in chap. 2, Second Temple literature contains several names for such a chief demon, including Azazel, Samael, Mastema, Belial, and Beliar (so Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 237; Osborne, *Matthew*, 396).

²⁷So Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 156.

²⁸Luz (*Matthew 8–20*, 203) states, “Now no more bridges can be built.”

²⁹Luz states, “Matthew thus emphasizes that Jesus’ exorcisms are a realm of experience where something completely new and qualitatively different appears.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 204. Similarly, Davies and Allison state, “Jesus believed that the power of God was at work in him to overcome evil forces and that his success in fighting the devil and his minions was part of God’s eschatological deliverance.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 339.

³⁰See Wahlen, who states, “Matthew’s version of the Beelzebul controversy is the clearest of the three in depicting a ‘kingdom’ of demons headed by Satan . . . Jesus announces the bringing in of God’s eschatological salvation through the overthrow of Satan’s kingdom.” Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 126. Ridderbos states, “The kingdom’s coming in principle is a pledge and a guarantee for the eventual total expulsion of the prince of demons.” Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 239. Also Osborne, *Matthew*, 480. Twelftree suggests that Matthew is “linking the exorcisms of Jesus with the first of what was understood to be a two stage defeat of Satan.” Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 169.

opposite royal power seizing control of human beings through a striking miracle.³¹

Matthew 15:21–28. In this passage Jesus has withdrawn (*ἀναχωρέω*) to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman approaches him crying out for mercy because her daughter is *κακῶς δαιμονίζεται* (severely demonized). It is noteworthy that she refers to him as “son of David,” given the fact that she is a Gentile.³² Matthew also emphasizes the severity of her demonic oppression with the adjective *κακῶς*. As is Matthew's pattern, he emphasizes Jesus' authority, saying, *καὶ ἰάθη ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης*. The phrase *ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης* carries the idea of instantaneous healing. So again, with a word and in this instance even from a distance, Jesus' power over demons is absolute.³³

Also important in this section is what is said between the woman's pleas and the actual healing. Jesus looks as though he will ignore the woman, stating that to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs is not right.³⁴ He is expounding here on his statement that he has come only to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”

³¹John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 2, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 417; also Harrington, who notes, there is “an apocalyptic division between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan . . . Jesus' exorcisms are blows against the kingdom of Satan.” Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 183. Witherington states, “Jesus believes such exorcisms are already evidence that the final Dominion of God is appearing on the human scene.” Witherington, *Matthew*, 247. Further, Luz, states, “Jesus presumably put his exorcisms in the context of the eschatological struggle against Satan and his kingdom.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 205n73.

³²Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 288. Osborne suggests that she may have been a God-fearer or proselyte. Osborne, *Matthew*, 597. Luz states, “By addressing him as “Son of David” the gentile woman expresses that she is turning to the Messiah of Israel . . . she knows that Jesus is sent to Israel; and her faith is seen precisely in the fact that she nevertheless cries out to him.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 339.

³³So Osborne, *Matthew*, 601.

³⁴Note that this response is what the people would expect, highlighted by the fact that this is a Canaanite woman. It is likely that Jesus' initial statement here is purposely in keeping with typical Jewish thought, so that the unexpected turn of events would be all the more emphasized (so Osborne, 597; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 289; Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 240). Thus, Beare's contention that Jesus's words here “exhibit the worst kind of chauvinism,” while at first glance is understandable, ultimately misses the point. Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 342.

(15:24).³⁵ The children, then, represent Israel and the dogs represent Gentiles.³⁶

However, when Jesus sees the faith of this Gentile woman, he praises her faith and heals her daughter. So again Matthew draws a connection between Jesus' power over the demonic and the breaking down of the wall between Jew and Gentile.³⁷

Matthew 17:14–18. In this account, which is the last reference to exorcism in Matthew, a man approaches Jesus and pleads for him to heal his epileptic son, whose condition is caused by a demon.³⁸ What is different about this account is that the man brought his son to Jesus' disciples and they were unable to heal him (17:17).³⁹ Again highlighting “the instantaneous, permanent effects” of Jesus' authority over the demonic realm, Jesus rebukes his disciples and then rebukes the demon and “The demon came out from him and the child was healed from that hour” (ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης).⁴⁰

To summarize, Matthew elaborates on several demonic encounters which not only further highlight Jesus' authority, but are also positioned at important junctures within the Gospel which teach crucial truths about Jesus' mission. Leon

³⁵So Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 235.

³⁶Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 235; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 289; *pace* Witmer, who reads the account through the lens of tensions between Tyre and Galilee. Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist*, 200–201. This leads her to diminish what appear to be the clear theological implications of this account and toward a more “social, political, and economic” interpretation.

³⁷Wahlen states, “The story of the Canaanite woman raises the question of who belongs in Israel.” Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 132. Also Osborne, *Matthew*, 594; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 186; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 289–90). Further, Harrington states, “Behind her saying is the idea that Gentiles as well as Jews are fed by God. This incident would naturally have been important in the Matthean community, given its emphasis on the Jewish roots of Jesus and the mission to the Gentiles.” Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 235.

³⁸So Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist*, 187.

³⁹Witherington states, “Jesus' disciples are portrayed as inept exorcists due to their little faith.” Witherington, *Matthew*, 328. Also, Osborne states, “in their failure, the disciples have joined the rest of the Jewish people in their unbelief and perversity.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 656.

⁴⁰Osborne, *Matthew*, 656.

Morris sums up nicely the implications of these exorcisms:

In his conflict with the demons Jesus did not behave like a typical exorcist. Such a man would have techniques, spells, incantations, and the like. The Gospel writers do not picture Jesus as just another of this type . . . This is indeed a conflict with the demons [but] He stood in a place all His own. He was uniquely the object of Satanic opposition. He was unique in the methods he used to defeat it. And He was unique in the completeness of His victory.⁴¹

Further, Jesus' authority over demonic forces signals something about his identity. The crowds marvel at this authority, wondering what kind of man could do such things. The religious leaders, however, feel they must defend a dark origin of this authority, and so credit his casting out of demons to the power of demons and Satan himself (Matt 9:34; 12:25). Regarding Jesus' mission, it is apparent that the casting out of demons signals the dawn of a new era in the world in which the kingdom of God through King Jesus overtakes the kingdom of Satan which is presently ruling.⁴² Not only is Jesus bringing a new kingdom upon the world, but he is plundering the goods of the present strong man by taking back the people being oppressed by him. Jesus' exorcism of demons indicates his new kingdom in the world and his freeing oppressed people and so bringing them into that kingdom. Indeed, what sets Jesus apart, as the Beelzebul controversy makes clear, is the context of his exorcisms. They are eschatological in nature in that they do not simply cure from mental or physical problems, rather they are indicative of Jesus' defeat of Satan himself.⁴³ As Wink states,

Jesus regards his healings and exorcisms as an assault on the kingdom of Satan and an indication that the kingdom of God is breaking in. The Gospel is very

⁴¹Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 56–57.

⁴²So Lichtenberger, who states, "God's Kingdom is made present in Jesus' expulsion of the demons." Hermann Lichtenberger, "Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 278.

⁴³So Bell, who states, "Through his exorcisms [Jesus] was attacking the root cause of evil in the world" (90). Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 90–91.

much a cosmic battle in which Jesus rescues humanity from the dominion of evil powers.⁴⁴

Disease

Jesus' healing of disease plays an important role in Matthew's Gospel.⁴⁵

Just after the temptation account is a summary of the type of ministry Jesus would be involved in:

And he went about in all of Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. And the report of him spread into the whole of Syria; and they brought to him all those having illness, afflicted with various diseases and torments, the demon oppressed and epileptics and paralytics, and he healed them (4:23–24).⁴⁶

After the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records a series of healings in chapters 8–9, which are followed by several other healings and exorcisms (12:9–14; 14:34–36; 15:29–31; 20:29–34; 21:14).⁴⁷ It becomes apparent that Jesus' healing ministry is closely related to his exorcisms.⁴⁸ This can be further deduced from several considerations. First, only healing and/or exorcisms are found in each of the summary sections of Jesus' miraculous activity (4:23–25; 8:16–17; 9:35; 11:2–6; 12:15–21; 14:34–36; 15:29–31; 19:1–2; 21:14), and often the lines are blurred between the two. Thus, Matthew 8:16–17 states,

That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and

⁴⁴Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 26.

⁴⁵It is not my purpose here to defend the historicity of Jesus' healings, since I am focusing on Matthew as a literary work. For a defense of the unique nature of Jesus' healings, and thus their authenticity, see A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1982), 98–119; also Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 95–101.

⁴⁶Noted also by Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, IBT (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 60; Plummer suggests Matthew's language alludes to Deut. 7:15, "The Lord will take away from the all sickness (*πᾶσαν μαλακίαν*)."⁴⁷ Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 50.

⁴⁷See discussion in Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 59–61.

⁴⁸Bell notes the more fluid boundaries between healing and exorcisms within Matthew's Gospel in comparison to Mark. Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 68.

he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

Commenting on this text, Poythress states,

Jesus delivered people from demons and from sickness. This deliverance has a link with Jesus’ bearing our diseases . . . Isaiah 53 uses language metaphorically to indicate how the coming servant will suffer as a substitute for sin . . . deliverance on the physical level symbolizes deliverance on the spiritual level.⁴⁹

It seems then that though there is a distinction made between demonic exorcism and the healing of disease, the two are so closely linked that they are often mentioned in the same breath in Matthew’s narrative and they often point to the same reality, namely, that Jesus Christ is the deliverer of those who are oppressed.⁵⁰ Indeed, Matthew wants us to understand “the absolute authority Jesus has over everything in this world.”⁵¹

Second, as demonstrated in the previous section, often physical disease arises from demonic oppression in Matthew's gospel.⁵² According to Böcher, ancient Jews held that all disease arose as a result of contact with the demonic.⁵³ He argues that “Den dämonischen Ursprung der–vor allem sexuellen–Krankheit offenbart nicht

⁴⁹Poythress, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 115.

⁵⁰Twelftree suggests that the distinction between healings which required exorcism and those which did not had to do with increased strength and/or violence and the voice of the sufferer. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant*, 71. Davies and Allison state, “The distinction between mundane and supernatural illness was scarcely hard and fast in antiquity.” W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 418.

⁵¹Osborne, *Matthew*, 157.

⁵²Bell notes that Matthew assigns to demons cases of muteness, blindness, and epilepsy. Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 68. Note also Lichtenberger, who states, “Their proclivity for causing illness is one of the strongest links connecting New Testament demonology with some of the texts presented above; but it also belongs to the Koine of ancient demonology as a whole.” Lichtenberger, “Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 278. Gundry states, “Matthew presents exorcism as a kind of healing.” Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 64. Contra Witherington, *Matthew*, 206.

⁵³Holzendorff suggests that “Satan is the cause of every disease.” Holzendorff, *Protestant Commentary*, 66–67. He distinguishes demon activity as sickness that affects the mind.

zuletzt der antidämonische Charakter der Heilungspraktiken.”⁵⁴ However, it is likely that Böcher overstates his case, since the Old Testament does not indicate such a belief among ancient Jews.⁵⁵ Even so, Wahlen has acknowledged the tendency in Matthew more so than in the other gospels to link sickness with demonic activity, such that exorcisms are a kind of healing.⁵⁶ Regarding this tendency, Ridderbos states, “It should not surprise us that the Evangelist uses the healing of diseases that were the direct work of the Evil One as his examples of Jesus’ miraculous power. The battle with Satan forms the background to Jesus’ whole ministry.”⁵⁷

Third, both healing and exorcisms are important indicators of Jesus’ Messianic status and the coming of the kingdom.⁵⁸ In Matthew 11:5 Jesus alludes to Isaiah 35:5–6 in response to the messenger sent to John the Baptist, indicating that the healings and exorcisms of Jesus demonstrate that he is the Messiah sent from God.⁵⁹ A second passage is the Beelzebul controversy, wherein Jesus heals a blind and mute man through the casting out of a demon. Jesus goes on to say that if he

⁵⁴Otto Böcher, *Dämonenfurcht und Dämonenabwehr: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe* BWANT 90 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970), 156.

⁵⁵See similar critique in Edwin Yamauchi, “Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms,” in *The Miracles of Jesus*, ed. David Wenham and Craig Blomberg, Gospel Perspectives (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 115–20; Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 4–5.

⁵⁶Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 114.

⁵⁷Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 80. Carter rightly states, “The Gospel does not accept the imperial claims about the blessed state of the world, does not accept that Rome is a channel of blessing, and contends that only with the establishment of God’s empire can such well-being and blessing be known. That empire is countered in part now in Jesus.” Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press), 70. Carter has already argued correctly that behind the Roman imperial system is Satan, thus here we have an argument that healing is a direct attack on Satan’s kingdom.

⁵⁸See Ragnar Leivestad, *Christ, the Conqueror: Ideas of Conflict and Victory in the New Testament* [London: SPCK, 1954], 1–9. Leivestad discusses the relationship between the Messiah and conflict in Jewish thought. He states, “The Battle has a cosmic perspective, the enemies being all the pagan nations or even mythical hosts The Messianic kingdom does not merely signify the restoration of Israel, but of the lost Paradise” (9; also Holzendorff, *Protestant Commentary*, 66).

⁵⁹So Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 134–35.

casts out demons by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God has arrived (12:28). Thus, both the healings and exorcisms demonstrate that the Messianic kingdom of God has broken into the world through Jesus. As Ladd states, “Before the eschatological appearance of God’s kingdom at the end of the age, God’s kingdom has become dynamically active among men in Jesus’ person and mission.”⁶⁰ And as Matthew makes clear, the coming of the kingdom of God upon the earth means the expelling of the kingdom of Satan.⁶¹ This reality is perhaps also seen in Jesus’s healing of the paralytic in Matthew 9. Regarding the account, Harrington notes,

More important than the causal connection was the conviction that ‘sin’ often personified as a powerful figure belonged on the side of the forces of ‘the evil one.’ The healing of the paralytic and the forgiveness of sins constituted another blow against the powers of evil and another step toward God’s reign.⁶²

So, we see in Jesus healing of disease a unique authority. He heals by a word and never fails to heal.⁶³ We also see in this authority a demonstration of his identity as the Messiah. This is clear in Matthew 11, where Jesus alludes to both Isaiah 35:5–6 and Isaiah 61:1.⁶⁴ The former describes return of God’s people to the promised land and all the blessings this would entail. The latter describes the coming of the Messiah to free the people of God from bondage. Jesus’ point is clear: his ministry of healing proves that these promises are fulfilled in him. As Stettler concludes,

Somit ist Jesu Antwort an Johannes nicht uneingeschränkt bejahend, sondern sie korrigiert zugleich: Das Gericht kommt später. Jetzt sucht Jesus als messianischer Hirte Israels das Verlorene.⁶⁵

⁶⁰George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 139.

⁶¹Also Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 107.

⁶²Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 124.

⁶³So Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 112.

⁶⁴So Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 134.

⁶⁵Hanna Stettler, “Die Bedeutung der Täuferanfrage in Matthäus 11,2-6 par Lk 7,18-23 für die Christologie,” *Biblica* 89, no. 2 (2008), 180.

Satan

Satan is the chief antagonist in Matthew's gospel. As discussed in chapter 2, the OT presents a multifaceted understanding of Satan. As Schreiber summarizes,

- (1) Satan is . . . a supernatural being, but unambiguously subordinate to God.
- (2) He can fulfil the function of (a) a tempter of the righteous on earth and (b) their accuser in the divine council; (c) as a tempter, he can be the cause of impoverishment and disease.
- (3) Viewed from a socio-historical perspective, he can be conceived of by a group as a heavenly representative of an opposing group.⁶⁶

It has been demonstrated that this archenemy is behind the conflict between Jesus and lesser antagonists in Matthew's gospel. In the following pages I analyze those places where Satan is mentioned explicitly, and in doing so further solidify his prominence in Matthew's Gospel and the foundational nature of this cosmic conflict to Matthew's narrative. Paradoxically, there are only a few places in Matthew's Gospel where such explicit mention actually takes place, however, what will be evident is that in his apparently insignificant explicit references to Satan, Matthew actually creates a ripple effect that resounds throughout his entire narrative. As Plummer rightly asserts of Christ's mission, "Conflict with the evil one was of its very essence from beginning to end."⁶⁷

ὁ διάβολος

In 6 instances Matthew utilizes the articular *διάβολος*, clearly referencing Satan. The first 4 are found in chapter 4, where the devil tempts Jesus in the wilderness. The 5th is found in 13:39, where Jesus is explaining the parable of the weeds to his disciples. The final occurrence is found in 25:41 where Jesus is explaining the coming of the Son of Man at the end of the age.

⁶⁶Stefan Schreiber, "The Great Opponent: The Devil in Early Jewish and Formative Christian Literature," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings — Origins, Development and Reception* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 440.

⁶⁷Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 35.

Matthew 4:1–11. The devil appears on the scene in 4:1, immediately following Jesus’ baptism, as made evident by Matthew’s use of *Τότε*.⁶⁸ Matthew continues the narrative, saying, “Then Jesus was led up to the wilderness by the Spirit (*ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος*) to be tempted by the devil” (*ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου*). The cosmic nature of this impending conflict is here made explicit.⁶⁹ The same Spirit of God who descended from heaven upon Jesus at his baptism is the one orchestrating this temptation.⁷⁰ The structure of this phrase, particularly the placement of *πειρασθῆναι*, evidences this:

*Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον
ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος
πειρασθῆναι
ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου.*

The placement of *πειρασθῆναι* between both parallel *ὑπὸ* clauses creates an “apo koinou” (*ἀπό κοινου*) construction which perhaps indicates that *πειρασθῆναι* “casts its meaning” on both *διαβόλου* and *τοῦ πνεύματος*.⁷¹ Whether or not Matthew had this

⁶⁸So Quarles, *Matthew*, 39; Barclay M. Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (London: United Bible Societies, 1988), 80; Phanon states, “Being his favorite word to introduce a new scene *Τότε* carries an important sequence from the previous account.” Yuri Phanon, “The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Conception, Baptism and Temptation of Christ: Implications for the Pentecostal Christian Part II,” *AJPS* 20, no. 1 (2017), 59.

⁶⁹So Phanon, “The Work of the Holy Spirit,” 59. Of the parallel between the Spirit and the devil, Lenski states, “The one bestows all his power upon the human nature of Jesus, the other at once puts this power to the supreme test. In a strange way God’s will and the devil’s will meet in a tremendous clash.” R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel 1–14* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1964), 138.

⁷⁰So Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC, vol. 33a (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 64; Osborne, *Matthew*, 131; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and James Dixon Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 112; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 354; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 66; Kristian A. Bendoraitis, *Behold, the Angels Came and Served Him’: A Compositional Analysis of Angels in Matthew*, LNTS 523 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 55; contra George Stephen Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ’s Temptation: A Study in Interpretation* (Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1914), 73. Painter states, “if we should give the words a literal meaning, the divine Spirit would be represented as having led Christ forth for the express purpose of being tempted of the devil, a supposition which is not in harmony with our general notion of the moral character of God . . . external compulsion robs the occurrence of all worth or meaning.” Painter, however, completely ignores the context of Jesus’ baptism and the clear connection between the two texts, especially in relation to the Spirit.

⁷¹A. H. Snyman, “ANALYSIS OF MT 3:1–4:22,” *Neotestamentica* 11 (1977): 25;

precise construction in mind, he clearly wanted his readers to understand that the devil does not take Jesus off guard here, but rather it is part of God's plan for Jesus that he be tempted.⁷² However, as if to clarify that it was not the Spirit who was directly tempting Jesus, Matthew names Satan *πειράζων* in 4:3.⁷³ Matthew then reverts to the name *ὁ διάβολος* for Satan in the next two temptations (4:5, 8).⁷⁴

In the first temptation, Satan tempts Jesus to satisfy his hunger by turning stones into bread.⁷⁵ Matthew has just stated that after fasting 40 days, Jesus is hungry.⁷⁶ The temptation has less to do with food and more to do with how Jesus intends on utilizing his divine power as the Son of God.⁷⁷ Will it be in accordance with the Father's will, or will it be based on his own needs and desires?⁷⁸ Satan

see discussion in Robert E. Plath, "Apo Koinou," *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity Volumes (Brill, 2006); Osborne believes the double use of *ὑπὸ* sets up a contrast. Osborne, *Matthew*, 132. Blomberg suggests that "By this phrasing, Matthew warns against two common errors—blaming God for temptation and crediting the devil with power to act independently of God." Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 83.

⁷²So Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 81; Painter suggests that Matthew is intentionally drawing on the book of Job in that in both cases "God and Satan bargain with one another." Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ's Temptation*, 7.

⁷³Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 66; John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1:212; Turner, *Matthew*, 126.

⁷⁴Newman and Stine suggest that "devil" should be rendered "chief evil spirit." Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 81.

⁷⁵Newman and Stine suggest that this temptation "recalls the wilderness experience of Israel." Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 83.

⁷⁶Painter states, "When Christ was tempted in his extreme hunger to turn stones into bread, it is evident no more powerful temptation could have come to him at that moment." Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ's Temptation*, 215. Also Richard B. Gardner, *Matthew*, Believer's Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1940), 71.

⁷⁷So Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 39; Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 55–56; France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 96; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 65; Osborne, *Matthew*, 132; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 67. Wright suggests that all of the temptations "would easily combine into the temptation to doubt the nature of the vocation of which he had sure at the time of John's baptism . . . [Thus] the struggle is precisely about the nature of Jesus' vocation and ministry." Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 458. Luz says, "Jesus refuses to perform a miracle that is not commanded by God." Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 152.

⁷⁸Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 90; cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 362; contra Painter, who

clearly hopes for the latter. Jesus answers that he will live not by his own desires but “by every word proceeding from the mouth of God” (4:4).

In the second temptation, ὁ διάβολος takes Jesus to Jerusalem (4:5), and stands him upon the peak of the temple. He again appeals to his divine power, tempting him to throw himself off the temple and let everyone see the angels protect him, as the Scriptures indicate will happen (4:6, cf. Ps 91:11–12).⁷⁹ This would confirm his identity in the presence of all his enemies, and so it is likely a suggestion “that He should take an easy road to success . . . so prodigious a sign as that of falling unharmed from the top of the Temple would convince both priests and people that He was the Messiah.”⁸⁰ Jesus again answers according to the Scriptures, indicating he will follow the will of the Father in fulfilling his mission, rather than put the Father to the test (4:7).

Finally, ὁ διάβολος takes Jesus to an “exceedingly high” (ὑψηλὸν λίαν) mountain and shows to him πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν. He offers to hand them over if Jesus, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, would only fall on his face and

sees the temptation as one between gratifying one's desires and living under the “rational law of self-control.” Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ's Temptation*, 239.

⁷⁹So Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ's Temptation*, 244, 246. However, Painter misses the mark in suggesting that the essence of this temptations was the “impulse to pride, vanity, and self-seeking aggrandizement.” Such would be the case if Christ were not worthy of such praise. He of course is worthy, and thus the temptation has nothing to do with vanity, and everything to do with demonstrating immediately his true identity and thus avoiding the divine plan by which such will eventually be realized. Allison notes that the prayer of Ps 91 came to be used as an incantation to ward off demons, which if known by Matthew adds an ironic layer to the cosmic conflict motif here. Allison, *The Intertextual Jesus*, 159. In this regard Allison cites Robert Joseph Burrelli, “A Study of Psalm 91 with Special Reference to the Theory That It Was Intended as a Protection Against Demons and Magic,” *Ph.D. Diss, Cambridge* (1993): 91.

⁸⁰Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 41; also Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1987), 51; contra Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 66; Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 67; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 62; Hagner argues, “This testing should be understood as involving a struggle between Jesus and Satan. There is no mention of and no need of witnesses for the passage to make sense.” Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 67.

worship him, ὁ διάβολος.⁸¹ This temptation not only draws an answer from Jesus according to the Scriptures, as each of the other accounts, but also a stern rebuke from Jesus (ὑπάγε, σατανᾶ).

A few points should be made here with regard to Satan's temptation of Jesus. First, there is a clear connection between this account and the account of Jesus' baptism. At the baptism the Father affirms Jesus' identity as the son, and at the temptation Satan also affirms that identity (see discussion above). Further, at Jesus' baptism the Spirit descends on Jesus as the Father is voicing his approval, and it is the same Spirit who leads Jesus into the wilderness for the express purpose of undergoing Satan's temptations.⁸² Thus, a conflict arises between the Father's mission for Jesus and Satan's intention with regard to that mission.⁸³ The Father has commissioned Jesus at his baptism to move forward with his mission by the power of the Spirit, and Satan immediately appears in an effort to thwart that very mission.⁸⁴ It is here then that the stage is set for the cosmic conflict that will play out throughout Matthew's gospel.⁸⁵ Mathewson is worth quoting here:

[Jesus'] sonship is tested, not merely at a mundane level, but as part of a larger cosmic conflict, revealing in apocalyptic fashion what is at stake in Jesus' anointing as divine son in his subsequent ministry: it is nothing less than the

⁸¹Ridderbos notes that Jesus does not dispute Satan's claim here. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 67.

⁸²Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 63.

⁸³Lachs argues that the temptation account here indicates that "Jesus is the Messiah who will overpower the forces of evil as represented by the Satan, a motif amply attested to in rabbinic sources." Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 50 (also Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 35; Witherington, *Matthew*, 92).

⁸⁴Contra Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 16-20. Wink argues at length that Satan is not an evil being here but a "heavenly sifter" causing Jesus to recognize that God has loftier plans for him than the temporary, albeit good, things being offered in the moment. Such a reading, however, not only goes against the thrust of Matthew's narrative at this point, but also turns the entire message of Matthew on its head, a point which will be made evident as we progress.

⁸⁵Ridderbos aptly states this was "the first great encounter between the Messiah and His true foe." Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 62.

struggle between God and the powers of evil at a supra-mundane level.⁸⁶

Second, it is important to note the relationship between the three temptations themselves. One question to consider here is whether the temptations bear equal weight, or if there is some sort of progression towards a climax among them. I argue that there is a progression based on the setting of each temptation, Jesus' response to each temptation, and the temptation itself.

First, there appears to be a progression in the setting of each temptation. Satan begins in the wilderness, then moves to the pinnacle of the temple, and then finally to an "exceedingly high" (ὕψηλὸν λίαν) mountain.⁸⁷ Secondly, while Jesus responds with Scripture to all of Satan's temptations, in the third temptation he echoes the first 2 commandments of the Decalogue (Deut 6:13; cf. Exod 20:3).⁸⁸ It is this exclusivity when it comes to the worship and service of God alone which he will later say is the first in importance among the commandments. Also, it is only in response to this third temptation that Jesus rebukes Satan by name, and commands him to flee from his presence. Thirdly, the temptations themselves seems to have their own progression with regard to the degree in which Jesus' would accomplish his mission apart from the Father's will (see Table 4 below).

Regarding the first temptation, Jesus' turning the rocks to bread would have resulted in him using his power apart from the Father's will, relying instead on his own desires, and so "misconstrue divine sonship."⁸⁹ The second temptation

⁸⁶David Mathewson, "The Apocalyptic Vision of Jesus: Reading Matthew 3:16–4:11 Intertextually," *Tyndale Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (2011): 107.

⁸⁷Davies and Allison note this "spatial progression" as well. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 352. If one takes into account the importance of the mountain scene in Matthew, this progression becomes even more apparent.

⁸⁸Osborne, *Matthew*, 135; Gundry, *Matthew*, 58; Turner, *Matthew*, 130; Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 153; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 371.

⁸⁹Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 83; Turner, *Matthew*, 127; Gundry, *Matthew*, 55. Satan, in effect, offers him a "shortcut to world dominion." H. A. Ironside, *Matthew* (repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 27.

would have done the same, but it would have also demonstrated that power to the religious leaders, who are his enemies throughout Matthew’s narrative.

Table 4. Progression of the temptation account

Matt 4:1-4	Matt 4:5-7	Matt 4:8-11
Use power apart from Father’s will	Use power apart from Father’s will	Use power apart from Father’s will
	Show power to enemies	Show power to enemies
		Receive authority over all the kingdoms of the world

Finally, giving in to the third temptation would have resulted in both the inappropriate use of his power, the demonstration of this power to his enemies, as well as to the world, *and* he would have received authority over all the kingdoms of the earth, thus accomplishing the end goal of his mission apart from his Father’s will.⁹⁰

Thus it is apparent that this cosmic conflict being played out early in Matthew’s Gospel is foundational to Matthew’s story of Jesus and his mission on earth.⁹¹ This is made clearer when we notice that the entire temptation narrative is

⁹⁰So Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 160; cf. Terence Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthew* (London: Bloomsbury, 1987), 91–92. My view is subtly different from Donaldson, who sees the temptations as primarily pressing Jesus to be “unfaithful to a pattern of sonship conceived in terms of the relationship between ideal Israel and the divine Father.” Thus it is “a temptation away from sonship, rather than towards any specific pattern of messianism” (92). I have argued that the temptations center upon the issue of Jesus’ Messianic mission, and that each temptation progresses along that axis. These two understandings are closely related, however, and can easily be viewed as two sides to the same coin. To be moved toward a pattern of messianism apart from the Father’s will is indeed to be moved away from true and proper sonship. Of the final temptation, Luz states, “Here the core and highpoint of the three scenes is reached.” Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 153.

⁹¹Bendoraitis states, “Matthew is explicit about the cosmic conflict between the devil and God through Jesus . . . the temptation narrative symbolizes the battle between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of Satan, revealing Jesus’ life as a cosmic struggle against the devil.” Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 70.

bracketed by references to the conflict between Jesus and the devil, as well as the cosmic nature of this conflict. In 4:1, it is the Spirit who leads Jesus to be tempted by the devil, and in 4:11, the devil flees from Jesus and angels minister to him. Here then we have an inclusio of cosmic elements (i.e., the Spirit and angels) bracketing the entire account, marked off by the term *ὁ διάβολος*, which elements also form a chiasmus. Thus,

A. Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος (4:1a)

B. πειρασθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου (4:1b)

B. Τότε ἀφίησιν αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος (4:11a)

A. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄγγελοι προσῆλθον καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ (4:11b)

Matthew’s intricate attention to detail in the temptation narrative indicates its important role in his story. As France notes, in the temptation narrative, the devil “appears in Matthew as a real and powerful rival, the one whose authority is threatened by Jesus’ inauguration of the kingdom of heaven (12:24–29; 13:19, 39; 16:23).”⁹²

Matthew 13:36–43. The next use of *ὁ διάβολος* is found in Jesus’ explanation of the parable of the weeds. In the parable, a farmer plants a crop of wheat, but in the night an enemy comes and sows weeds among that crop. When the act is discovered, the farmer decides to allow the weeds to grow up among the wheat until the harvest, at which time he will separate them and burn all the weeds (13:24–30). In Jesus’ explanation of the parable to his disciples, he discloses that this is a parable of the state of the world until Christ returns.⁹³ Note here that the enemy who

⁹²France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 98.

⁹³Harrison argues that Matthew’s allegorical interpretation of the parable is a later “depoliticization” of the original meaning of the parable, which originally spoke to the issue of economic oppression by the Romans. Harrison’s argument is unconvincing in that it assumes Matthew must be using this parable as an attack on the Roman empire and its oppression of the poor. He further assumes that the parables are concerned with the non-apocalyptic kingdom of God. In light of these and other assumptions, Harrison concludes

sows the weeds in the field is ὁ διάβολος (13:39), and the weeds are his children (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ).⁹⁴ On the other hand, the man who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, and the bushels of wheat are his children (οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας). Thus, this parable indicates that cosmic conflict plays an integral role in Jesus' mission in bringing his kingdom.⁹⁵ As Black comments, "The archenemy of the Son of man (13:25, 37–39), the devil presides over a nefarious domain at war with the kingdom of heaven (13:36–43)."⁹⁶

Matthew 25:41. The final use of ὁ διάβολος is found in Jesus' explanation of the final judgment. As with the parable of the weeds, Jesus explains that at the end of the age the wicked will be separated from the righteous. The righteous will

that Jesus' parables are political and social critiques couched in stories told by a social prophet. The assumptions then leave no room for the apocalyptic interpretation given by Jesus in Matthew, therefore, Jesus' interpretation must be a later addition added at a time when the readers' context required such a shift. John P. Harrison, "Weeds: Jesus' Parable and Economic and Political Threats to the Poor in Roman Galilee," *Stone–Campbell Journal* 18, no. 1 (2015): 73–88.

⁹⁴Marulli states, "The role and action of the enemy therefore have their own narrative justification in the plot itself. We shall nevertheless bear in mind that this word was a common term to designate Satan: *Adam & Eve* (Greek) 2:4; 7:2; 25:4; 28:3; *3 Bar* 13:2; *Test. Dan* 6:3; *Test. Job* 47:10." Luca Marulli, "The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew XVI, 26–30) - a Quest for its Original Formulation and its Role in the Preaching of the Historical Jesus," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 2 (2010): 70. Luz states, "The enemy is the devil whom Matthew believes to be at work, as at 13:19, in the present when the seed is sown." Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 268.

⁹⁵As Turner notes, "Jesus' parabolic imagery and teaching content are rooted in biblical apocalyptic." Turner, *Matthew*, 351.

⁹⁶C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 35. Similarly, Osborne states "Here Christ wants hearers to know who the antagonist is. In this world the war between good and evil cannot be avoided, and there is no middle ground. One either belongs to the kingdom or the powers of evil." Osborne, *Matthew*, 533. Turner states, "There is also a clear contrast of the roles of Jesus and the devil, the ultimate protagonist and antagonist behind the cosmic struggle portrayed here." Turner, *Matthew*, 351. Nihinlola states, "[The devil] heads an organized system of the kingdom of the spirit world. The devil is opposed to God, God's plans/ purposes, God's work and God's people. Jesus treats evil and the devil with seriousness. While the Christian faith is not dualistic, a serious biblical eschatology cannot deny or ignore demonology." Emiola Nihinlola, "The Weeds Among the Wheat: Hermeneutical Investigation into a Kingdom Parable," *Ogbomoso Journal Of Theology* 12 (2007): 93. Jacobson states, "The devil is also at work *now* in and through those who do his will, laying claim to lordship over the world (13:38c-39a ; cf. 4:8-9)." Delmar Jacobson, "Exposition of Matthew 13:44-52," *Interpretation* 29, no. 3 (1975): 275.

“inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world” (25:34), while the wicked will depart from God’s presence “into the eternal fire prepared τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ” (25:41).⁹⁷ Thus we find at the finale of Jesus’ mission is a resolution of the cosmic conflict which has raged from Genesis 3 until Christ’s final return.⁹⁸

In conclusion, Matthew’s use of ὁ διάβολος points to the importance of the cosmic conflict motif for Matthew’s narrative. The first four uses are clustered in the temptation narrative in a way which highlights the theme of cosmic conflict as important for the entire gospel. The final two uses indicate that a major part of Jesus’ mission and its final resolution has to do with bringing to an end this conflict and defeating the arch enemy of this drama, ὁ διάβολος, who is Satan himself.

ὁ πονηρός

The word πονηρός is used 72 times throughout Matthew’s gospel, most of which are anarthrous, referring to evil as an abstract concept. On 9 occasions, it is attached to an article, and in 4 of these instances it directly modifies a noun. It is the instances in which the articular construction stands on its own which are relevant here (5:37, 39; 6:13; 13:19, 38, 49). The first 3 of these uses are found in the Sermon on the Mount, and so I examine them together, while the last 3 are found in Matthew 13, and will likewise be addressed together.

⁹⁷This is “the fiery lake prepared for the devil” in Revelation, where “human sinners join the cosmic powers in the fiery lake” (Osborne, *Matthew*, 938). One is further reminded here of the dualism of Qumran, where Michael is pitted against Belial, as is the prince of light and the angel of darkness (also W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew 19–28* [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 431).

⁹⁸Calvin says “Christ contrasts with himself the devil, as the head of all the reprobate.” Calvin, *Harmony*, 3:182. Marulli states, “The future and final purification, which is a necessary condition to the establishment of the ultimate communion of God with his children, finds its anticipation in a present purification made possible not by the destruction of the evil ones, but by the simultaneous manifestation of the Kingdom (through Jesus’ preaching and miracles) and the defeat of Satan.” Marulli, “The Parable of the Weeds,” 77.

The Sermon. While this project cannot begin to mine the depths of the Sermon on the Mount nor examine the breadth of scholarship such would entail, it is beneficial here to examine some structural aspects of the Sermon as well as its important theological contribution to Matthew's narrative.⁹⁹ As France notes,

The Sermon on the Mount thus takes its due place in the development of Matthew's plot . . . far from being an independent document from a group out of sympathy with Matthew's theology, it forms the essential foundation for Matthew's reader to appreciate all that will follow.¹⁰⁰

Once we begin to grasp its centrality, its connection with and therefore the importance of Matthew's cosmic conflict motif will be evident.

The first thing that stands out in this passage is its setting. Upon seeing the crowds, Jesus ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος. The importance of this setting in Matthew's Gospel has been thoroughly argued for elsewhere, thus a few brief comments here will suffice.¹⁰¹ The significance of this setting in the temptation narrative has been demonstrated, where in the climactic temptation Satan takes Jesus to a very high mountain (4:8). Here, Jesus ascends the mountain to deliver the first of five major discourses in Matthew. Some have argued that this scene should recall in the

⁹⁹Strauss states that Matthew's Gospel "shows the most evidence of careful structure and design" and certainly he is correct in stating that Matthew "is clearly a skilled literary artist." Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2011), 215. This truth about Matthew is perhaps most evidenced in how he structures the Sermon. However, I deal only with the aspects of the Sermon's structure that are relevant to the topic at hand. It should be further noted that the discourses in Matthew, including the Sermon, are integrated into Matthew's narrative and ultimately serve to move it forward, not subtract from it. Though the discourses, and especially the Sermon, deserve in depth treatment in their own right, the focus here is to understand how it serves Matthew's entire narrative. For the understanding that "The discourses are integrated into the flow of the surrounding narrative" with specific attention to the Sermon on the Mount, see David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, JSNTSup 31 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 130.

¹⁰⁰France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 165.

¹⁰¹Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 78; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 86; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 191. Luz states, "For Matthew the mountain is the place of prayer (14:23), of healings (15:29), of revelation (17:1; 28:16), and of teaching (24:3)." Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 182. For one of the fullest treatments of this setting in Matthew, see especially Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain*. Further, see discussion in Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 138-39.

reader's mind Moses' ascent to Mount Sinai.¹⁰² There we find a scene of dread where Moses receives the tables of the Old Covenant from Yahweh, while here Jesus, Yahweh made flesh, ascends a mountain and teaches the law of the New Covenant as one who has authority.

The third major mountain scene takes place when Jesus again ascends a mountain and crowds flock to him (15:29–31). For three days he heals the lame, blind, sick, and hurting among them. Jesus then has compassion on the crowds because they have nothing to eat, and so he multiplies seven loaves and a few small fish so that over four thousand can eat. This mountain scene is found in the midst of a summary statement which stands at the end of a series of such statements which have import to the narrative in various ways (4:23–5:1; 9:35–38; 11:1–6; 12:15–21). This final summary statement marks the end of Jesus' ministry among the Gentiles, and the beginning of his movement towards Jerusalem.¹⁰³ It should also be noted that immediately following this mountain scene the Pharisees seek a sign and are called an evil and adulterous generation. The disciples then misunderstand Jesus' call to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. We have seen above the importance of that passage to the theme of cosmic conflict. Thus far each mountain scene is closely connected to Jesus' conflict with Satan. Such a pattern will continue.

The fourth mountain scene is found in Matthew 17:1–13, where Jesus is transfigured before his disciples. As we have noted above, this passage parallels

¹⁰²So Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 139; Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 67; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 86; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 124–25; Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 103; Osborne, *Matthew*, 165; Keener, *Matthew*, 103; Quarles notes that “The clause ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος appears 3 times in the LXX and always describes Moses' ascent of Sinai.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 49. Contra France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 107; Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 106; Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain*, 105–21; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 86; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 192.

¹⁰³See discussion in Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain*, 128–31. Donaldson argues convincingly that this scene should call to mind “the Christological fulfillment of the expectations of Zion eschatology” (131).

Peter's confession, his failure to understand Jesus' mission, and Jesus' subsequent rebuke (Matt 16). It also by extension echoes the temptation narrative in Matthew 4:1–11.

The next important mountain reference takes place as Jesus is nearing his death in Jerusalem. The setting is the Mount of Olives and in conjunction with this mountain Matthew recounts several important scenes. First, Jesus and his disciples come to the Mount of Olives just before his triumphal entry and subsequent cursing of the temple (21:1). Second, Jesus delivers the famous "Olivet Discourse" upon this mountain (24:3). And finally, it is on this mountain where Jesus prays in Gethsemane (26:30). A few points can be drawn from this. First, there are several important connections in these texts to both the temptation narrative and the transfiguration.¹⁰⁴ Jesus' kingly authority is announced in the formula quotation of Matthew 21:5 and the crowd's reaction to Jesus.¹⁰⁵ Further, the cosmic language of 24:13, where Jesus predicts that all nations will hear the message of the kingdom before the end comes, echoes Jesus' third temptation where Satan offers to grant him all authority over all kingdoms of the world. The garden of Gethsemane also contains temptation language. Jesus warns the disciples to be diligent lest they "enter into temptation." This echoes Jesus being led into the wilderness to be tempted.¹⁰⁶ Further, here Jesus again is tempted in light of his sonship and his Father's will

¹⁰⁴Note also Huizenga, who argues for parallels between Gethsemene and Jesus' transfiguration as well as the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Leroy Andrew Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 225–26. We will see how all this weaving together of stories via intratextuality will shape Matthew's overall narrative, and that at the heart of it all is the theme of cosmic conflict.

¹⁰⁵So Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 344; Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 285; Carson, *Matthew*, 438; Morris emphasizes that the important point of the prophecy is the meekness of the coming king. Morris, *Matthew*, 520.

¹⁰⁶Hagner states, "The lesson of Jesus' experience is thus applied to the disciples." Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC, vol. 33b (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 784. Also Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 371.

regarding his Messianic mission.¹⁰⁷ This is made evident in his repeated prayer that the cup he is to suffer would pass from him, if it be his Father's will. Witherington states,

The First Evangelist has structured his narrative so that he stresses that Jesus faces a severe temptation at the three most crucial turning points in the narrative: (1) the beginning of his ministry; (2) at Caesarea Philippi where he is partially 'unmasked' by a disciple; (3) at the garden of Gethsemane. In each case the nature of the temptation is to try to avoid what God wants Jesus to do and be.¹⁰⁸

Two further observations bolster this connection. First, Jesus commands a non-violent response to his capture based on the fact that if he willed, legions of angels would come to his aid. This is precisely what Satan said would happen if he jumped off the temple.¹⁰⁹ Another subtle connection is the account's emphasis on Peter. Previously it was argued that the account of Peter's confession and Jesus' rebuke of him echoed the temptation narrative. In a similar vein, here Peter is prominent and speaks on behalf of the disciples saying that none would leave Jesus' side, and Peter himself would die before he did so. Jesus corrects Peter, stating that he will indeed leave his side, and not only this, but deny him three times (26:33–35). Again, in 26:40, Jesus rebukes Peter for falling asleep instead of praying in Jesus' hour of trial.¹¹⁰ Such actions again demonstrate Peter's misunderstanding of Jesus' mission.

¹⁰⁷Senior aptly notes, "The same source of strength [that protected him from the power of Satan in the wilderness] would be the object of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane." Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 107.

¹⁰⁸Witherington, *Matthew*, 318; also Gundry, *Matthew*, 109; see discussion in Garrett, who when commenting on this text in Mark's Gospel (8:33), states, "The severity of Jesus's rebuke of Peter . . . corresponds to the magnitude of Jesus's temptation here: the rebuke is sharp because the temptation is profound." Garrett, *The Temptation of Jesus in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 82.

¹⁰⁹So Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 790; Yoseop Ra, *The Origin and Formation of the Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 145; Bendoraitis argues convincingly for an echo here of the temptation narrative. Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 182–83.

¹¹⁰So Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 109; Quarles, *Matthew*, 320.

The final mountain reference is the mountain of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:16–20. This text is crucial to one’s understanding of cosmic conflict in Matthew, and will thus receive a more robust treatment below. Suffice it to say here that the resolution to the cosmic conflict exemplified in the temptation narrative and highlighted throughout Matthew’s Gospel is most clearly seen upon this final mountain.¹¹¹

The first two instances of the articular *πονηρός* are found early in the Sermon (5:37, 39). The latter is not significant for the present study, for “the evil one” refers to anyone who has wronged another.¹¹² Verse 37, however, warrants some discussion. Here Jesus is revealing the heart behind what is written in the law. The law commands that the Jews not swear falsely, but to follow through with their oaths. Jesus here reveals that the heart behind such a command, saying,

But I say to you do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God, nor by earth, for it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither swear by your head for you are not able to make a single hair white or black. Rather, let your word be yes, yes; and no, no. Anything beyond this is from the Evil One (*ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*).

The language here is clearly emphasizing God’s kingdom.¹¹³ The reasoning given for Jesus’ exhortations are the fact of God’s absolute sovereignty and the breadth of his kingdom. Heaven is his throne, earth is his footstool, Jerusalem is his city, and all people, even the hairs on their head, belong to him. As Calvin comments, “There is no part of the world on which God has not engraved the marks of his glory . . . he fills all things, and no extent of space can contain him.”¹¹⁴ Thus,

¹¹¹So Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 369.

¹¹²Osborne states, “All agree this does not mean ‘the evil one,’ i.e., Satan.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 208n3.

¹¹³Calvin seems to affirm this when, regarding the phrase “or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King,” he states, “God had chosen it to be the seat and residence of his empire.” Calvin, *Harmony*, 1:296. Also Pennington, who links the words to “God’s . . . coming kingdom.” Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 193.

¹¹⁴Calvin, *Harmony*, 1:295.

to disobey the commands of Jesus is to deny that kingdom, and affirm another kingdom, which is ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. Quarles states, “in this case the art. also serves as the def. art. *par* excellence, referring to Satan as the epitome of evil.”¹¹⁵ It is apparent here that Jesus is again highlighting the conflict between two kingdoms. God’s sovereign kingdom is breaking in with Jesus’ ministry, and is opposed by the kingdom of the Evil One, Satan, on whose side belong all those disobedient to the commands of Christ.¹¹⁶

The next use of πονηρός is found in Matthew 6:13, contained within the prayer of 6:7–15. From a structural perspective, this section of the Sermon is very significant, for it puts it at “the center of the center of the center” of the Sermon.¹¹⁷ Further, the Lord’s Prayer is an interlude on how to pray in the midst of the second of three examples of the practice of piety in the life of a disciple.¹¹⁸ The prayer

¹¹⁵Quarles, *Matthew*, 59. Similarly, Pennington states, “Finally, I take the Greek *ek tou ponērou estin* in 5:37 as ‘from the evil one,’ in concord with Matthew’s typical usage of the articular *ho ponēros* as reference to ‘the evil one’ (6:13; 13:19, 38).” Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 191–92n50.

¹¹⁶Hagner states, “Jesus strongly condemns anything beyond the simple, genuine yes or no as being ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ, ‘from the Evil One,’ the one associated preeminently with deception.” Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 128. Also see Witherington, who connects the phrase with Matthew’s use of “the Father of Lies.” Witherington, *Matthew*, 135 (similarly, Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 538). Hughes, Osborne, Gundry, and Newman and Stine all recognize the ambiguity of the phrase, but favor the definite meaning. R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 126; Osborne, *Matthew*, 205; Gundry, *Matthew*, 109; Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 151. Contra Calvin, who suggests the phrase ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ be translated “from evil” and that “it originates from the wickedness of men.” Calvin, *Harmony*, 1:97 (also Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 266). Carson says the phrase could be rendered as “of evil” or “of the Evil One,” thus seeing it as ambiguous. He assigns the same ambiguity to 6:13, although argues that there it most likely refers to “the Evil One.” Carson, *Matthew*, 154. Harrington and Turner also view it as ambiguous. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 88; Turner, *Matthew*, 173.

¹¹⁷Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount* 125. Similarly, Harrington states, “From one perspective the Lord’s Prayer can be viewed as an intrusion in a carefully structured triad . . . but it can also be taken as the center of the entire text and thus as the ‘spiritual heart.’” Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 96. Witherington calls the prayer both “central and crucial.” Witherington, *Matthew*, 142. Turner says it is the centerpiece of 6:1–18 and perhaps of the whole sermon. Turner, *Matthew*, 184.

¹¹⁸So Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 93, 96; Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 209; Senior rightly states that the prayer is at the heart of this section, and that “it is a distillation of motifs that run through the sermon and the Gospel as a whole.” Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 106–7.

addresses several of the major themes in Matthew, and is divided into six petitions. The first three have to do with God, and the second three with his people. Regarding the first three, we should pray that God's name be holy, his kingdom come, and his will be done. The latter three petitions on behalf of God's people include provision, forgiveness, and a deliverance ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.¹¹⁹

The cosmic and eschatological elements of this prayer are apparent.¹²⁰ The Father is addressed as “in heaven” which refers to the cosmic and all-encompassing nature of his reign. In light of this fact, Jesus prays that his kingdom come in its fullness on the earth as it is in heaven. The third petition is similar to the second in that the Father's reign will be manifested on earth precisely when his will is done on earth.¹²¹ As Pennington notes, this contrast between “God's way in heaven over against sinful humanity on earth” is an important theme in Matthew.¹²² The goal of the cosmos, then, is for the contrast to cease, a reality which is possible because “it is in Jesus Christ that the eschatological reuniting of heaven and earth has begun.”¹²³ As we have seen, Jesus is able to pray such a prayer because in his ministry he is binding the ruler of this world and bringing in the kingdom of God.

The second three petitions are more difficult to parse. Is the cosmic and

¹¹⁹Also Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 221–22.

¹²⁰So Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 76; Gardner, *Matthew*, 119; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 127; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 97. Note, however, France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 133. France, while not ruling out an eschatological element to the prayer, argues that its primary application is day to day discipleship. Similarly, Osborne suggests the first three petitions are primarily eschatological, while the second three are primarily present focused, yet there is an “inaugurated thrust” to the whole prayer. Osborne, *Matthew*, 227.

¹²¹So Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 95; Gardner, *Matthew*, 119. Pennington suggests that the first 3 petitions should be taken as one. He states, “There is a significant, mutually informing overlap between the three initial requests, making them in effect one cohesive idea.” Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 223. Also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 603.

¹²²Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 155.

¹²³Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 155.

eschatological nature of the first three petitions dropped in the second three?¹²⁴ I argue here that this is not the case, and that the whole of the prayer is cosmic and eschatological. Just as with the first three petitions, there is an expecting element and a present element in the latter three petition. This is clear in petitions five and six. In the fifth petition, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for forgiveness. This points forward to the reality of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, which will guarantee the forgiveness of his people at the judgment.¹²⁵ Yet there is a present aspect here as well, for the disciples must trust God's mercy through Jesus now for their forgiveness of sins in order to receive eternal forgiveness. Further, in light of God's forgiveness of his people, they too should presently forgive those who have wronged them. Thus, "This remission of debt the NT sees as accomplished by the self-giving of Jesus . . . the cancellation of the disciples indebtedness, in the face of the dawning Kingdom, must be met by a like service to the debtors."¹²⁶

The fourth petition reads: τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον. Much of the difficulty in interpreting this phrase lies in the meaning of the adjective ἐπιούσιον, as well as its relationship to σήμερον.¹²⁷ Further, whatever interpretation is accepted needs to account for the emphatic position of σήμερον at the end of the sentence. The most common reading found in most translations takes ἐπιούσιον to be equivalent to ἐπὶ τὴν οὐρανὴν ἡμέραν, and so refer to the bread that is needed "for the day." This however fails to explain the position of σήμερον, indeed, the need for the

¹²⁴This appears to be the view of Garner (*Matthew*, 119–20); however, Gardner still suggests that the second 3 petitions should be read in light of the eschatological hope of the first three. Pennington views the first 3 petitions as eschatological and the second 3 as human oriented. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 225.

¹²⁵So Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 131–32.

¹²⁶Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 76.

¹²⁷For a discussion of the interpretive possibilities, see Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 175–76.

word at all. The translation would in effect be “give us our for the day bread today.” This redundancy seems unnecessary. Another common interpretation is that it is derived from ἐπὶ and οὐσία, thus rendering its meaning “necessary for existence.”¹²⁸ While possible, this reading still does not explain the presence of σήμερον nor its emphatic position. Another possibility is to view ἐπιούσιον as deriving from ἐπιέναι, which means “to come.” Such a reading could be rendered, “give us our bread which is yet to come today.”¹²⁹ This understanding perhaps makes the most sense of the difficulties faced thus far, if indeed the “bread to come” is that bread to be enjoyed with Christ at the eschatological banquet (cf. Matt 8:11).¹³⁰ Thus, the prayer is that the people of God would experience in some sense in the present that eschatological banquet at which we will all feast at the end of time.¹³¹

This brings us to the sixth and final petition. Here Jesus teaches his disciples to pray: καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ

¹²⁸This seems to be how Ridderbos takes it. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 131.

¹²⁹So Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 93, 95; Albright and Mann give a solid defense for this view, but then reject it based on reasons which ironically seem to support the reading. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 76.

¹³⁰*Pace* Newman and Stine, who state that “in this context such an interpretation is highly unlikely.” Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 175. Osborne combines the today and tomorrow readings, thus the rendering, “give us our bread for today and tomorrow.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 229. He rejects an eschatological understanding, as does Keener, *Matthew*, 145; Gundry, *Matthew*, 107; Turner, *Matthew*, 188; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 278.

¹³¹However, Quarles rejects this reading on the grounds that “The temp. adv. σήμερον . . . seems to preclude the eschatological interpretation that view the petition as a plea for the Messianic feast.” Quarles, *Matthew*, 64. However, such would not be the case if the petition is meant to highlight the fact that in Jesus’ appearance the blessings of the kingdom have already dawned, even if the kingdom has yet to come in its fullness. Witherington suggests that even if you translate the phrase as “the bread for tomorrow” it still carries the notion of present provision rather than any eschatological sense. Witherington, *Matthew*, 146. Similarly, Guelich favors the meaning “bread for tomorrow” and suggests it is a prayer of faith that God will provide for the physical needs of his people. Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 293 (also Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 321). However, he also states that “The eschatological element remains inherent in the request When praying for one’s needs now, one does so in anticipation of the ‘tomorrow’ of the consummation.” Similarly Hughes states, it “is a prayer to meet our daily physical needs . . . praying for tomorrow’s bread implicitly requests that God meet our needs with the bread of the ultimate tomorrow.” Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 189. Davies and Allison also argue for a present and eschatological interpretation. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 609.

πονηροῦ. The question concerning this verse has to do with whether ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ has to do with deliverance “from evil” in general, or from “the Evil One” (referring to Satan) specifically.¹³² While it is possible that the Greek could refer to either, there is a grammatical argument for the latter understanding. As Bauer has pointed out, ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς can take either the preposition ἐκ or ἀπὸ, the former always referring to things to be delivered from (neuter), while the latter always referring to persons (masculine).¹³³

More compelling, however, are the linguistic and thematic connections between this passage and Matthew 4:1–11.¹³⁴ The Lord’s prayer begins with a recognition of God as Father who has the power to grant the requests of his children (Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς), which provides the foundation for the entire prayer. The Fatherhood of God is the prerequisite for his desire and commitment to provide for his children, and his transcendence (ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) the prerequisite for his

¹³²Scholars who take it as “the Evil One” include: Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 614–15; Carson, *Matthew*, 174; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 279; Witherington, *Matthew*, 147; Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 197; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 77; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 133; Gundry, *Matthew*, 109. Scholars who see a general reference to evil include: Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 323; Morris, *Matthew*, 148–49; Kodjak, *A Structural Analysis of the Sermon on the Mount*, 114; James A. Kellerman and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew (Opus Imperfectum)*, ACT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 125; Richard Glover, *A Teacher’s Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1956); Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*. Scholars who conclude it could be either, and that the difference in meaning is negligible include: Calvin, *Harmony*, 329; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 95. Harrington, however, appears to lean toward the eschatological reading of “Evil One.” Osborne is similar, favoring the articular reading, however, he suggests that “evil” and “the Evil One” are virtually synonymous. Osborne, *Matthew*, 231. Further, see E. Milton, “‘Deliver Us from the Evil Imagination’: Matt. 6:13b in Light of the Jewish Doctrine of the Yetzer Hara,” *RelStTh* 13 (1995): 52–67. Milton argues based on Jewish belief regarding the “two impulses” that the evil one here refers to the human imagination and its evil inclinations.

¹³³J. B. Bauer, “Libera nos a Malo,” *Verbum Domini* 34 (1956): 12–15; see also Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 297, who further notes that the notion of an abstract force of evil does not exist in the NT, only evil words or actions, or as the Evil One. He goes on to state, “The Evil One referring to Satan . . . fits the eschatological context of the defeat of Satan.”

¹³⁴Witherington states, “It is worth noting that this story [of Jesus’s temptation in the wilderness] sets up one of the petitions in the Lord’s prayer, providing a key as to how it should be translated and interpreted. Matthew 6:13 should read ‘lead us not into temptation, but rather deliver us from the Evil One.’” Witherington, *Matthew*, 89. Pennington notes this connection as well. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 228.

power to provide for his children. As Calvin states, “Whenever we engage in prayer, there are two things to be considered, both that we may have access to God, and that we may rely on Him with full and unshaken confidence: his fatherly love toward us, and his boundless power.”¹³⁵

Likewise, the temptation account hinges on the fact that Jesus is the Son, and his Father would therefore grant him the power to provide perfectly for the Son’s needs (εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ). The first petition asks that the Father’s name be “sanctified” (ἀγιάζω). To sanctify God’s name means to set his name apart as supreme among all other gods. The text here perhaps echos Ezekiel 36:22–25:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you (ESV).

Ezekiel goes on to tie this promise to the bringing in of the New Covenant kingdom by the Messiah (36:26–38). If we look closely at Matthew 4, we see a similar idea in Jesus’ response to Satan’s third temptation of Jesus. Satan offers to grant Jesus authority over all earthly kingdoms if he bows down to worship him. Such an action on Jesus’ part would effectively profane the name of the Father among the nations, the very thing for which God chastises Israel through Ezekiel, and the very opposite of what Jesus prays for in praying ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου. In the second and third petitions, Jesus prays that the Father’s kingdom (ἡ βασιλεία) come upon the earth,

¹³⁵Calvin, *Harmony*, 1:317; also Carson, *Matthew*, 169; Nolland states, “Heaven’ points to God’s transcendence, while ‘Father’ picks up the committed relationship in which God and those praying stand.” Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 286. Morris states, “We should not miss the balance in this opening to the prayer. We address God intimately as Father, but we immediately recognize his infinite greatness with the addition in heaven.” Morris, *Matthew*, 144.

which would result in his will being accomplished upon the earth just as it is in heaven. As previously noted, the crux of the temptations of Satan is the overthrow of the Father's will with regard to Jesus' mission. To give in would be to accomplish precisely the opposite of what Jesus is praying for in his third petition. Further, the climactic third temptation in its kingdom language echoes the second petition, which is that God's kingdom come upon the earth. The temptation is that this take place on Satan's terms, rather than the Father's. Jesus would receive all earthly kingdoms, and thus accomplish the end goal of his mission. In reality, the cost would prove greater than the reward, for the Father's will would be forfeit and the mission would ultimately be futile. Satan would win the battle, and the kingdom of the Father would fail to come upon the earth.

The connection between the fourth petition and the temptation account is clear. Most obviously, they both refer to bread. Noteworthy is that in both instances there is both a present sense and a cosmic/eschatological sense to what is requested. In the temptation account, the present sense is that Jesus has fasted forty days and is hungry! He is in need of the Father's provision presently. From a cosmic/eschatological perspective, however, Jesus' entire mission in the redemption of the universe hinges upon his response to this temptation. Will he carry out his mission on his Father's terms, or on Satan's terms? As discussed above, the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer certainly carries a present sense of the provision of God for his children. However, the eschatological nature of the petition is evident as well in that Christ is calling for the present fulfillment of an ultimately eschatological and cosmic reality, namely, the final supper of the bridegroom with his bride, the church. Had Jesus given into to Satan's temptation regarding bread, this final bread breaking at the eschatological banquet could never take place.

Finally, in this final petition is perhaps the clearest indicator of the connection of these two passages, and thus the greatest evidence that deliverance

ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ references deliverance from Satan himself.¹³⁶ In the first part of the petition, Jesus prays *καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν*. This points back to 4:1 where Matthew records that Jesus *ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος πειρασθῆναι*.¹³⁷ Because Jesus was victorious over Satan’s temptations, he can now pray that his disciples be delivered *ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*.¹³⁸ This is possible because in the temptation account Jesus is first led into the wilderness to be tempted, and is ultimately delivered from the clutches of Satan through his obedience to the will of his Father. It is almost certain, given the parallels mentioned thus far, that this sixth petition of Jesus follows that same pattern, namely, temptation then deliverance. The deliverance from “the Evil One” then is that same deliverance Jesus experienced from Satan in the temptation account.¹³⁹ Thus, Jesus experienced temptation at the hands of Satan himself so that we might be delivered from such temptation. (cf. Heb. 4:15; 1 Cor 10:13). Here at the center of the center of the center of the Sermon, we find a clear statement of the importance of cosmic conflict for Jesus’ mission and Matthew’s narrative. Christ has overcome the temptation of Satan, and thus can teach his people to pray that God’s kingdom come and his will be done on earth, and so his people be delivered from the power of the Evil One, Satan himself.¹⁴⁰ As Helmut Thielicke observes, “There is a dark, mysterious, spellbinding figure at work. Behind the temptations stand *the* tempter, behind the lie stands *the* liar.”¹⁴¹ This petition

¹³⁶So Osborne, *Matthew*, 320.

¹³⁷Turner, *Matthew*, 189. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 228.

¹³⁸So David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 77.

¹³⁹Senior notes this connection as well as a parallel with Jesus in Gethsemane. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 107. Also Wilkins, *Matthew*, 279.

¹⁴⁰See Guelich who notes the connection of this passage not only with the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, but also the temptation of Adam and Eve in the garden. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 295.

¹⁴¹Helmut Thielicke, *Our Heavenly Father* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 133.

points to the ongoing cosmic conflict in Matthew's narrative and foreshadows its ultimate fulfillment, which resolution will not be apparent until the final verses of the gospel.¹⁴²

Matthew 13. Matthew 13 begins the third major discourse section in Matthew. It is made up of a series of parables by which Jesus elucidates truths regarding the kingdom of Heaven. While much could be discussed regarding Jesus' parables, the focus here will be on the use of *πονηρός* and its implications for the theme of cosmic conflict in Matthew's Gospel.

The first use is found in Matthew 13:19, where Jesus is explaining the parable of the sower to his disciples. In this parable, a sower throws seed along a path, but birds come and devour it so that it cannot take root (13:3–4). Jesus explains that the seed sown along the path are those who hear “the word of the kingdom” (*ὁ λόγος τῆς βασιλείας*), but do not understand it (13:19). Jesus then describes what is going on with this lack of understanding: *ἔρχεται ὁ πονηρὸς καὶ ἀρπάζει τὸ ἐσπαρμένον ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ.*¹⁴³ It is best to take *παντὸς ἀκούοντος τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ μὴ συνιέντος* as a genitive absolute construction, with the present tense indicating an action in progress, and so view the “hearing” and “not understanding” as contemporaneous with the snatching away of the seed.¹⁴⁴ The

¹⁴²Albright and Mann argue that the “testing” here refers to “a sharp and bitter struggle between men and the forces of evil . . . this theme of conflict is constantly emphasized in the NT, and Jesus saw his work of exorcism as part of this conflict.” Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 26:76–77.

¹⁴³Note discussion in chap. 2 where it was seen that demonic forces are often represented as birds in Second Temple literature (i.e., *Jub.* 11:11–12; *Apoc. Ab.* 13:3–7. Osborne and Luz also note this fact. Osborne, *Matthew*, 513; Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 248n134. For more examples of this, see Hans Josef Klauck, *Allegorie und Allegorese in synoptischen Gleichnistexten*, NTAbh 13 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1978), 201.

¹⁴⁴See *BDAG*, 1105; also Morris, *Matthew*, 345; and Calvin, who states, “Hence we infer that, as hungry birds are wont to do at the time of sowing, this enemy of our salvation, as soon as the doctrine is delivered, watches and rushes forth to seize it, before it acquires moisture and springs up.” Calvin, *Harmony*, 114.

seed is being sown on hard and unfertile soil, which is easy prey for the Evil One, Satan, who comes and snatches the seed away before it is able to take root.¹⁴⁵ In the epistles it is Satan who blinds the minds of unbelievers to keep them from believing, and this seems to be parallel to what is being said here.

So this parable elucidates an important aspect of Satan's role in the cosmic conflict. He seeks to prevent the good news of the kingdom of Heaven from taking root in the hearts of those who hear it.¹⁴⁶ This has actually been confirmed already in Matthew's Gospel. Consider the temptation of Jesus. Satan's goal was to distort the "word of the kingdom." He did this specifically in the second temptation by distorting God's words in Psalm 91, tempting Jesus to put his Father to the test. Further, the entire temptation account was Satan's attempt to distort this word of the kingdom by tempting Jesus to corrupt God's mission for him in bringing about this kingdom. Satan promised Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" if he would bow down in worship. Such is the goal of Christ's mission, but the means would have ultimately forfeited that very mission and the kingdom would not have come. Such a role harkens even further back in the biblical narrative to that first temptation. There Satan asked Eve, "did God really say?" Thus, we find in this parable an illustration of Satan's primary role in this cosmic battle that has raged from the beginning. He is "the Evil One" who distorts and distracts from God's word and the good news of the kingdom. As Osborne states, "Satan is portrayed throughout the gospels as the enemy of all who come in contact with the proclaimed word."¹⁴⁷ Yet Christ has come

¹⁴⁵On the Evil One being Satan, see Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 188; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 380; Morris, *Matthew*, 346n45; Quarles, *Matthew*, 147; Witherington, *Matthew*, 264–65; Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook*, 428; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 258. Sim notes that Matthew omits Mark's "Satan" here and replaces it with "the Evil One," which he views as "significant in terms of the evangelist's overall dualistic scheme." Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 77.

¹⁴⁶Luz states, "That the devil especially likes to accost new converts [was] presumably known to the readers of the gospel." Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 248.

¹⁴⁷Osborne, *Matthew*, 513.

and is waging war against Satan and bringing all his enemies to naught as the kingdom of Heaven breaks into the realm of earth through his ministry.

The next 2 instances of *ὁ πονηρός* are found in 13:38 and 49. The former we discussed previously. Jesus, explaining the parable of the weeds, states that the weeds are *οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, who are sown by the devil himself.¹⁴⁸ It stands to reason then that the devil is “the Evil One” being described and that those showing allegiance to him are his sons.¹⁴⁹ Again, we have a direct connection with those who do not believe the words of Jesus and Satan. A dichotomy is present here between the good seed, who are *οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας* sown by Jesus, and the weeds, who are *οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, sown by Satan.¹⁵⁰ Thus, reiterating what I mentioned previously, here Jesus indicates that cosmic conflict will play an integral part in Jesus’ inaugurating his kingdom on the earth. The battle will rage until his return, with the wicked and the righteous ever present, and the Evil One attempting to thwart its advance at every turn. Here “The antagonists are spelled out . . . the battle is between the kingdom and the cosmic forces of evil for the souls of humankind, and some belong to God’s kingdom and others to Satan’s.”¹⁵¹ Yet Christ will reign until all his enemies are placed beneath his feet, and as the parable further indicates, until

¹⁴⁸In Harrison’s re-reading of this parable, the sons refer to the Roman oppressors of the Jewish people, who will one day be defeated by coming insurrectionists. Harrison, “Weeds.”

¹⁴⁹The *υἱοὶ* here is not a reference to actual progeny, rather it has to do with one’s allegiance as demonstrated by their character (so Quarles, *Matthew*, 153; Osborne, *Matthew*, 533). In light of the “sons of” language used often in connection with the religious leaders, it is likely they are the primary referent here, although all opposed to God’s kingdom fall into this category.

¹⁵⁰Note the similarity between this language and the dualistic language of “sons of light” and “sons of darkness” found in the Qumran literature discussed in chap. 2 above (Sim notes this connection as well. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 79). Marulli rightly states, “Jesus maintains the dualistic vision, but dismisses the eschatological war between the *sons of the light* and the *sons of the darkness* in view of the establishment of the Kingdom. The Kingdom, according to Jesus, is already deploying itself in the present time, and Satan cannot really oppose this process.” Marulli, “The Parable of the Weeds,” 76.

¹⁵¹Osborne, *Matthew*, 533; cf. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 82.

the devil and his angels are all cast into the lake of fire, and the righteous “shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (13:42–3).¹⁵²

The final use of *ὁ πονηρός* is found in 13:49, and is similar to the previous parable. Here, the plural *τοὺς πονηροὺς* is used as Jesus explains that the righteous will be separated from “the evil ones” at the end of the age, just as fishermen gather fish into their nets and separate the good from the bad. *Τοὺς πονηροὺς* here refers to *οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ* discussed above (v. 38), and so they are those who are led astray by Satan and are opposed to the kingdom of God. This opposition rages to the end of the age, and so too the cosmic conflict which is so integral to Matthew’s story. However, at the end of the age these two groups will be separated, and Christ will be victorious in bringing the Father’s kingdom in its fullness.

Σατανᾶ

In Matthew’s Gospel, the devil is named Satan on three occasions: Matthew 4:10, 12:26, and 16:23.¹⁵³ The first use of *σατανᾶ* is found in 4:10 where, in responding to Satan’s third and final temptation, Jesus states, *ὑπάγε, σατανᾶ· γέγραπται γάρ· κύριον τὸν θεόν σου προσκυνήσεις καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις*. The placement of the text here is important. At Jesus’ baptism, the Father affirmed the mission of the Son in the descent of the Spirit upon him. That same Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness *πειρασθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου*.¹⁵⁴ As argued above, the temptations

¹⁵²Meier notes that the allegorical interpretation of vv. 41–43a “dwells almost entirely on the punishment of the wicked [with] no resumption of the imagery of the wheat, harvest, or barn.” John P. Meier, “The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (Matthew 13:24–30): Is Thomas’s Version [Logion 57] Independent?” *JBL* 131, no. 4 (2012): 721. Sabourin notes this emphasis as well. Leopold Sabourin, “Apocalyptic Traits in Matthew’s Gospel,” *Religious Studies Bulletin* 3, no. 1 (1983): 19–36.

¹⁵³The present discussion will focus on the first and third of these instances, since *σατανᾶ* in 12:26 is used in relationship to Beelzebul, which will be discussed in the next section. Further, because both instances of *σατανᾶ* in 4:10 and 16:23 have been discussed secondarily in previous sections, the observations made here will be brief and summative.

¹⁵⁴Luz states, “The Matthean introductory note takes up the thread of the baptism story. The Spirit given to Jesus there now leads him up into the wilderness.” Luz, *Matthew* 1–7, 151.

progress towards a climax, and it is in the final temptation that Jesus rebukes Satan by his own name.¹⁵⁵ This foreshadows how the cosmic conflict will play out throughout the gospel.¹⁵⁶ As Black notes,

The characterization . . . of Satan in [the temptation account] establishes the antipodal extremes between which the actions of the ensuing narrative will swing, the countervailing power exerted by good or evil . . . of allegiance to either God or Satan.¹⁵⁷

Satan rages against Jesus, yet is continually overcome by him, as evidenced in the narrative following the temptation account, for he calls his disciples and immediately begins casting out demons, a feat which takes place throughout the gospel.

The third use of *σατανᾶ* is found in chapter 16, which was discussed in detail above. To reiterate, the parallel between 4:1–11 and 16:1–23 demonstrates that Matthew desires to connect the two. As in chapter 4, Satan attempts to thwart Jesus' mission, this time through one of his closest confidants.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the primary goal of Satan is to combat the mission of Christ's work as Messiah, which hinges on Jesus' obedient humiliation to the point of death on a cross.¹⁵⁹

Βεελζεβούλ

The Beelzebul controversy is clearly important for understanding cosmic conflict in Matthew, as has already been discussed previously. Here I explore Matthew's intention in referring to Satan as Beelzebul in 10:25 and 12:24, 27.¹⁶⁰ It is

¹⁵⁵So Osborne, *Matthew*, 135; Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 151.

¹⁵⁶So Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 62.

¹⁵⁷Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 35.

¹⁵⁸So Luz states, “[Peter] strives for the human rather than for the divine.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 382.

¹⁵⁹So Davies and Allison state, “In both places Jesus is choosing the path of duty: the end ordained by the Father is to be achieved by the manner ordained by the Father, namely, the cross. And any opposition to this is satanic. To reject the way of the cross is to be on the side of the devil.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 372.

¹⁶⁰Note, however, that Luz argues that Beelzeboul, though likely the ruler of the demons, “is probably to be distinguished from the devil.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 96. However,

important therefore to understand the background and meaning of the name.

Some disagreement exists as to the origin of the name Beelzebul; however, there is a general consensus that it derives from the Canaanite God, Baal.¹⁶¹ Baal Zebul likely means “Lord of the high house,”¹⁶² and is sometimes rendered “Baal the Prince.”¹⁶³ It is also noteworthy that Beelzebul is associated with Belial in some Qumran literature (cf. 4QBer^a). Patrick Schreiner points out three important aspects of Baal’s identity; he is (1) a giver of life; (2) the builder of a house, or temple; and (3) the “lord of the earth.”¹⁶⁴ Each of these aspects of Baal’s identity are important for one’s understanding of comic conflict in Matthew for two reasons. First, in Matthew’s Gospel each of these characteristics can be linked to Satan’s opposition to

the evidence in Matthew contradicts this view, for in 12:26 Beelzeboul is explicitly identified as Satan, and elsewhere in Matthew Satan is identified as the devil (4:10). Thus, Luz’s argument should be rejected.

¹⁶¹Regarding the name’s origin, see discussion of W. Herrmann, “Beelzebub,” in *DDD*, ed. K. Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem van der Horst (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 154–55. The variant Baal Zabub could be translated “lord of the flies,” as attested in Ugaritic (cf. 2 Kgs 1:2, 6; so Witherington, *Matthew*, 245; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 183). Cheyenne believes Beelzebub to be an intentional modification of the original Beelzeboul “in the direction of a cacophony for religious reasons.” Thomas Kelly Cheyenne and John Sutherland Black, *Encyclopaedia Biblica: A Critical Dictionary of the Literary Political and Religious History, the Archaeology, Geography, and Natural History of the Bible* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1899), 514. Fensham argues that zabb of the Old Testament should be connected to the Ugaritic dbb, meaning flame. Thus, according to Fensham, Beelzebub is a caconymic meaning “Lord of the Flame,” which sets the true God over against Baal, the Lord of the Flame in the Elijah story. F. Charles Fensham, “Possible Explanation of the Name Baal-Zebub of Ekron,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 79, no. 3 (1967): 361–64. The irony is that the prophets of the supposed Lord of the Flame were defeated by the prophet of the one true God. Lachs suggests that Beelzebul is used to describe “the antagonist of God.” Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 211.

¹⁶²So Witherington, *Matthew*, 245; Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 96. Zebul appears to indicate a dwelling place in several DSS texts as well: 1QM 12:1, 2; 1QS 10:13; 1QH 3:34 (also Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant*, 73).

¹⁶³See discussion in John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 77–81. MacLaurin argues that both the phrases *οικοδεσπότην* and *ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων* define Matthew’s use of Beelzebul, with the former being a precise translation, and the latter perhaps translating part of the word. Thus he prefers the rendering “master of the house” or possibly “prince of demons.” E. Colin B. MacLaurin, “Beelzeboul,” *Novum Testamentum* 20, no. 2 (April 1978): 156–60. Similarly, see Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 105; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 183.

¹⁶⁴Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 66.

Jesus, which is likely the reason behind Matthew's use of Beelzebul as a name for Satan. Second, in his combat against Satan Jesus dismantles each of these and reclaims them as his own. The first of these will now be discussed, while the second will be dealt with in the next section. Presently, I show how each of these aspects of Baal's identity are alluded to both in Matthew 12 and Matthew 4, as well as elsewhere in his Gospel.

According to Umberto Cassuto, Baal's activity is often associated with life.

They thought of him as the giver of food and nourishment . . . he was the source of life for all things created: for plants, for animals, for men, and even for the gods themselves. In a word, he was regarded as the God of Life, as the personification of all the forces that give, preserve, and renew life.¹⁶⁵

This is apparent in Baal's battle with and defeat of Mot, whose name means "death," in the *Baal Cycle*. What is intriguing about the Beelzebub controversy is that Matthew depicts Beelzebul as a bringer of destruction. Thus, while he "is supposed to be the 'giver of life' . . . Baal instead takes away life."¹⁶⁶ This is seen most clearly in the demonic possession around which the passage centers. The demon possessed man brought to Jesus was both blind and mute, both of which function as essential to life. Blind men in that day would often beg, calling out to those passing by for help. A mute person, though unable to speak, could see and thus work or seek out help. However, a blind and mute person could not do any of these, and thus could not live except in utter dependence on another. As Schreiner notes, "The demon-possessed man stood at a disadvantage regarding social life [and] would not have been welcomed in societal functions."¹⁶⁷ Beelzebul brings death and destruction, rather than life, a reversal of Baal's role in the Baal cycle. Instead, Baal has taken on

¹⁶⁵Umberto Cassuto, "The Palace of Baal," *JBL* 61, no. 1 (March 1942): 52. I originally discovered this quote in Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 64–65.

¹⁶⁶Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 71.

¹⁶⁷Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 67.

the role of his enemy, Mot, or “death.” This reversal is further confirmed by Jesus’ reference to “possessions” (τὰ σκεύη) of Satan in verse 29. It could be that “possessions” here is simply used by Matthew to preserve the house metaphor.¹⁶⁸ However, it seems likely that since demonic possession gave rise to Jesus’ use of the metaphor, the σκεύη of the strong man are the bodies, and thus the lives, of demon possessed individuals.¹⁶⁹ Thus, it is Beelzebul who takes and destroys life, while Jesus through his exorcisms grants life.¹⁷⁰ This idea is perhaps also alluded to in temptation account. Satan’s first temptation has to do with the giving of life. Jesus, after having fasted forty days, is hungry, likely to the point of death. Satan suggests he use his power as the Son of God to make life-giving bread out of the rocks. That life is in view here is Jesus response that “man does not *live on bread alone*.” Thus, while Satan’s temptation might appear to be life sustaining, it would actually bring death and destruction into a world without hope. Indeed, the eschatological aspect of the bread remains intact, for the death that Satan brings is not merely physical, but eternal, whereas the life represented by the bread is that eternal bread of life, a metaphor which Jesus elsewhere uses to describe himself (John 6:48, 51).

Secondly, Baal is depicted as the builder of a house, or temple. The obvious connection of this role to the temptation account is the second temptation

¹⁶⁸Carson, *Matthew*, 290.

¹⁶⁹Thus, Luz states, “Probably σκεῦοι is also not accidental. A ‘vessel’ is a frequent metaphor for the human body.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 206. Also Klauck, *Allegorie*, 181n172; Christian Maurer, “σκεῦος,” in *TDNT*, vol. 7, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 358–59. France notes this as a possible reading, but ultimately agrees with Carson that “possessions” here is simply an extension of the metaphor. France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 209.

¹⁷⁰This argument is made clearly and effectively by Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 73–74. Schreiner’s argument is threefold. First, within the Scriptures σκεῦος often refers to individuals (Acts 9:15; Rom 9:22; 2 Cor 4:7; 1 Pet 3:7). Second, literature outside the Scriptures identify σκεύη with bodies (*T. Naph.* 8:6; *Herm. Vis.* 5:1–2); Third, non-linguistic considerations make this likely, including the present context of demonic possession, as well as the likely illusion to Isa 49, which speaks of God rescuing his people from their oppressors (ισχύοντος).

in which Satan stands Jesus upon τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ. As discussed above, Satan’s entrance into “the holy city” and his access to the temple is surprising and suggests that in some respects he has authority over that place. It is likely then, that at this point the temple has lost its divine favor, and is in the power of Satan. Thus, as Baal is depicted as the builder of a temple, so here Satan has infiltrated the most holy place of God and asserted his authority. Thus, here Jesus is reasserting divine authority over the temple of God. Indeed, as Matthew makes clear, Jesus himself is the new and greater temple being built up by the Father (12:6). Satan has built a house by possessing and ruining bodies, and now Jesus has entered the house, is binding the strong man, and building his own house by freeing those bodies, bringing them from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God.¹⁷¹

Finally, Baal is called “the lord of the earth.” We noted of the temptation a progression that peaks in the third temptation. Part of this progression includes the recognition of Satan’s authority. He first approaches Jesus in the wilderness, then stands Jesus on the temple of the holy city, and finally upon a very high mountain. On this mountain Satan proclaims his authority over the entire earth. He shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and offers them in exchange for worship, saying, “they have been given to me.” If we keep this idea in the background, we can see that in the Beelzebul Controversy this authority of Satan is reaffirmed, with one important caveat, namely, his kingdom is crumbling. We see again the language of

¹⁷¹Plummer states, “The Messiah had taken prey from Satan by freeing demoniacs from his power; which is evidence that, so far from being the ally of Satan, He has begun to conquer him.” Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 177. Also Lachs, who sees here an “allusion to the Messiah, who will vanquish Satan.” Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 213 (also Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 344). This language is similar to what we saw in *T. Levi* 18:12, “And Beliar shall be bound by him and he shall give power to his children to tread upon evil spirits.” Lachs makes this connection as well. Legg states that the binding of Satan leads to the spread of Christ’s kingdom “to the whole world” (cf. Rev. 20:2–3). Legg, *The King and His Kingdom*, 231. Contra Toussaint, who argues that Jesus is not suggesting that he has bound or is even currently binding Satan, only that he has the capacity to bind Satan. Contra Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold the King: A Study of Matthew* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 164. This, however, is highly unlikely.

Satan's kingdom throughout the passage. First, in Jesus' response that every kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and second when he applies this to Satan, asking "How will his kingdom stand?" (12:26). Thus, in light of the third temptation the kingdom of Satan at least includes his authority over the earth, and the house metaphor refers to the earth over which Satan has exercised free authority, but which is now being plundered by Jesus. France sums up the point of this passage: "Satan is powerless before the victorious incursion of God's kingdom in Jesus' ministry of deliverance."¹⁷²

Jesus versus Satan

Jesus' relationship to Satan in Matthew's Gospel is multifaceted. Ultimately, as Sim correctly notes, "The Satan tradition plays an important role in the Matthean narrative and sets the story of Jesus in the context of a cosmic conflict between the heavenly forces and the powers of evil."¹⁷³ If the argument of this project stands, Satan stands behind all secondary antagonists and thus all conflict throughout Matthew's gospel. In this section I look at three texts which most clearly reflect the direct relationship between Jesus and Satan, which is then further reflected in the interaction between Jesus and the other antagonists in Matthew's gospel. These texts include the temptation account of Matthew 4, Jesus' rebuke of Peter in Matthew 16, and the Beelzebul Controversy of Matthew 12.

First, Jesus' identity and mission are the primary focus of the temptation narrative. Each individual temptation begins with the conditional εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ. Jesus' identity as Son is called into question and the devil attempts to test that identity with several challenges which would require more than human authority.

¹⁷²France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 210.

¹⁷³Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 77.

However, Satan here proves crafty because the temptation to confirm Jesus' identity would actually result in him forfeiting the very mission for which he was sent.

The account ends with Jesus having resisted all three temptations of Satan. Two important points should be made here. First, Jesus rebukes Satan saying, *ὑπάγε, σατανᾶ*, and affirms his allegiance to his Father alone (4:10). Matthew 4:11 then states two things: first, that the devil left him, and second, angels ministered to him. Regarding the first, Satan has just referenced his authority over all the kingdoms of the world, however, at the word of Jesus he must flee. It is perhaps important that Satan does not come face to face with Jesus again throughout the entire gospel. While there is still war to be waged, Satan himself has been defeated by Christ and cast from his presence. Second, angels minister to Jesus at the conclusion of his victory over Satan. This is significant because angels are mentioned in Matthew's Gospel as those agents who are able to come to his aid in this cosmic battle, and who at the end of the age will be at Jesus' side when he finally defeats all his enemies.¹⁷⁴ Here then, at his initial defeat of his ultimate enemy, angels arrive as ministering servants, perhaps foreshadowing that final defeat of Satan and all who with him oppose Christ.

The next encounter between Satan and Jesus is not in a physical sense but is seen in Jesus' interaction with Peter in Matthew 16. There Peter rebukes Jesus for saying that he must suffer and die at the hands of sinners. Jesus then addresses Peter, but names Satan, saying, *ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ*. The reason for Jesus' rebuke is that Peter's words are a stumbling block to him. This passage clearly refers the reader back to that initial encounter with Satan in chapter 4. Matthew reemphasizes Jesus' divine mission from the Father as the Son, and also the primary antagonist to that mission, Satan himself.

¹⁷⁴See section on angels in chap. 5 below.

This brings us to the Beelzebul Controversy of Matthew 12. As noted above, there are three important aspects to Baal's identity as revealed in the Ugaritic Baal cycle; he is (1) a giver of life; (2) the builder of a house, or temple; and (3) the "lord of the earth."¹⁷⁵ We noted two important points regarding such. First, in Matthew's Gospel each of these characteristics can be linked to Satan's opposition to Jesus, which is likely the reason behind Matthew's use of Beelzebul as a name for Satan. Second, Jesus' combat against Satan involves a dismantling each of these aspects of Satan's identity as he reclaims them as his own. Having discussed the first of these above, I now turn to the second.

The Beelzebul controversy begins with the exorcism of a demon who has robbed a man of sight and speech. These senses represent what is essential for life. Without sight, the man cannot see to find help, and without speech, a man cannot call out for help. Baal is not a giver of life, but rather destroys life. As Oakman notes,

The conflict surrounding Beelzebub, which immediately escalates into words about divided kingdoms and the plunder of the goods of the strong, underscores the political and economic dimension of demon possession. The 'demons' that the 'reign of God' is colliding with are not just 'spooks' and psychoses. There is in view here economic disprivilege, malnutrition, endemic violence and the destruction of rural families.¹⁷⁶

Jesus, however, heals this man with a word. He brings him new life by commanding the demon to flee and thus demonstrates his authority over Beelzebul. As Lichtenberger states, "Rescue from the demons brings people back to the ordinary life from which they had been excluded."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 66.

¹⁷⁶Douglas E Oakman, "Rulers' Houses, Thieves, and Usurpers: The Beelzebul Pericope," *Forum* 4, no. 3 (September 1988): 115.

¹⁷⁷ Lichtenberger, "Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 279. This is also evident in Jesus' earlier healing of the man with the withered hand. Osborne notes that in that account "The act of healing is not described; rather, its result—the restored wholeness—is emphasized. Matthew goes to great lengths to emphasize the completeness of the healing." Osborne, *Matthew*, 459.

This is seen further in the plundering of the strong man's possessions in verse 29. The word *σκεῦος*, used only here in Matthew's Gospel and often translated as goods or possessions, is indicative of how the kingdom is arriving in Jesus ministry, or more specifically in his conflict with Satan. Throughout the New Testament, the word is used figuratively in connection with an individual person. In Romans 9:22, it refers to people as "vessels of wrath" and "vessels of mercy."¹⁷⁸ In Acts 9:15, Paul is a "chosen vessel" (*σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς*), and in 1 Peter 3:7, women are called the "weaker vessel" (*ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει*). Also in 2 Corinthians 4:7 and 1 Thessalonians 4:4, *σκεῦος* refers specifically to the human body. This common usage coupled with the context in Matthew 12 further confirms that the plundering of the strong man's goods refers to Jesus' deliverance of human bodies from bondage to Satan. Thus, the plundering of goods which indicates the breaking in of the kingdom is bringing life to those whom Beelzebul has robbed of life.¹⁷⁹ It is also possible that *ὁ ἰσχυρός* here has Isaiah 49:23–25 as its background. There God is said to rescue his people from their oppressors (*ἰσχυρός*). So in Isaiah, God is rescuing people from their strong oppressors, and also here Jesus is freeing people from the strong one, Beelzebul.¹⁸⁰ As Horsley aptly notes, "Jesus' proclamation and practice of the kingdom of God . . . was the conviction that God was now driving the satan from control over personal and historical life, making possible the renewal of the people of Israel."¹⁸¹ We also noted in the temptation account Satan tempts Jesus with food essential for life at a time when Jesus would be in dire need of nourishment. There

¹⁷⁸Note its similar use in 2 Tim 2:20.

¹⁷⁹Harvey Cox argues similarly when he writes, "As healer and reconciler, [Jesus] exorcised [demons] to restore people to their places in the community." Harvey Cox, *Secular City* (London: SCM, 1965), 149.

¹⁸⁰So Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 72.

¹⁸¹Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 160.

too Jesus rejects Satan's attempt to offer false life by pointing to the true life found in the will of his Father.

Second, Baal is the builder of a house. This idea is clearly alluded to in the temptation account, where Jesus rejects Satan's authority over the temple, and so points to himself as the true temple. In the Beelzebul controversy, house imagery abounds. First, Jesus' responds to the Pharisees' accusation by referring to a divided kingdom (*βασιλεία*), which he further compares to a city (*πόλις*) or house (*οικία*). Jesus then continues to counter the Pharisees' accusation with a parable about entering (*εἰσέρχομαι*) the strong man's house. In order for such to happen, the strong man must first be bound, the application being that in the casting out of demons Jesus is binding the strong man (Satan), entering his house (his kingdom, the world), and plundering his goods (people in bondage to him).¹⁸² Thus, the bringing of the kingdom through expelling demons is imagined as Jesus reordering Satan's own house, or kingdom, as his own. What was foreshadowed in the second temptation is now taking place in Christ's casting out demons.

Finally, in the Baal Cycle, Baal is ruler of the earth. This is alluded to in the third temptation, where Satan boasts authority over all the kingdoms of the world and offers them to Jesus in return for worship. It is here Jesus commands Satan to flee his presence. This is significant because in the midst of Satan attempting to establish his authority over the earth, Jesus, upon the earth, commands him to flee and Satan must obey. Immediately Jesus begins his ministry of casting out demons. In the Beelzebul Controversy, in the plunder of Satan's goods through the casting out of demons, Jesus is reclaiming the earth as his through the freeing of people from the bondage of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. As Schreiner

¹⁸²Keener suggests that Jesus is here referring to his having already bound Satan in the temptation account. Keener, *Matthew*, 95. However, it is better to view Jesus' ongoing conflict with Satan as a process of binding which culminates in the cross and resurrection.

notes,

Beelzebul has caused the possessed man, the Pharisees, and even the crowd to be out of place because he is exercising his rule as lord of the earth . . . Jesus, as the new lord of the earth, heals men and women and restores them to a right relationship with God, others, and their environment. Jesus shows all those listening in this episode that the territory of the kingdom of heaven is now upon the earth through his presence.¹⁸³

In this way, Satan is being bound and the kingdom of God is coming upon the earth through the person of Jesus.¹⁸⁴ Thus, in the Beelzebul Controversy, “The story was being radically retold, so as to focus on the climactic conflict not with Rome, but with the satan.”¹⁸⁵

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have examined the theme of cosmic conflict in Matthew’s Gospel through the lens of the narrative’s antagonists. From the beginning of the Gospel we see this conflict take shape, and by chapter 4 it becomes foundational to the story of Jesus told by Matthew. Herod and the religious leaders are greatly troubled at the birth of Jesus, so much so that a plan is carried out to murder him. God intervenes, and in chapter 4 Jesus meets the one most opposed

¹⁸³Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 68. Similarly, Twefree suggests that Jesus viewed the coming of the kingdom as “God’s reign itself in operation in the defeat of Satan in people’s lives . . . Jesus sees himself as binding Satan in order to plunder his property—those hitherto held by Satan.” Twefree, *Christ Triumphant*, 79.

¹⁸⁴Twefree similarly states, “Jesus believed that where the Spirit was operating in him there was the Kingdom of God.” Further, he states, “Jesus is the first one to make a specific connection between the relatively ordinary events of exorcism and the defeat of Satan, between exorcism and eschatology” (emphasis original). Twefree, *Christ Triumphant*, 79. Also Kellerman and Oden, *Opus Imperfectum*, 2:229. Note the parallel of this text with 1QM 17:5–7, which states, “Today is his appointed time to subdue and humiliate the prince of the realm of wickedness.” Thus, in the War Scroll the time is immanent in which the prince of wickedness will be subdued by God. Matt 12 also speaks of the binding, or subduing, of the prince of demons, which is bringing about the kingdom presently. Davies and Allison list this text, among others, as parallel to Matt 12. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 335.

¹⁸⁵Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 454; Carter does not juxtapose the two, but closely connects them. He states, “In this devilish, imperial world, Jesus as God’s agent demonstrates the empire of God . . . Jesus’ exorcisms point to God’s empire that overcomes the devil’s sovereignty (12:28).” Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 80.

to his mission, the devil. From that point on, the devil utilizes every means possible to thwart the mission of Christ. Through Herod, demons, the religious leaders, Judas, Pilate, and even the disciples, Satan battles Jesus every step of the way with the one apparent goal of preventing the Father's purpose for the Son from being accomplished.¹⁸⁶ Thus, there are not several layers of conflict in Matthew's Gospel separate from one another, so that Jesus is opposed by Satan, then the religious leaders, and then even the disciples. Rather, the opposition to Jesus' mission by Satan is played out over and over again through secondary antagonists which Satan utilizes in his hostility to Christ.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, in examining the antagonists in Matthew's Gospel we would agree with Williams and Farrar that "[Satan] sits in a web of language and ideas about cosmic evil."¹⁸⁸

We now examine the theme of cosmic conflict through the lens of the protagonists in Matthew's story. These include the Father, the Spirit, angels, the disciples, and Jesus.

¹⁸⁶In this regard, Taylor states, "The kingdoms under Satan then are represented by Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish leaders in addition to the demonic influence of demon possession and illness. Charles Fleming Taylor, "Violence and Matthew: A Reconsideration of Matthew 11:12" (Th.M. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007).

¹⁸⁷ Mathewson similarly states, "Behind Jesus' struggle with earthly opponents lies a deeper struggle of apocalyptic proportions on a broader cosmic scale . . . a struggle with Satan and the demonic realm who control the kingdoms of the world." Mathewson also notes the parallel between this idea and early apocalyptic literature, including the "Animal Apocalypse" found in *1 Enoch*, which I discussed in chapter 2. Mathewson, "The Apocalyptic Vision of Jesus," 107.

¹⁸⁸Thomas J. Farrar and Guy J. Williams, "Talk of the Devil: Unpacking the Language of New Testament Satanology," *JSNT* 39, no. 1 (September 2016): 82.

CHAPTER 5

COSMIC CONFLICT: THE PROTAGONISTS

We now delve into the other opposing side of Matthew's narrative coin, namely, the protagonists of cosmic conflict. As demonstrated above, several characters and groups serve as antagonists to Jesus' mission. Examining them in detail yields insights into the import of cosmic conflict in Matthew's Gospel. On the flip side, several characters or groups serve as agents on the other side of the conflict, whose characterization further develop this theme in Matthew. This chapter will examine Matthew's portrayal of the Magi, the Father, the Spirit, the angels, and the disciples.

The Magi

It may at first seem odd to include the magi in a study of the protagonists of Matthew's gospel. Indeed, their role seems at first blush relatively minor. They see a star, follow it to Bethlehem, give gifts to Jesus and depart as quickly as they arrived. However, a close examination of the role of the magi in Matthew's overall narrative justifies their inclusion here.

First, the magi play into Matthew's contrast between two kings at the outset of his gospel. Whereas Herod is the worldly king bent on destroying Jesus, the magi appear on the scene seeking to worship ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.¹ It

¹So Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, trans. Ray Togtman (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 33; Keener states, "Thus, the Magi worship Jesus; Herod seeks his death." Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 65. Also Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, IBT (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 90; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 81; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on Matthew 1-7*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 229; Joshua E. Leim, "Worshipping the Father, Worshipping the

is this announcement by the magi that “greatly troubles” Herod and the religious leaders with him. Further, the true kingship of Jesus is underscored by the gifts presented to him by the magi. Whether or not these gifts each have symbolic meaning, it is clear that the three of them combined represent a gift of great value, “suitable for offering to a king.”² Davies and Allison argue that the gifts are the “firstfruits of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations and their submission to the one true God.”³ Second, note how Matthew contrasts Herod and the religious leaders’ response to news of Jesus with that of the magi.⁴ While Herod and the religious leaders were “greatly troubled,” the magi “rejoiced with a great joy exceedingly” (ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα).⁵ Finally, the fact that the magi are portrayed as pagans from the east following an astral body demonstrates Jesus’ authority over all the false pagan gods put forth by centuries of myth.⁶ Jesus is not just the king of the Jews, he is the ruler of all, Jew and Gentile, all kings of the earth, and even all the gods of the pagan nations.⁷ Indeed, “By the star over the child and

Son: Cultic Language and the Identity of God in the Gospel of Matthew,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 9, no. 1 (2015), 73.

²Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 41; John Legg, *The King and His Kingdom: The Gospel of Matthew Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2004), 31.

³Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 249.

⁴So Ben Witherington III, *Matthew*, Smyth Helwys Bible Commentary, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 61.

⁵Luz argues that this is part of an intentional substructure in which 2:3–9 and 2:9b–12 “mirror each other antithetically.” Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 102. The overall structure of 2:1–13 which Luz suggests particularly highlights the cosmic conflict in the narrative.

⁶Legg, *The King and His Kingdom*, 31; Handley notes, “No god and no emperor had yet been manifested with the genuine heavenly sign of a star.” James O’Banion Handley, “Epiphany and the Wise Men,” *Reformed Journal* 10, no. 1 (January 1960): 5. Contra W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, AB, vol. 26 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 12. Albright and Mann do not believe the magi were Gentiles at all.

⁷So Lachs, who notes, “The magi here represent the nations of the world.” Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1987), 8. Also Legg, *The*

the worshipping wise men, Matthew bears witness that Jesus Christ, and He alone, is the Great God–Saviour–King to whom millennia of myth had pointed.”⁸

The significance of the magi is perhaps further evidenced in the climax of this narrative, when they find Jesus and “fall down and worship him” (πεζόντες προσεκύνησαν; 2:11). Leim has argued for the significance of the verb προσκυνέω in Matthew’s gospel, and notes that here the language is strikingly parallel to Satan’s third temptation in the wilderness, where Satan says to Jesus, ταῦτά σοι πάντα δώσω, ἐὰν πεσὼν προσκυνήσῃς μοι (4:8).⁹ It might also be pointed out that the conclusion to Matthew’s Gospel utilizes the same language of the disciples (28:16).¹⁰ Further, at the conclusion of his Gospel Matthew emphasizes Jesus’ authority over all kingdoms and his mission to make that authority known to all nations (28:18–20).¹¹ This authority is contrasted with Satan’s authority over the kingdoms of the world in chapter 4. Thus, not only do the magi in their worship of Jesus provide for Matthew a contrast with Satan’s blasphemous attempt to be worshiped by Jesus, but the story of the magi forms the first bracket in an inclusio surrounding his entire Gospel which underscores the final resolution to Jesus’ conflict with Satan himself.

King and His Kingdom, 31; Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 93; Keener states, “For one special event in history the God who rules the heavens chose to reveal himself where the pagans were looking.” Keener, *Matthew*, 65.

⁸Handley, “Epiphany and the Wise Men,” 6.

⁹See discussion in Leim, “Worshipping the Father,” 76–77. He discusses further parallels between the account of the magi and Satan’s third temptation.

¹⁰Also noted in Joshua E. Leim, “The Father and the Son: Matthew’s Theological Grammar” (Ph.D. diss., Divinity School of Duke University, 2014), 85.

¹¹So Harrington states, “The Magi’s role as prefiguring the acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian community points toward the universal character of the gospel.” Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 49–50. Also Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 91; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 100; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 321.

God the Father

The Father's role in Matthew's portrayal of the cosmic battle is only seen in his relationship to Jesus.¹² It is Jesus who acts, albeit in complete accordance with the Father's will, as the primary agent in the war with Satan and his allies. However, it will be helpful to examine some of the important references to God the Father in relationship to the Son in the unfolding of this cosmic battle in Matthew's narrative, for, as Black notes, "Through the framing character of God, Matthew communicates the quintessential values that govern the story of Jesus."¹³

The first and perhaps most important reference to God the Father is found at Jesus' baptism. While *πατήρ* is not actually used in this text, it is the "Spirit of God" who descends on Jesus and then "a voice from heaven" speaks of the Son, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (3:17). Matthew makes it abundantly clear that this voice belongs to God the Father, and it is also apparent that the Father is affirming Jesus as his Son and approving of his mission.¹⁴ Thus, the mission that Jesus will carry out upon the earth is in complete accord with the Father's will.¹⁵ Foundational to that mission is the cosmic conflict in which Jesus has come to engage. As noted above, the cosmic battle in Matthew culminated in the arrival of *Ἐμμανουήλ*, when God himself stepped onto the battle ground in the incarnation of the Son. As heaven was brought to bear upon the earth, two worlds

¹²So C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 34; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 143–44.

¹³Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 34. Leim argues similarly when he speaks of the "concomitant 'filiocentricity' of the Gospel and the *Christological shape to Matthew's 'Father' language*" (italics mine). Leim, "Worshiping the Father," 83. Further, see Robert L. Mowery, "The Activity of God in the Gospel of Matthew," *SBLSP* 28 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 400–411.

¹⁴So Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 61; Turner, *Matthew*, 119; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 53.

¹⁵Pennington notes the significance of the idea of the Father's will in the "whole proclamation of Matthew." Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 98.

collided, worlds which are utterly opposed to one another. Here at Jesus' baptism, heaven and earth collide as the Spirit of God descends through opening heavens upon the Son.¹⁶ This marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry and already Matthew has emphasized the cosmic nature of his mission. As the same Spirit who descended upon the Son will then drive him into the wilderness to be confronted by his arch enemy, Matthew makes plain what is central to his narrative: at the heart of Jesus' mission is the fulfilling of his Father's will to break the strongholds of the enemy, and so bring the kingdom of Heaven and the rule of God against the kingdoms of the world and the rule of Satan.

In Jesus' baptism we see the Christocentric nature of cosmic conflict in Matthew's gospel. The focus is on Jesus, the Son, commissioned and approved by the Father.¹⁷ The Father's part in Matthew's narrative is seen only in his relationship to the Son. The Son seeks to glorify the Father (5:16) and will ultimately return "in the glory of the Father" (16:27). We also see in Matthew that the Father is in heaven (5:45, 48; 6:1, 9, 14, 32; 7:11, 21; 10:32), which is his kingdom (6:9–10; 26:29), and the goal of Jesus' ministry is for the kingdom of the Father to come upon the earth (6:10). Further, to reject Jesus is to reject the Father; thus, whoever denies Jesus before men, Jesus will deny before the Father, and whoever acknowledges Jesus before men, Jesus will acknowledge before his Father (10:32–33). Jesus' authority was given him by the Father and no one can know the Father unless the Son reveals him (11:25–27).¹⁸ Indeed, only those who do the Father's will can be in relationship

¹⁶Luz also connects Jesus' arrival as Emmanuel and the descent of the Spirit at his baptism. He calls the latter the "reification" of the former. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 146.

¹⁷Ridderbos states, "Jesus . . . was openly proclaimed by God as the one who . . . had received and would continue to receive divine approval." Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 62.

¹⁸Davies and Allison argue that this text should be read against the backdrop of "Jewish eschatological expectation" and thus "Eschatological *gnosis* can even now be found in Jesus . . . in brief, Mt 11.25–7 announces the realization of an eschatological hope." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 277.

with the Son (12:50). On the other hand, those who know the Son are those to whom he is revealed by the Father, for those planted by the Father will truly blossom, while all others will be rooted up (15:13; 16:17). During Jesus' earthly sojourn, it is the Father alone who knows the time of his second coming (24:36). Those who enter the kingdom are those "blessed by the Father" while all others are cursed (25:34, 41).

We also see the perfect unity between the will of the Son and the Father in the passion narrative. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prays earnestly that the Father might remove the cup of wrath he would soon endure, yet Jesus submits to the Father's will (26:39, 42).¹⁹ This commitment to the Father's will is evidenced in the fact that if he desired, he could call upon his Father to rescue him from his hour of trial (26:53).²⁰

Thus, the Father is not viewed as a primary agent in the cosmic conflict Matthew presents. Rather, the Son acts as an agent of and in full accordance with the will of his Father.²¹ Matthew's story of conflict is Christocentric, yet we cannot separate Jesus' actions with the will of the Father, for his mission is the Father's mission, and his one immutable goal is to bring the kingdom of the Father crashing into the kingdoms of the world, ruled by the Evil One. Through Jesus we see that "God is the 'heavenly father,' whose righteous love is unmitigated, and who's salvific

¹⁹Ridderbos states, "Jesus' request to be spared the cup of suffering thus was surrounded by qualifications that showed His submission to God's purpose and plan." Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 490. Also Turner, *Matthew*, 631.

²⁰Davies and Allison state, "Twelve sword wielding disciples or twelve legions of angels are equally unacceptable if they hinder Jesus' obedience to the command of the Father." W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, *Commentary on Matthew 19–28*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 514.

²¹Keener states that the relationship of Jesus to the Father is one of "both respectful dependence and affectionate intimacy as well as obedience." Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 216.

fidelity to his creation his wholeheartedly devoted.”²²

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit plays an active role in Matthew’s Gospel. This role is central to cosmic conflict in Matthew and is demonstrated in both the Spirit’s relation to Jesus as well as Jesus’ followers.

Regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Jesus’ followers, John the Baptist says of Jesus, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (3:11). John then describes the work this coming one will do: “He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire” (3:12). Here the baptism of the Holy Spirit is related to the gathering of the wheat, while the baptism of fire is related to the burning of chaff.²³ Thus, one effect of Jesus’ work will be the giving of the Spirit to his people.²⁴ It is this Spirit that will empower Jesus’ followers to complete the work Christ commands of them upon the earth before his return.²⁵ We also see here the dualism required of this cosmic conflict motif in Matthew: the people of God who are characterized by this Spirit baptism and the enemies of God whose end is destruction.²⁶

²²Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 34.

²³Gundry, *Matthew*, 49; Turner, *Matthew*, 117; Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 138

²⁴So Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 138.

²⁵This concept is again echoed in Matthew’s last reference to the Spirit found in 28:18–20. Jesus commands his disciples to make other disciples through teaching and baptism. This is the same baptism which John speaks of in chapter three, and it is done in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The effect of this baptism is the transforming of the enemies of God into the people of God (so Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 138–39). Contra Davies and Allison, who argue the Spirit and fire both refer to eschatological judgment, and that there is no reference to Christian baptism present. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 317–18.

²⁶Charette argues similarly: “Presumably all will undergo a baptism administered by this coming one. But whereas for some the experience will be redemptive, for others it will be destructive.” Blaine Charette, “Never Has Anything Like This Been Seen in Israel: The Spirit as Eschatological Sign in Matthew’s Gospel,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 8 (April 1996): 40 (also Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 55). Snyman states, “The baptism of Jesus is a baptism of grace and judgment.” A. H. Snyman, “ANALYSIS OF MT 3:1–4:22,” *Neotestamentica* 11 (1977): 30.

Matthew further makes this role clear in chapter 10, where Jesus sends the twelve out on mission. As they go, they are to proclaim that ἡγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, as they perform many miracles, including the casting out of demons (10:7–8). Here we see that Jesus commissions his disciples in the same work that he himself has been doing, including the proclamation of the coming kingdom, the healing of the sick, and the casting out of demons. Further, they will be persecuted and opposed by Jesus’ enemies. As we have seen, these are all evidence of the cosmic conflict waged between Jesus and Satan throughout the Gospel. Further evidence of this fact is the mention of Beelzebul in verse 25, where Jesus states, “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more his household.” With this reference Matthew reminds his readers of the association of Jesus’ enemies with Beelzebul found in chapters 9 and 12. The missionary work of Jesus’ disciples is thus grounded in cosmic conflict. It is important then, that the weapons of the disciples’ warfare, namely, the words they will use in proclaiming the kingdom of God, are granted by “The Spirit of your Father” (10:20).²⁷ As Ridderbos notes, in that hour, “They would be turned entirely into His instruments.”²⁸ It is noteworthy that on two other occasions in Matthew Jesus is portrayed as being empowered or led by the Spirit (3:16; 12:18–28). Both of these passages have been crucial in the discussion of cosmic conflict in Matthew.²⁹ Further, Luz connects the giving of the Spirit here to 28:19, saying “Except for the baptismal formula in 28:19 (cf. 3:11), this is the only place where the spirit is promised to the disciples.”³⁰ Just as the Spirit leads and

²⁷Turner notes that “Up to this point in Matthew, the Spirit has been mentioned solely in connection with Jesus and his kingdom ministry.” Turner, *Matthew*, 276. Also see Gundry, *Matthew*, 193–93.

²⁸Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 202.

²⁹Also noted by W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, *Commentary on Matthew 8–18*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 186.

³⁰Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis:

empowers Jesus, so also it is the Spirit who empowers Christ's followers in the waging of this cosmic battle.

While the Spirit is evident in the lives of Jesus' followers, Matthew's primary portrayal of the Spirit is with relationship to Jesus. In Matthew's narrative, the Spirit is viewed as guiding and even empowering Jesus in his mission, particularly with regard to cosmic conflict.³¹ First, it is the by the power of the Spirit that this story of conflict and victory has its beginning, for Mary was with child by the power of the Holy Spirit (1:18, 20).³² At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit comes to rest upon him, indicating his empowering of Jesus ministry and the approval of the Father of his mission.³³ As Schreiner states, "The disjunction between heaven and earth is breached as the Spirit rests upon Jesus."³⁴ It is then the Spirit who leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (4:1).³⁵ Further, Jesus explicitly

Fortress, 2001), 90.

³¹John Owen states, "The immediate divine efficiency in this matter was the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost: Matt. 1:18." John Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vols. 3 and 4, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1862; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 3:163.

³²Schreiner argues for an allusion to the Spirit in Matthew's genealogy in the words βίβλος γενέσεως. Patrick Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew* (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 83–84. It is indeed true that these words likely allude to the creation account in Genesis, and since it is the Spirit who is moving in Gen 1:2, it is perhaps appropriate to see an allusion to the Spirit's work here at the beginning of Matthew's narrative. On the other hand, while it seems likely that Matthew wants his readers to think new creation here, to include this as a concrete text in a discussion of the Spirit in Matthew would perhaps be to overreach.

³³So Keener, *Matthew*, 85; Turner, *Matthew*, 119–20; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 142.

³⁴Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 85.

³⁵Garlington states, "The combination of the Spirit's leading of Jesus and the devil's enticements give the verb a double connotation here . . . By means of Satan's 'temptations' God was 'testing' his Son." D. B. Garlington, "Jesus, the Unique Son of God: Tested and Faithful," *BibS* 151, no. 603 (1994): 284–308. In this regard, Wilkins states, "Jesus is Spirit-led. The Spirit came on him at his baptism, and now the Spirit leads him into the desert . . . he is the personal agent who will be intimately involved in guiding Jesus every step of the way in his earthy life." Wilkins, *Matthew*, 154. Mathewson interestingly argues that in his post-baptismal experience and temptation Jesus is experiencing a sustained apocalyptic vision akin to that of early Jewish and Christian apocalypses. David Mathewson, "The Apocalyptic Vision of Jesus: Reading Matthew 3:16–4:11 Intertextually," *Tyndale Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (2011): 89–108.

states that it is by the Spirit of God that he casts out demons and so wages war against Satan and establishes God's kingdom on earth (12:28). As noted above, the power of the Spirit upon Jesus proves his identity as the promised Messiah (11:4-5; cf. 12:18) as well as his kingship (12:25).

Note also that Jesus' ministry begins and ends with a reference to the Spirit in relationship to both the Father and the Son. In his baptism, the Spirit rests on Jesus indicating his empowering of his mission.³⁶ In the last words of Jesus, he commands his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, again indicating their absolute harmony regarding his mission. Further, Jesus' promise of his presence likely refers to the presence of the Spirit.³⁷ We see this idea present in Matthew's Gospel when Jesus sends his disciples out on mission. In Matthew 10:20, Jesus states that when the disciples are delivered over to the authorities to bear witness concerning him, it is the Spirit who will provide their defense. Thus, the same Spirit who has been with Jesus and empowered Jesus throughout his ministry, will also empower the disciples as they engage in cosmic conflict.³⁸ The Trinitarian

³⁶In this regard, Mowery states, "While this passage does not explicitly associate God's Spirit with power, Jesus forged such a link when he asserted that he casts out demons 'by the Spirit of God.'" Robert L. Mowery, "From Lord to Father in Matthew 1-7," *CBQ* 59 (1997): 646. Further, Ridderbos states, the granting of the Spirit here "indicated that He was equipped with the gifts of the Spirit, which He would need in his public ministry He would now have the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in all the work that He now had to undertake." Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 60. Also Turner, *Matthew*, 119.

³⁷So Henry Stob, "Lo, I am With You Always," *Reformed Journal* 3, no. 6 (June 1953): 15-16.

³⁸I am aware of the debate concerning whether or not Jesus did *anything* by his own power or if that in his incarnation he was solely empowered by the Spirit. Regarding the latter perspective, see Gerald D. Hawthorne, *The Presence and the Power: the Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 145-46. Hawthorne states, "The Spirit so fully motivated Jesus' speech and action that the miracles he performed and the words he spoke, he spoke and performed, not by virtue of his own power, the power of his divine personality, but by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit at work within him and through him." Further, in his discussion of Matt 12:28, Hawthorne argues that Jesus was aware that his power to overcome the power of Satan, "lay not in the strength of his own person, but in God and in the power of God mediated to him through the Spirit" (170). Similarly, Issler states, "Jesus Christ lived his life as an example for us, not resorting to his own divine powers, but rather by *solely using his own human abilities*, and *relying moment by moment on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit*." Klaus Issler, "The Spiritual Formation of Jesus: the Significance of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Life," *Christian Education Journal* 4, no. 2 (2000): 5. For a critique of this view,

text of Matthew 28:18–20 indicates the absolute collusion of the mission of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the continued demolition of Satan’s kingdom of darkness through the preaching of the Gospel to all nations.³⁹

Angels

In several significant places Matthew portrays an important role for angels in cosmic conflict.⁴⁰ Angels first appear prominently on the seen in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ birth.⁴¹ Matthew 1:18–25 recounts how Joseph, upon learning of his wife’s pregnancy, had resolved to divorce her in secret. However, before he could take action an “angel of the Lord” (ἄγγελος κυρίου) appeared to him in a dream and explained that Mary’s baby was wrought in her by the power of the Holy Spirit. The remaining instances of angelic activity in the birth narrative is found in relation to Herod’s attempt to plot against Jesus. First, the magi who had told Herod of the

particularly referencing both Hawthorne and Issler, see Keith Johnson, “The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Ministry of Jesus Christ: A Trinitarian Perspective,” *TrinJ* 38, no. 2 (2017), 147–167; also Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 395–420. For the purposes of the present work, it is not necessary to affirm one side or the other, for the Scriptures are clear that the Holy Spirit was active in the work of Jesus while on earth, whether or not such work was entirely separate from the work of Jesus’ divine nature. Perhaps Owen says it best: “To clear the whole matter . . . the immediate acts of the Holy Spirit are not spoken of him absolutely, nor ascribed unto him exclusively, as unto the other persons and their concurrence in them . . . *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. There is no such division in the external operations of God that any one of them should be the act of one person.” Owen, *Pneumatologia*, 3:162.

³⁹Schreiner argues for a reference to the Holy Spirit in 27:50 when Jesus gives up “His spirit.” Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus*, 86–87. He follows Charette in arguing that Matthew’s “unique language” coupled with the “extraordinary phenomena” that take place immediately following indicate that at Jesus’ death the Spirit is released (see Charette, “Never Has Anything Like This Been Seen in Israel,” 48–50). If this is right, then Matthew includes a reference to the Spirit at the beginning and end of Jesus’ ministry, which further highlights his role.

⁴⁰For a comprehensive study of angels in Matthew, see Kristian A. Bendoraitis, *Behold, the Angels Came and Served Him*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2015).

⁴¹Interestingly, Anderson argues similarly in her discussion, but her focus is on dreams rather than angels. Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*, JSNTSup 91 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994). However, see Albright and Mann, who suggest that this is not a heavenly being, but a human messenger. They assume as much for most of the ἄγγελος references in Matthew. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 8.

child's birth in Bethlehem are "warned in a dream" not to return to Herod.⁴² Second, in Matthew 2:12–15 an "angel of the Lord" again appears to Joseph in a dream and warns him of Herod's plot to kill Jesus. Matthew further explains that this action of Joseph's escape to Egypt took place to fulfill "what was spoken through the prophet: Out of Egypt I called my son." Finally, an "angel of the Lord" suddenly appears to Joseph again after Herod's death and so Joseph returns to Israel. Upon entering into Judea, however, Joseph is afraid of Archelaus, who was ruling in his father Herod's place. Again Joseph is "warned in a dream," and so withdrew into Nazareth of Galilee. This move again fulfilled the words of the prophet "that he will be called a Nazarene."

A few points should be noted in this account of Jesus birth. First, the apparent role of this angel of the Lord is to ensure the safety of the child to be born.⁴³ The angel's appearance to Joseph assured that he would take her as his wife and protect her until the birth of the child. Further, the angel is the primary combatant against the first antagonist of the story, namely, Herod.⁴⁴ The magi did not return to Herod with the location of the child because they were warned in a dream.⁴⁵ It is then the angel's warning of Joseph in a dream that allows him to escape with his family to Egypt and avoid Herod's wrath against the infants in Bethlehem. Further, the angel signals to Joseph the appropriate time to return to

⁴²Allison interestingly and convincingly argues that the star followed by the Magi is actually an angel. Dale C. Allison, Jr, "The Magi's Angel," in *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005): 17–41. My only question would be why Matthew would not simply state that this was an angel given that angels play a prominent role at this point in Matthew's narrative?

⁴³Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 156.

⁴⁴Osborne, *Matthew*, 97.

⁴⁵Given the pattern throughout the account, it can be assumed that it is an angel that warns the magi here (so Wilkins, *Matthew*, 101–102; Bendoraitis, *Behold, the Angels*, 45; contra Osborne, *Matthew*, 91, who suggests the lack of reference to an angel "stresses even more the hand of God in the warning").

Israel and so set the stage for Jesus' ministry. Finally, the angel again warns Joseph in a dream not to settle in Judea, avoiding some unknown danger from Archelaus, the son of Herod.

Second, there is a very clear structure to this account. Note the strategic movement throughout as one side attempts to gain the upper hand on the other (see Table 5 below). As Anderson notes, these accounts, "provide motivation (*divine* motivation) for the chain of events—for the geographical movements—the arrivals and departures of characters. They move the action along."⁴⁶ It might be compared to a game of risk, where players attempt to gain territory in order to defeat their opponents. With this in mind, one might consider this account in terms of "move/counter-move." In such an analysis, each move and counter move have a specific result which leads to another move, and so on. Thus, upon Joseph's doubts regarding Mary, the angel moves, assuring him of the importance of taking Mary as his wife. Upon Herod's discovery of the birthplace of Jesus, the angel moves, warning the magi against returning to Herod. When Herod's plans to destroy the young children in Bethlehem are revealed, the angels moves, warning Joseph to flee into Egypt. When Herod dies, the angel moves, exhorting Joseph to move back to Israel. When the danger is made known regarding Archelaus, the angel moves, warning Joseph so that he settles in Nazareth.⁴⁷ As Wilkins notes, "As [God] begins his redemption of humanity, his hand is on every event that transpires."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 156–57. Similarly, Bendoraitis, *Behold, the Angels*, 22–23, 36–37.

⁴⁷Luz argues similarly: "The two subsections correspond to the 'conflicting narrative agendas' that will characterize vv. 13–23. On the one side is Herod's strategy in Jerusalem, on the other side God's strategy. Sections in which Herod acts and those in which God acts alternate, much like the Gospel's conclusion in 27:62–28:20. Of course, the evil King Herod and the royal child Jesus, who cannot yet act on his own, are unequal opponents: on the side of the good is God, the secret sovereign actor; the people through whom he acts are the magi in 2:1–12 and Joseph in 2:13–23." Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 102.

⁴⁸Wilkins, *Matthew*, 103.

It should also be noted that each move of the angel results in the fulfilling of Scripture.⁴⁹ This is important because it demonstrates that this conflict at the outset of Matthew's narrative goes back farther than the birth of Jesus. Indeed, the people of God have looked forward to this promised deliverance for thousands of years. The son that is now born is none other than the promised seed of Genesis 3:15, a point bolstered by Matthew's genealogy which clearly refers the reader back to Genesis.⁵⁰

Two more references to angels are found in the temptation account. In the first, Satan justifies his temptation of Jesus to hurl himself off of the temple with Scripture, saying, "His angels he will command concerning you, and upon their hands they will take you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone" (4:6). Implicit in this temptation is the angels' role in Jesus' battle on earth. They are awaiting his command to step in for his defense at any point along the way. This fact is made clear in Matthew 26:53, where Jesus rebukes the use of violence, saying, "Do you not think I am able to call upon my Father, and he will present to me now more than twelve legions of angels?"⁵¹ Jesus goes on to say, "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled." We see then that Jesus has an angelic army at his disposal, something Satan recognizes from the Scriptures, to be provided by his Father at a moment's notice.⁵²

⁴⁹Anderson and Bendoraitis note this connection as well. Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 156; Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 36-49. Also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 117.

⁵⁰Davies and Allison view the genealogy as pointing to a new creation in part because of the NT's wider understanding of the coming of Jesus as the "counterpart of the creation account narrated in Genesis." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 150-51. Such connections are made in Paul's use of new creation language, as well as his view of Jesus as the "last Adam." Allison adds to this evidence John's prologue in which he sets the story of Jesus against the background of the Genesis creation story in his use of ἐν ἀρχῇ.

⁵¹So Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 66; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 153-54

⁵²For an in-depth discussion of the angels role as protective agents of the Father, see Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 62-65.

Table 5. Movement of angels

Move	Counter-Move	Result	Fulfillment
Joseph considers divorcing Mary	Angel appears to Joseph in a dream	Joseph takes Mary as his wife	Isaiah 7:14
Herod seeks baby Jesus	Angel appears to magi in a dream	They do not return to Herod	Micah 5:2
Herod seeks baby Jesus; slaughters infants	Angel appears to Joseph in a dream	Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt	Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 31:15
Herod dies; Archelaus is governor over Judea	Angel appears to/warns Joseph in a dream	Joseph and Mary return to Israel; settle in Nazareth	Isaiah 11:1 or 53:3 ⁵³

It is noteworthy that in 26:54 the reason given for not calling upon angels is that the Scriptures would be fulfilled. We saw in the birth narrative that angels played the role of bringing about the fulfillment of Scriptures by protecting and moving Joseph, Mary, and Jesus according to prophecy. Here Matthew makes the same point but from a negative angle. Jesus will not call upon the angels because such action would negate the fulfillment of Scriptures, which same Scriptures the angels at Christ's birth played an important role in bringing to fulfillment. As Davies and Allison note, "Twelve sword-wielding disciples or twelve legions of angels are equally unacceptable if they hinder . . . the fulfillment of Scripture."⁵⁴

⁵³There is much debate regarding this fulfillment quotation. Two opinions stand out as standard interpretations. Carson argues that Matthew here is "drawing attention to the thrust of Old Testament prophecy about the Christ" that he would be "despised and rejected" and thus his growing up in Nazareth contributes to this, for he is "a citizen of an obscure and unimportant town." D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and James Dixon Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 48. The second option is that this passage refers to "the branch" (Nsr) of Isa 11:1 (John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005]; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 122-23). See also Brandon D. Crowe, "Fulfillment in Matthew as Eschatological Reversal," *WTJ* 75 (2013), 115-16. Crowe argues that Matthew is intentionally drawing from both OT motifs. Calvin argues that Matthew here is referring to Judg 13:5: "The child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb." This refers to the Nazarite vow of Sampson, whom Calvin argues is a figure of Christ. John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1:164-65.

⁵⁴Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 514.

We find a brief reference to angels in Matthew 4:11. Here Jesus has just undergone the temptations of Satan and victoriously cast Satan away from his presence, and Matthew tells his readers that “behold, angels came (προσέρχονται) and ministered (διακονέω) to him.” On two occasions, Satan tempted Jesus to receive divine aid in a way that did not conform to the Father’s will for his mission. In the first case, Jesus was tempted to satisfy his hunger by turning stones to bread. In the second case, Jesus was tempted to call upon angels and so prove his sonship. It is likely that the ministering of angels mentioned here points back to each of these instances.⁵⁵ Διακονέω carries with it the idea of “meeting a present need” and often has to do with provision of food.⁵⁶ Further, the fact that Jesus is now helped by angels after he had refused to call on them for aid when tempted by Satan demonstrates that he indeed is the Son of God.⁵⁷ The angels in both instances are affirming the protasis of Satan’s conditional statement. In the first, they are meeting the need Satan tempted him to meet by his own divine prerogative, and in the second they are showing that they truly are his Father’s means of divine aid.⁵⁸ As Hebrews 1:6 indicates, the angels came to testify to the sonship of Jesus. Thus, in the

⁵⁵So Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 71; Turner, *Matthew*, 130.

⁵⁶So A. H. Snyman, “ANALYSIS,” 26; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 100; Quarles, *Matthew*, 41. Davies and Allison further connect this language to Genesis, saying, “We are presumably to think of the food of angels, that is, manna—the food which Adam ate in paradise.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 357 (see chapter 6, note 31 below).

⁵⁷See discussion in Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 71–73. Bendoraitis suggests a contrast between Satan approaching (προσέρχεται) Jesus to tempt him and the angels approaching (προσέρχονται) Jesus presumably to worship him.

⁵⁸Plummer notes, “The ministry of the Angels . . . perhaps means that the miracle which the Messiah refused to work without God’s sanction now takes place with His sanction.” Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952), 43. Also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 100; Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 72; Witherington, *Matthew*, 91; Osborne, *Matthew*, 136). Quarles states, “Interestingly, two features of the temptations, angels protecting Jesus from harm (4:6) and supernatural provision of food (4:3), are granted to Jesus with divine approval.” Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, EGGNT (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 41.

temptation account, angels are “instrumental in portraying Jesus’ victory over Satan and in demonstrating his unwavering obedience to the Father, a crucial element to understanding Jesus’ subsequent ministry.”⁵⁹

The angels are again discussed in the parables of Jesus as well as in his Olivet Discourse. In these texts we learn that the angels are involved in the eschatological harvest, where they gather all the evil doers and throw them into eternal damnation (13:40–42, 49–50; 24:31).⁶⁰

Finally, angels appear in Matthew’s Gospel a third time after the death of Jesus. It is noteworthy that two of the three appearances of angels in Matthew’s Gospel occur at the time of Jesus’ birth and after his death.⁶¹ It is likely that this same angel, ἄγγελος κυρίου, which appears at Jesus’ tomb is the same referred to in the birth narrative.⁶² Here an ἄγγελος κυρίου, whose appearance is as lightning and clothing as white as the snow, comes down from heaven accompanied by a great earthquake, and rolls away the stone from Jesus’ tomb. He then tells the women who come to the tomb that Jesus has risen and commands them to tell the disciples that they should meet him in Galilee. This appearance of the angel recalls the angel’s role at Jesus’ birth, in both instances directing events to bring about God’s plan.⁶³ Angels,

⁵⁹Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 74.

⁶⁰After an extensive discussion of angels at the final judgment in Matthew, Bendoraitis concludes that angels in this context serve to highlight Jesus’ “authority and role as eschatological judge” (110). Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 75–111. Davies and Allison note the absence of God the Father in this role, which they argue highlights the absolute authority of the Son. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 362. Also Meier states, “The Son of Man acts completely on his own authority . . . Mt raises the divine majesty of the Son of Man to the greatest heights possible.” John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 288.

⁶¹So David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 75.

⁶²Bendoraitis further points to the expansion of Matthew’s description of this angel here in comparison to the infancy narratives to highlight the significance of Jesus’ resurrection. Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 193–94.

⁶³Also Bendoraitis, *Behold the Angels*, 197–99. Luz argues that this pericope should call to mind not only the infancy narratives, but the crucifixion and transfiguration as

then, testify to the Christ as the primary protagonist the cosmic battle waged throughout Matthew's gospel, and by virtue of this fact are shown in Matthew to be important players in the cosmic battle waged on earth between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan.⁶⁴

The Disciples

While the disciples' role as secondary antagonists was discussed in a previous chapter, it is appropriate to view them as secondary protagonists as well. Since we looked at much of the material regarding the disciples above, this section focuses on three evidences of their status as protagonists, namely, their calling, their confession, and their commission.⁶⁵

First, the disciples are protagonists in Matthew's narrative by virtue of the obvious fact that Jesus called them individually to be his disciples.⁶⁶ We see the first instance of this in 4:18–19, where Jesus sees Peter and Andrew and says to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He then calls James and John and they leave everything to follow him (4:21–22). It is not until chapter 10 where the twelve disciples are named. Notice here that Jesus "called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every

well. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 591.

⁶⁴Sim is insightful here: the important aspect of Matthew's angelology "concerns the relationship between Jesus and the holy angels . . . when Jesus returns in glory as the judgmental Son of Man, he will be accompanied by an angelic host . . . the holy angels therefore belong to Jesus the Son of Man." Sim further describes them as the agents of God in the cosmic struggle between God and Satan. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 75–76.

⁶⁵As Turner states, "Jesus takes the initiative in calling and commissioning his disciples, and he extends to them his authority." Turner, *Matthew*, 264. Also Wilkins, *Matthew*, 30.

⁶⁶So Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 64; David R. Bauer, "The Major Characters of Matthew's Story: Their Function and Significance," *Interpretation* 46, no. 4 (1992), 361–62.

disease and every affliction” (10:1). The fact that the disciples are given the authority that thus far only Christ has possessed to battle demons and disease, both discussed previously as antagonistic to Jesus’ mission, clearly demonstrate that they are intended by Jesus to be brothers in arms in this cosmic conflict.⁶⁷ Related to this, Jesus continually explains the mysteries of the kingdom to his disciples who often lack understanding. The clearest example of this is found when Jesus contrasts the disciples with the religious leaders in Matthew 13. When asked by his disciples why he speaks in parables, Jesus responds, “to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to those ones it has not been given . . . blessed are your eyes that see and your ears that here” (13:11, 16).⁶⁸ Jesus then goes on to explain the parable to the disciples so that they could understand it. Thus, while the disciples often display ignorance regarding Jesus identity and mission as well as lack of faith, Jesus does not condemn them as enemies but has compassion on them and corrects them as his followers and friends.

Jesus not only called his disciples, but also sends them. Chapter 10 clearly aligns the mission of the disciples with the mission of Jesus.⁶⁹ Here Jesus sends out his disciples, commanding them to proclaim the same message, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” while working the same miracles, “heal the sick, raise the dead,

⁶⁷Gundry argues that Matthew redacts his material precisely to emphasize this point. Gundry, *Matthew*, 182.

⁶⁸Marius Nel states, “Understanding the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven is thus not a natural endowment of the disciples in Matthew, but rather the result of their privileged instruction by Jesus.” Marius Nel, “The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven According to Matthew 13:10-17,” *Neotestamentica* 43, no. 2 (2009): 275. Likewise, Douglas S. McConmiskey states, “The fact that he used parables with the disciples is not a significant issue, because he also explained parables to them and taught them without parables.” Douglas S. McConmiskey, “Exile and the Purpose of Jesus’ Parables [Mark 4:10-12; Matt 13:10-17; Luke 8:9-10],” *JETS* 51, no. 1 (2008): 72.

⁶⁹However, Twelftree argues that this commission of the disciples is meant for Matthew’s readers, and is not fulfilled by his actual disciples. Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism Among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 165–66.

cleanse lepers, cast out demons” (10:7–8).⁷⁰ Jesus also exhorts his disciples to trust their Father when dragged before authorities for the sake of his name (10:18–20). They will be “hated by all” for the sake of Jesus’ name (10:22). Jesus then aligns them with his purpose by stating that they are his disciples, and so will be maligned as in league with Beelzebul, just as he was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul (10:25). Thus, just as Jesus was falsely accused of being in league with Satan, the very one against whom he warred, so also the disciples are implied to be in this very same battle against Satan and his angels.⁷¹ Further, the disciples will rely on the same Holy Spirit who rested on Jesus at his baptism (3:11) and by whom Jesus wages war against demonic forces (12:28).⁷² Finally, Jesus says that those who receive the disciples receive Christ himself, and the one who receives them “will by no means lose his reward” (10:42).

We see the disciples as protagonists not only in Jesus’ calling of them, but also in their confession of him.⁷³ Just as throughout Matthew’s Gospel the disciples are described as having little faith, so too they at crucial points demonstrate their allegiance to Jesus through their confession. In Matthew 14:33, in response to Jesus’ calming of the sea after walking on water, they cry out in worship saying, ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ. The climax of the disciples’ confession is in Matthew 16:16–17 where Peter exclaims σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος!⁷⁴ Jesus responds by saying

⁷⁰Twelftree states, “Their exorcisms are part of the destruction of Satan’s kingdom and the realization of the powerful presence of God.” Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 167.

⁷¹Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 205.

⁷²So Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 186.

⁷³So Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 64, who notes 14:33 and 16:12 in this regard.

⁷⁴Davies and Allison state, “The unfolding of the Gospel has witnessed a growth in their knowledge, a growth which will reach its pre-Easter maturity in 16.16. In short, the disciples are beginning to catch up with the readers of the gospel.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 510.

that this has come not from flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven. Further, Jesus follows the confession with a promise to give the keys of the kingdom (ὁ βασιλεία) over to the disciples and to build his church “upon this rock,” against which the gates of hell itself shall not prevail (16:18).

Finally, Jesus’ commission of his disciples demonstrates their status as protagonists.⁷⁵ Above we have seen that Jesus first called his disciples to be a part of the mission he was fulfilling in Jerusalem, yet an even greater mission has been reserved for them after Jesus’ resurrection, and that is the mission of continuing the mission of Christ beyond Jerusalem and to all the nations. In Matthew 28:16–20, the disciples go to the mountain where they would meet Jesus. We see the immediate response of worship from the disciples, recognizing Jesus’ divine authority. Jesus then commissions the disciples to be his witnesses to the world. They are to make disciples of the nations through baptism into Christ and the teaching of his commands. Thus, the role of Christ on earth has now become the role of his disciples, namely, bringing the kingdom of God into the world through the proclaiming of the good news of Jesus.⁷⁶ Yet it is not the work of the disciples alone, for Jesus promises his continued presence with them until the work is accomplished. Thus all doubt as to the status of the disciples in relationship to Jesus is removed as they are to be his instruments to fulfill his mission in the world. Thus, as Harrington puts it, the disciples are “earnest but fallible people whose attitude before Jesus’ resurrection was a ‘little faith.’”⁷⁷

⁷⁵Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 65.

⁷⁶As Ridderbos states, the disciples’ role is now “The gathering of all nations into the church [which] exhibits His victory over the powers of darkness.” Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 554.

⁷⁷Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 259.

Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the role of the protagonists in the cosmic conflict of Matthew's gospel. While a reading of the Gospel as a whole makes it clear who are the true protagonists and who are the antagonists, within the narrative it is not always so apparent. Judas, for instance, is not revealed to the other characters as an enemy until the final chapters. Yet his true role is evident to the reader from his introduction. Similarly, Peter would be considered a quintessential protagonist, yet within the Gospel he is often shown to lack understanding and even be a stumbling block to Jesus' mission. What is clear in this chapter is that each of the protagonists are defined as such insofar as their relationship to Jesus is one of support for his mission. Indeed, all of the characters in Matthew's Gospel find their role defined in their relationship to Jesus.

As discussed previously, Jesus as the main character permeates Matthew's entire gospel. It is clear from the first few words of Matthew's Gospel that Jesus is the very reason for which he has written. Kingsbury rightly states,

By introducing Jesus at the outset of his Gospel-story through a genealogy and story about his origin, Matthew succeeds, in merely two paragraphs, in informing the reader of the identity and ancestry of his story's protagonist and of the protagonist's ultimate origin, ministry, and eschatological significance . . . Matthew has only one essential task remaining: to fill the reader in on the details.⁷⁸

At the first mention of Jesus' name, we are transported to history's inception and reminded that in Jesus the promises of God are fulfilled. As argued above, βίβλος γενέσεως calls to attention the creation account and by extension that infamous day in which creation fell by the guile of the serpent. But Matthew quickly reminds us that Jesus is the Χριστός, υἱός Δαυίδ. And as such he is the promised king who will fulfill God's promise to crush the head of the serpent once and for all. As

⁷⁸Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Birth Narrative of Matthew," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 165.

we have seen, opposition to Jesus is fundamentally of a cosmic nature and thus those who are on Jesus' side are those who help advance the kingdom of Christ over against that of Satan.

Because the characters of Matthew's narrative are defined based upon whether or not they oppose the mission of Jesus, it makes sense to conclude that the entire plot of Matthew's narrative turns upon this conflict. Therefore, having discussed at length the characters in Matthew and their relationship to Jesus, this project will now attempt a narrative reading of Matthew's Gospel in light of the cosmic conflict theme argued for thus far. Here I demonstrate that Matthew views the life and ministry of Jesus as the continuation and climax of the cosmic conflict of the Old Testament, and that in Christ the conflict finds its culmination when Jesus regains the dominion that Adam forfeited in the garden.

CHAPTER 6
COSMIC CONFLICT AND THE PLOT OF
MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

The plot of a story “refers to the interconnected sequence of events which follows a cause–effect pattern and centers upon conflict.”¹ Thus, according to Marx, “Every dramatic situation arises from conflict between two opposing forces.”² Conflict as the central aspect of plot is important for the present discussion of the Gospel of Matthew. Many have recognized conflict in Matthew, particularly the rising conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of his day.³ This is indeed a major emphasis and it culminates with the seeming victory of the Jewish leaders over Jesus at his crucifixion. However, as I have argued above, even the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders appears subservient to the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan.⁴ In this chapter I bring that argument to bear upon a narrative analysis of Matthew,⁵ and show that this theme of conflict between Jesus and the

¹Grant R. Osborne, “Redaction Criticism,” in *DJG*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 666–67.

²Milton Marx, *The Enjoyment of Drama* (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co, 1940), 45. Marx argues that the purpose of drama is to entertain. While the gospels are certainly a dramatic portrayal of the Christ story, their purpose is theological, rather than mere entertainment. This purpose, however, should not be completely severed from the Gospel as story, for Matthew certainly intends to draw in his audience and hold them captive in the story of Christ.

³So Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Plot of Matthew’s Story,” *Interpretation* 46, no. 4 (October 1992): 347–56; Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*, JSNTSup 91 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994), 188–89; Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 244. Matera argues that Matthew’s plot moves from Israel’s rejection of the Messiah to the Gentiles’ inclusion in the people of God. Frank J. Matera, “The Plot of Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 49, no. 2 (April 1987): 252.

⁴So Marx, whose discussion of the three types of conflict is helpful here, for he argues that, while one type of conflict will usually predominate, the three typically exist in combination. Marx, *The Enjoyment of Drama*, 48–50.

⁵As Osborne notes, two primary schools of thought regarding Matthew’s overall

Jewish leaders, as well as all other conflicts, is subservient to a more fundamental conflict that Matthew consistently brings to the forefront in his gospel, namely, the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan.⁶

Cosmic Conflict and Matthew's Narrative

Thus, this chapter builds upon the previous chapters and by arguing that the underlying conflict which drives Matthew's Gospel is the "Battle of the Seeds" which began in Genesis 3:15. This broad theme as it plays out specifically in

structure have both focused on repeated phraseology in the narrative. Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 40. The first of these is based on the repetition of *καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς* closing each of the five discourses in Matthew (e.g., David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, JSNTSup 31 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988], 21–55; Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 136–37; George Dunbar Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* [Oxford: The Clarendon, 1946], 107–8; Benjamin Wisner Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* [New York: H. Holt and Company, 1930]; John Paul Pritchard, *A Literary Approach to the New Testament* [Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972], 69; Barclay M. Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* [London: United Bible Societies, 1988], 2–4; Osborne, *Matthew*, 41). A second emphasizes the twice repeated Ἄπὸ τότε ἤρξατο found in 4:17 and 16:21 (e.g., Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] and Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story"). While scholars representing each of these certainly have not ignored the narrative aspect of Matthew's gospel, a third perspective in Gospel studies puts the primary emphases on Matthew as a dramatic story, and brings in all the relevant data in that regard, such as genre, setting, characters and plot (so Frank J. Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," 6; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, 5 vols. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988]; Richard Alan Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985]; Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*). These approaches are not opposed to one another, for as Black notes, Kingsbury's "literary-critical scholarship has significantly altered the currents of Matthean interpretation." C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 24. Black is here referring to Kingsbury's work on the literary aspect of Matthew. Based on his previous work on Matthew's structure, Kingsbury's literary focus paved the way for the emphasis on Matthew of narrative prevalent in current scholarship on Matthew. Blomberg follows Kingsbury but also incorporates the narrative/discourse pattern. Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 22–25, 49. See discussion in Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, IBT (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 24–32. Senior suggests that no single structure or set of structures will likely "unlock the master plan of Matthew's gospel" (30). He proceeds to comment on Matthew based on a broad literary outline. This chapter will fall into the third category, and so focuses on a narrative analysis of Matthew, with plot being the central avenue of inquiry.

⁶Powell rightly notes that the other characters, including the religious leaders, are aligned with either the kingdom of God in Christ or with that of Satan according to how they respond to Jesus, the promised Seed. Mark Allan Powell, "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 38, no. 2 (April 1992): 199n30.

Matthew's Gospel forms the underlying plot of Matthew's drama.⁷ I began by looking at this theme as it appears in Jewish literature, including both the Old Testament and Second Temple documents, and then I demonstrated its prominence as a major motif in Matthew's gospel. In this chapter, then, I apply my findings to a narrative analysis of Matthew by examining the plot of Matthew with regard to this conflict motif, and thus demonstrate that Matthew views the life and ministry of Jesus as a recapitulation of this cosmic conflict in the Old Testament, and that in Christ the conflict finds its culmination in which Jesus regains the dominion that Adam forfeited in the garden. In keeping with Aristotle's understanding of plot as having a beginning, middle and end,⁸ I focus on three texts which encompass each of these: the temptation account (Matt 4:1–11), the Beelzebub controversy (Matt 12:22–32), and the Great Commission (Matt 28:16–20).⁹

The reasons for this understanding of Matthew's plot are two-fold.¹⁰

First, Matthew recounts the story of Jesus because in him God's plan of redemption finds its culmination.¹¹ Thus, Matthew grounds his story in the Old Testament,

⁷See discussion in Marx on the relationship between plot and theme. Marx argues that a story's plot is basically how its broad theme plays out in specific events. Marx, *The Enjoyment of Drama*, 51–54.

⁸Aristotle, *On the Art of Poetry*, trans. S. H Butcher, 2nd ed., Library of Liberal Arts, no. 6 (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), 11–12.

⁹This chapter attempts a feat similar to that of David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel*, JSNTSup 42 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990). Howell states, "We will offer a reading of Matthew which seeks to follow the flow of the narrative and to focus on the way plot elements of promise/fulfillment and acceptance/rejection structure the narrative." This chapter will instead focus on the way the theme of cosmic conflict provides the structure for Matthew's narrative plot. It is important to note that the purpose of this chapter is not to provide in-depth exegesis of texts; rather, it is building upon the discussions already provided in the previous chapters to show how cosmic conflict is foundational to Matthew's plot. While I spend more time discussing the three texts highlighted above, I also provide a "forest for the trees" type of overview of Matthew's narrative as a whole with specific attention to how the narrative flows in relationship to the theme of cosmic conflict.

¹⁰This chapter will not attempt a detailed analysis of plot theory, nor do I attempt an exhaustive analysis of Matthew's plot. Rather, I demonstrate the importance of cosmic conflict as an underlying theme driving the multiple facets of Matthew's drama.

¹¹For a massive treatment of theological drama, see Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*.

which recounts the unfolding historical–redemptive plan of God, who through Christ brings about the eschatological kingdom that Adam lost and Israel continually rebelled against.¹² In other words, Christ succeeded where both Adam and Israel failed.¹³ Therefore, the first two words of Matthew’s gospel, Βίβλος γενέσεως, connect the story of Jesus to the book of Genesis and God’s original creation (Matt 1:1; Gen 2:4).¹⁴ The conflict that is most fierce in Matthew is not one that arises in the first-century, but one that has been waged from the beginning, the conflict between the serpent and the seed of the woman that began in Genesis 3:15.¹⁵ Having surveyed this theme in the Old Testament, in Second Temple literature, as well as in Matthew’s gospel, I now turn to a narrative reading of Matthew in light of cosmic conflict.

¹²Newman and Stine liken the relationship between the Old and New Testaments in Matthew to Hebrew parallelism in which “The second part affirms that the first part is true, but then adds something more, and this extra or excess of the second part over the first is what transforms it and fulfills it.” Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 1. Hays, rightly observes that the story of Jesus “constituted the continuation and climax of the ancient biblical story.” Richard B. Hays, “The Canonical Matrix of the Gospels,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. S. C. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 53. Of this quote, Pennington states, “This is apparent for Matthew as much as any of the gospels.” Jonathan T. Pennington, “Heaven, Earth, and a New Genesis: Theological Cosmology in Matthew,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough, LNTS 355 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 35.

¹³Beardslee rightly argues that an integral part of the Gospel plot is a “reenactment of the past.” William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 18–21.

¹⁴Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC, vol. 33a (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 9; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and James Dixon Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 61; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 18–19; Nolland sees a likely allusion to Genesis, yet rejects the idea that it indicates a new Genesis, but rather it covers 1:1–17 and is concerned with “the origins of Jesus in relation to the larger shape of the history of God’s people.” John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 71. Similarly Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, trans. Ray Togtman (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 15. For a critique of Nolland, see Pennington, “Heaven, Earth, and a New Genesis,” 39–41.

¹⁵Powell correctly notes that Matthew’s Gospel “is not limited to the period of Jesus’ life but extends backward to creation (Matt 19:4, 8; 24:21; 25:34).” Powell, “Plot and Subplots,” 199. See further discussion at 72–73 above.

Matthew 4:1–11: The Kingdom Offered

Setting the context. It is not surprising then that at the onset of Matthew's Gospel the "Battle of the Seeds" has not subsided.¹⁶ After alluding to the Old Testament through the genealogy, Matthew immediately steeps his Gospel in the same type of conflict we find throughout the OT.¹⁷ Thus, in Matthew 2:1, Jesus is born in Bethlehem "in the days of Herod the king (τοῦ βασιλέως)," who here represents a second Pharaoh who threatens to squelch the promised deliverance of God's people.¹⁸ Considering this and other parallels with the Exodus noted above, Nolland correctly states, "The recapitulation of the life of the nation in the life of Jesus is in some way, for Matthew, foundational for Jesus' significance in the purposes of God."¹⁹ We see this played out most clearly in the conflict between Jesus and Herod. When the magi come seeking the "king of the Jews" (βασιλεύς τῶν Ἰουδαίων), Herod becomes "greatly troubled" (ταράσσω), setting up the conflict between two kings: Jesus, the rightful king of the Jews, and Herod, a king of this world who serves Rome and thus belongs to Satan's empire.²⁰ In 2:7, the conflict resumes with Herod attempting to use the magi to find Jesus so that he might

¹⁶Contra Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 312; David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 86. Beare and Sim both see no context in the Old Testament pertinent to Matthew's cosmic conflict motif.

¹⁷For the argument that Matthew steeps his cosmic conflict motif in the literature of apocalyptic Judaism, see Robert Charles Branden, *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew*, Studies in Biblical Literature 89 (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 17–27.

¹⁸For the parallel between Herod and Pharaoh, see discussion in chap. 3.

¹⁹Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 125. For a further discussion of these parallels in their significance in understanding the role of the slaughter of the infants in Matthew's narrative, see Richard J. Erickson, "Divine Injustice? Matthew's Narrative Strategy and the Slaughter of the Innocents (Matthew 2:13–23)," *JSNT* 64 (1996): 5–27.

²⁰So Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 102. For an interesting discussion of Matthew's link between Rome and Satan, see David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, Early Christianity in Context 276 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 93–106. Similarly, Carter states, "Rome's empire is viewed as devilish and diabolical, an expression of Satan's sovereignty." Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press), 63.

destroy him.²¹ This section ends with another reference to Herod in verse 12 where God sovereignly circumvents his plans and warns (χρηματισθέντες) the magi not to return to Herod. The conflict between the seed of woman and the serpent is again in full force and, as in the Exodus account, God has sovereignly protected the promised Seed.

Another formula quotation is found in 2:18 which refers to Rachel weeping over the Jewish people, and is quoted in the aftermath of Herod's slaughter of the infants.²² The quotation is from Jeremiah 31, which promises a return from exile and the fulfillment of God's covenant promises, and so is meant to instill hope that though the children are gone, the one who represents them has returned and is bringing salvation for their people. In dealing with the issue of the death of the infants, Erickson states, "Part of the answer, then, to the objection that Jesus escapes while the babies of Bethlehem die because of him, is that he returns, identifying with them and representing them, bringing with him their restoration."²³ Thus, the conflict with Herod and victory of the woman's seed serves, along with Matthew's use of the fulfillment language, to instill hope in the reader that this Messiah will fulfill the promises of Yahweh and the return from exile to paradise restored has begun in him. Thus, Allison states,

²¹Osborne is correct in stating that this altercation with Herod "introduces the central theme of conflict and God's triumph over opposition." Osborne, *Matthew*, 86.

²²For a discussion of this text and how it relates the problem of evil, see Dale C. Allison Jr, "Slaughtered Infants," in *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005): 251-64.

²³Erickson, "Divine Injustice?" 21. Of this problem, Luz states, "Modern readers notice that Matthew does not raise the theodicy question in connection with the suffering of the innocent children. The evangelist's interest is in the struggle between God and Herod, the enemy of Jesus; the innocent children appear as it were only on the reverse page of this struggle. It does not bother Matthew that God saves his Son at the expense of innocent people." Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 121. While the last statement goes beyond what we can discern, there is a sense in which Luz is correct here. Matthew is highlighting the rage and malice of the wicked king in deathly conflict with the innocent baby Jesus. It is God versus Herod and because Jesus escapes and Herod is thwarted in his attempts to stamp out the true king, God is victorious.

One should not pass judgment either on God or the meaning of the current situation without taking into account the eschatological future. The present may have an heir of finality, above all when, as happens not only to the infants at Bethlehem but to Jesus himself, innocents die at the hands of evildoers. But the present is always be swallowed up by the future, and someday all presents will be caught up in the eternal kingdom of God.²⁴

As this conflict develops, three pivotal texts help move the battle from beginning to end: the temptation account (Matt 4:1–11), the Beelzebub controversy (Matt 12:22–32) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:16–20).

The temptation. After setting the context of the conflict between the seeds, Matthew skips ahead in time to Jesus' adulthood. He tells of John the Baptist preaching "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand" and of Jesus' baptism.²⁵ While the reason for Jesus' baptism is debated, it identifies Jesus with Israel and demonstrates the Father's approval of the Son's mission.²⁶ It also provides a parallel between Jesus and Israel's "baptism" in the Red Sea and subsequent wilderness testing (1 Cor 10:2).²⁷ It is not surprising then that Matthew immediately recounts the Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness to be "tempted" (πειρασθῆναι) by the devil.²⁸

²⁴Allison, "Slaughtered Infants," 259. Allison continues, "The fate of Jesus himself is the great proleptic illustration, because in his own person the eschatological pattern of tribulation followed by vindication manifests itself."

²⁵For a discussion of Matthew's portrayal of John the Baptist and how it relates to the plot of Matthew, see Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 83–90. Anderson ultimately concludes that John's character serves as a parallel to Jesus and thus introduces many of the themes Jesus will emphasize in the gospel, including the opposition of the religious leaders and Matthew's dualistic framework.

²⁶W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew, vol. 1, Introduction and Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 344.

²⁷So Richard B. Gardner, *Matthew*, Believer's Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1940), 69; A. Feuillet, "Le baptême de Jésus d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc (1:9–11)," *CBQ* 21 (1959), 476; Davies and Allison state, "Like the Israel of old, the son comes out of the waters to enter the desert and suffer temptation." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 344–45, 152. Buse sees the background to Jesus' baptism in Isa 63, where both the Exodus and the Holy Spirit are highlighted. S. Ivor Buse, "Marcan Account of the Baptism of Jesus and Isaiah 63," *JTS* 7, no. 1 (April 1956), 74–75.

²⁸So Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 88. Further, Sim states, "These temptations take place immediately after the baptism of Jesus when God had confirmed his status as the son of God . . . Satan is therefore established early on as the adversary of Jesus." Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 78.

Matthew 4:1–11 is central for understanding the plot of Matthew’s Gospel. First, although Matthew has already alluded to the Battle of the Seeds in the birth narrative, here is the first and most explicit encounter between the serpent of Genesis 3:15 and the promised seed, Jesus Christ.²⁹ Second, only here and at his baptism does Matthew make Jesus the object of a passive verb. Jesus “was led” (ἀνήχθη) by the Spirit for the express purpose of being “tempted by the devil” (πειρασθῆναι). This divine passive indicates the sovereign will of God that Jesus encounter the devil at this particular time in the wilderness.³⁰ Also, on only one other occasion did a man come face to face with the direct temptations of Satan: the serpent tempted Adam in the garden. Thus, the temptation of Jesus recapitulates the temptation of Adam, that moment in salvation history when dominion was forfeited and the serpent was victorious.³¹ Therefore, the temptation account plays a central role in Matthew’s plot, and salvation history hangs in the balance as the serpent mounts his attack on the promised seed.³² Regarding its significance, George Stephen Painter’s words ring true:

If it be thought of purely as literature, it is a classic, worthy to be placed beside the finest examples; but when we consider further that it represents the supreme moral trial of him who is recognized as the world’s greatest ethical teacher and the most perfect character of history, of whom it is written, “he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin,” it gains the profoundest

²⁹Powell is correct that Jesus engages in conflict with Satan before the religious leaders, yet each of these conflicts has already been foreshadowed in the birth narrative. Powell, “Plot and Subplots,” 199. Thus, these texts serve as “the overture to the entire gospel.” Donald Senior, “The Death of Jesus and the Birth of a New World: Matthew’s Theology of History in the Passion Narrative,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 19, no. 6 (December 1992): 95.

³⁰So Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 46; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 354.

³¹So John Legg, *The King and His Kingdom: The Gospel of Matthew Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2004), 47.

³²Powell’s distinction between the conflict of “Jesus and Satan” and that of “God and Satan” is unnecessary. Powell, “Plot and Subplots,” 199. Jesus continues the conflict that began when Adam forfeited the dominion given him by God. The conflict is best set in the context of Gen 3:15, which is God’s promised kingdom against that of Satan.

possible significance and the most absorbing interest.³³

A detailed analysis of Matthew 4:1–11 stands outside the purview of this chapter; however, its placement and purpose in Matthew’s Gospel is particularly relevant for a proper understanding of the conflict motif in Matthew.³⁴ First, this passage is a clear allusion to the temptation account in Genesis 3.³⁵ Adam and Eve, uniquely created in the “image” (εἰκῶν) of God, were given “dominion” (ἀρχέτωσαν; Gen 1:26, 28) over the earth and commanded to rule it. Yet the serpent called into question the character of God, and enticed Adam to sin and forfeit the dominion given him by God. The account ends with the promise that a seed would come, descended from the woman, against whom the serpent would war yet ultimately be overcome (Gen 3:15). In Matthew 4:1–11, Satan once again confronts a unique one of God. Jesus is the unique Son and the image (εἰκῶν) of the invisible God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). As the serpent with Adam, Satan tempts Jesus by calling the character of God into question. He states “If you are the Son of God” on three separate occasions. This statement calls into question the character of God by mocking Jesus’ relationship to the Father, who had already approved Jesus as his beloved Son at his baptism.³⁶ Jesus responds by quoting Scripture, each time from Deuteronomy 6–8,

³³Stephen Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ’s Temptation: A Study in Interpretation* (Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1914), 3.

³⁴See chap. 4, pp. 135–41 for a more in depth discussion of the temptation narrative.

³⁵Plummer states, “Satan’s suggestion is a manifest reference to the voice from heaven: ‘Hath God said, Thou art my Son, and yet said, Thou shalt not eat?’ (Comp. Gen. iii. I.)” Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952), 39. Davies and Allison see a connection to Adam in the account of the angels serving (διακονεῖν) Jesus in 4:11, recalling the food of angels, manna, which, according to some Jewish tradition, Adam ate in the garden of paradise. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 357. In this regard, note that in Ps 78:24–25 manna is called “the grain of heaven” and “the bread of the angels.” The Jewish text *Life of Adam and Eve* (discussed in chapter 2) has Adam recalling that in the garden he ate “angelic food” (*L.A.E.* 2:4).

³⁶See especially Donaldson, who connects the question of Satan in the wilderness to the mockers using the same language at the cross (27:40). Terence L. Donaldson, “The Mockers and the Son of God (Matthew 27:37–44): Two Characters in Matthew’s Story of Jesus,” *JSNT* 41 (February 1991), 7–10. Similarly, Carson calls Satan’s words a “taunt” parallel to those hurled at him while on the cross (27:40). Carson, *Matthew*, 112. Also

which recounts the wilderness wanderings of Israel where they were “tested” (ἐκπειράζω) by God and failed (Deut 8.2).³⁷ It should also be noted that Moses is recalling the history of Israel because they are about to enter into the promised land, thus Matthew could also be pointing to the fact that this promise is ultimately fulfilled in what Jesus will soon accomplish.³⁸

The final temptation of Jesus is the climax of the temptation narrative.³⁹ Satan takes Jesus onto a “very high mountain” (ὄρος ὑψηλὸν λίαν) and shows him all the kingdoms of the world, promising them to Jesus if he bows down to worship him. Concerning this scene, Painter states, “There is no more dramatic scene to be found in literature than that of Christ upon the high mountain viewing the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.”⁴⁰ Upon the mountain, Jesus commands Satan to flee him (ὑπάγε) and then quotes again from Deuteronomy (6:13), which follows the “Shema” of Deuteronomy 6:4 and is a command concerning how Israel is to worship and serve Yahweh as they cross into the

Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 157–58; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 360; Hagner states, “The relation of the son to the will of the Father is called into question.” Hagner, *Matthew*, 64–65. Finally, Söding similarly states, “Die Mitglieder des Hohen Rates halten dem Gekreuzigten zur Untermauerung ihrer ähnlichen Blasphemie Ps 22,9 (Mt 27,43) vor und agieren damit ebenso wie nach Mat 4,5f. der Diabolos.” Thomas Söding, “Der Gehorsem des Gottessohnes: Zur Christologie der matthäischen Versuchungserzählung (4,1–11)” in *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift: Studien zur Hermeneutik des Evangeliums*, ed. Christof Landmesser, Hans-Joachim Eckstein, Hermann Lichtenberger, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 86 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 740.

³⁷So Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 354; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 68; Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ’s Temptation*, 102–3; Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 81; Keener, *Matthew*, 88; Kristian A. Bendoraitis, *Behold, the Angels Came and Served Him: A Compositional Analysis of Angels in Matthew*, LNTS 523 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 56–57.

³⁸Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 352–53

³⁹Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 352; Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 148.

⁴⁰Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ’s Temptation*, 278.

Promised Land.⁴¹ Again, biblical history bears out the fact that Israel failed miserably in this regard.⁴² Not only did Israel fail their test, but Adam as well, who succumbed to the serpent's temptation to "be like God," thus failing to give Yahweh the worship he deserved.⁴³ Jesus is again portrayed as one who succeeds where Israel and Adam failed.⁴⁴ A difficult question regarding this temptation regards the nature of Satan's possession of "the kingdoms of the world" (αἱ βασιλείαι τοῦ κόσμου).⁴⁵ It could be that these refer to wicked kingdoms, but then one is hard pressed to see exactly what Satan's temptation entails. The idea that Jesus would be tempted to worship Satan in exchange for only the wicked kingdoms is unlikely.⁴⁶ It is more likely, then, that these are indeed all the kingdoms of the world; therefore, this temptation further supports the claim that so far the world and the battle has

⁴¹So Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 153.

⁴²See Judg 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1; 1 Kgs 11:6; 14:22; 15:26, 34; 16:25; 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:2; 8:18, 27; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:2; 21:2, 16, 20; 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19; 2 Chr 21:6; 22:4; 33:2, 22; 36:5, 9, 12; Jer 52:2.

⁴³So Hagner, who correctly observes, "As in the very first account of testing, failed by Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-7), the question centers on a choice between the will of Satan or the will of God, which involves implicitly the rendering of worship to the one or the other." Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 68.

⁴⁴So Wilkins, *Matthew*, 156. However, Gundry rejects the notion that Jesus is recapitulating Adam here on the grounds that Matthew leaves out Mark's reference to the wild animals. He thus only affirms a parallel with Israel. In the latter point he is surely correct, but it is likely that Matthew intends both. Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 53. Davies and Allison argue similarly to Gundry here, however, they do not ultimately deny a link with Adam, stating that "The points of commonality between the accounts of the temptation in Mark and Q are greater than is generally imagined." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 357. Specifically they are referring to the angels "serving" Jesus, which language they connect to angels serving Adam in Jewish tradition (see note 31 above; also *L.A.E.* 12-17; 33)

⁴⁵Cf. 2 Cor 4:4, where Paul calls Satan the "god of this world/age." Also John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 6:12. See also the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 2:4, which states, "for the angel of lawlessness, who is the ruler of this world, is Beliar."

⁴⁶Cf. Luke 4:6 where Satan says, σοὶ δώσω τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἅπασαν καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἐμοὶ παραδέδοται καὶ ὧ ἂν θέλω. This statement not only makes the parallel with Matthew 28 more clear, but also points to an undisclosed past event in which the kingdoms of the world were handed over to Satan. It is likely that this occurred at the fall.

belonged to the serpent.⁴⁷ However, as foreshadowed in this account, Jesus’ mission will decisively crush the head of the serpent once and for all (cf. Rev. 13.2) and restore the dominion that Adam lost in the garden.⁴⁸

Scholars have noted the parallel between this account and Genesis 3, and such a discussion is important for the present discussion.⁴⁹ This parallel is illustrated in Table 6:

Table 6: Links between Genesis 3 and Matthew 4

Genesis 3 (LXX)	Matthew 4
Τί ὅτι εἶπεν ὁ θεός; (3:1)	εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ (4:3)
εἶπεν ὁ θεός Οὐ φάγεσθε (3:3)	γέγραπται· οὐκ ἐπ’ ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος (4:4)
ἐν ἧ ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ (3:5)	εἶπε ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται; ἐὰν πεσῶν προσκυνήσης μοι (4:3, 9)
ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ (3:5)	ταῦτά σοι πάντα δώσω (4:9)
Adam disobeys (ἔφαγεν . . . καὶ ἔφαγον; 3:6)	Jesus is faithful (τότε λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ὑπάγε, σατανᾶ; 4:10)
Temptation to be like God/be independent from God	Temptation to receive all the kingdoms/use power independently from God’s will

Thus, the story of Jesus’ temptation continues the themes introduced thus far. He is the new Israel, who will succeed where Israel failed.⁵⁰ He is the seed of

⁴⁷So Gardner, *Matthew*, 73; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 371.

⁴⁸Thus the temptation account functions something like Patte’s “qualifying test” in which a character passes an initial test, only to face a “main test” and “glorifying test” before the mission is complete. Daniel Patte, *What Is Structural Exegesis?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 38.

⁴⁹So Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 67; Carson, *Matthew*, 111; Morris, *Matthew*, 74; John Lightfoot, *Matthew–Mark*, vol. 2 of *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, Matthew – 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 83; Davies and Allison focus on the parallel of Mark’s account; however, their statement certainly fits Matthew’s account: “[Jesus], like the first Adam, is tempted by Satan. But unlike his anti-type, he does not succumb, and the result is the recovery of paradise . . . and once again a man dwells with angels and is served by them.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 356–57. Osborne notes the parallel, but then states, “it must be said that this is not intended.” Osborne, *Matthew*, 137.

⁵⁰See Albright and Mann, who further expound upon the idea that Jesus’ temptations echo the experience of Israel. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, AB, vol. 26 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 36–37.

woman who will conquer the serpent who throughout biblical history has attempted to thwart the plan of God (Gen 3:15) and usurp his reign. Lightfoot states,

The war, proclaimed of old in Eden between the serpent, and the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman, Gen. 3:15, now takes place; when that promised seed of the woman comes forth into the field . . . to fight with that old serpent, and at last to bruise his head.⁵¹

Though God has always reigned and is sovereign, the consistent pattern in the OT is one of rebellion against Yahweh's kingdom. This pattern, however, has come to a decisive halt in the person of Christ. Not only is he the true and rightful ruler who would sit on the throne of David and bring all nations to himself (Matt 1:1–17), but God is also sovereignly bringing his plan to fruition despite the serpent's continued attempts to thwart it. Thus,

The temptation in which the Son of Man conquered is the counterpart of the temptation in which man first fell. As the descendant and representative of a fallen race, it is His mission to vanquish in the sphere in which they have been vanquished; and there is no postponement of the struggle.⁵²

This conflict, however, is not over when Satan departs in 4:11; rather, as the ensuing events demonstrate, it has only just begun.⁵³ Ridderbos is worth quoting here:

[The temptation] was the first great encounter between the Messiah and His true foe. Since the devil has dominion over this earth, Christ, who is the bringer of God's dominion, had to do battle first of all with the devil. This in fact was the starting point and the foundation of all that He would do later in His public ministry. Moreover it was the counterpart of man's temptation in the Garden of Eden.⁵⁴

⁵¹Lightfoot, *Matthew*, 83.

⁵²Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 36.

⁵³So Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 56; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 374. In this regard, Mathewson argues that the temptation account reveals “in apocalyptic fashion what is at stake . . . in Jesus subsequent ministry . . . the struggle between God and the powers of evil.” David Mathewson, “The Apocalyptic Vision of Jesus: Reading Matthew 3:16–4:11 Intertextually,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (2011): 107.

⁵⁴Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 62; Similarly, Davies and Allison state “As God once miraculously gave Israel manna in the desert, so now he feeds his Son—his Son who, unlike Adam, did not succumb to temptation and so received the food which the first man ate in paradise before the fall . . . what Adam forfeited by his disobedience, namely, the ministration of angels, Jesus regained by his obedience.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 374. They further note that Eden was on a mountain according to some Jewish texts. All this

The conflict continues in the events following the temptation account and will reach a turning point in the Beelzebub Controversy.

Matthew 12:22–32: Two Kingdoms Collide

Setting the context. Immediately after his temptation, Jesus withdraws into Galilee and begins his ministry, which Matthew describes as the kingdom of heaven shining into the darkness (Matt 4:15–16; Isa 9:1–2). This is reminiscent of the light versus darkness dualism which permeates Jewish literature of the second temple period (1QM 1:1; 1QS 3:17–22). Our previous discussion of the temptation account sheds light on Matthew’s understanding of “the kingdom of heaven” (ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν).⁵⁵ It is God’s dominion over against the rule Satan has over the “kingdoms of the world” (αἱ βασιλείαι τοῦ κόσμου). Thus, in Jesus the dominion of God is breaking into the realm of Satan, and Jesus’ defeat of the serpent in the wilderness demonstrates this reality. Jesus then calls his disciples, enlisting his kingdom army which will engage the enemy on his own grounds. So in 4:24, Jesus frees all those who are “demonized” (δαιμονιζομένους).⁵⁶ This narrative portion of Matthew then gives way to the first and most important discourse section in Matthew: the Sermon on the Mount.⁵⁷

The importance of cosmic conflict for this portion of Matthew is evident at the very center of the Sermon, the Lord’s Prayer (6:9–13). Pennington has noted

fit into the idea that Jesus is the counterpart to Adam.

⁵⁵Pennington argues that the “kingdom of Heaven” in Matthew is juxtaposed to all earthly kingdoms. Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 311. I would simply add that those earthly kingdoms are fundamentally of Satan’s kingdom (cf. Matt 4:8).

⁵⁶So Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 78.

⁵⁷The discourse portions of Matthew always play a major factor in the various discussions of Matthew’s structure. My purpose here is not to interact with various views in this regard, but rather to demonstrate that the idea of cosmic conflict as foundational to Matthew’s plot is evident within the discourses as well.

the significance of the heaven and earth language in this passage.⁵⁸ It is instructive, then, that along with this language we find further evidence for the cosmic conflict motif in Matthew. Jesus ends his prayer with a request for the Father concerning Satan: “and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One” (6:13). The “Evil One” (τοῦ πονηροῦ) here most likely refers to Satan.⁵⁹ This combined with the language of being “led into temptation” echoes the temptation account, in which Jesus was “led into” the wilderness “to be tempted” by the devil (4:1). In that passage, the climactic temptation was Satan’s attempt to receive worship from Jesus in exchange for all the “kingdoms of the world (4:8–9).” Because Jesus did not give in, he can now pray that God’s “kingdom” come on earth, and because Jesus was obedient to the Father through his temptation, he can pray that we be delivered from the clutches of the Evil One.⁶⁰ Thus the tragic events of humanity’s fall in Adam are being reversed in the new Adam, Jesus Christ.

Further, note that the Sermon ends within a dualistic framework, most notably the language of the good (καλοῦς) and bad (πονηροῦς) fruit.⁶¹ As argued above, πονηρός is most often utilized in the context of cosmic conflict between the forces of good and evil, God and Satan. This dualistic language is thus intended to recall that motif and move the narrative forward, where Jesus continues to assert his authority over Satan’s realm. Sim insightfully states,

We should not interpret these references to contrasting groups on the human level merely in terms of a moral division within humanity . . . these texts serve

⁵⁸Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 150–55.

⁵⁹So Graham H. Twelftree, “Demon, Devil, Satan,” ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, *DJG* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992). See chap. 4, n. 132 for further support of this view.

⁶⁰While it is true that any believer can pray this prayer, we can do so only because of Jesus’ perfect obedience in his life, death, and resurrection. Thus, had Jesus given into Satan’s temptation, this prayer would not be possible.

⁶¹This connection is also noted and discussed by Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 105–7.

to highlight Matthew's dualistic view of the cosmos . . . the righteous are good only in so far as they have aligned themselves with Jesus and forces in the cosmic struggle. On the other hand, the wicked are evil not just because they act immorally, but because their immorality betrays their allegiance to Satan. Matthew's constant use of *πονηρός* as a descriptive term for the wicked clearly points in this direction.⁶²

Immediately following the Sermon on the Mount, the narrative resumes as Jesus continues to minister to the crowd. Again, in 8:16 Jesus' deliverance of those under demonic oppression is connected to the fulfillment of an Isaianic prophecy, and the subsequent account of the Gadarene⁶³ demoniac is a clear demonstration of Jesus' authority over Satan's realm (Matt 8:28–34). The demoniac approaches Jesus immediately after he steps off the boat. Note the severity of this oppression: it was “so fierce that no one could pass that way” (Matt 8:28). The point is that no ordinary man could stand up against such power, and the demons had free reign over the man and any who attempted to subdue him. However, the moment Jesus appears on the scene the demons fall down before him and beg that he not torment them. Why? Because the demons know him to be the “Son of God” (Matt 8:29). Their question concerning whether or not Jesus had come to “torment” them “before the time” is instructive in that it indicates the demons' awareness of the unique authority of Jesus. Twelftree argues that the demons are not actually asking a question, but making a statement: “you have come to torment us before the time.” This would further emphasize the shocking nature of Jesus' authority over Satan's realm.⁶⁴

In the next several scenes Jesus continues to demonstrate his authority

⁶²Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 82.

⁶³With regard to the conflicting geographical data of the Synoptics concerning this region, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002), 18–19; Hagner, *Matthew*, 224. Further, see Raymond G. Clapp, “A Study of the Place-Names Gergesa and Bethabara,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 1907): 62–83; F. C. Burkitt, “Gergesa: A Reply,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 27, no. 2 (January 1, 1908): 128–33.

⁶⁴Graham H. Twelftree, “Demon, Devil, Satan.” For a more in depth discussion of this exorcism, see chap. 4, pp. 121–25 above.

through various healings and the casting out of demons, yet the religious leaders think “evil” (πονηρὰ) in their hearts and accuse him of blasphemy (9:4). Further, in response to Jesus’ exorcising a demon, the Pharisees state, “By the Prince of demons he casts out demons” (9:34). Matthew here foreshadows the more extended account of chapter 12, where Jesus proves the folly of the Pharisees’ accusations and actually demonstrates that they, not he, are warring against God’s kingdom.⁶⁵ This brings the narrative to the next major discourse section in chapter 10. Here Jesus commissions his disciples and grants to them authority “over unclean spirits, to cast them out” (10:1), and the message that they are to proclaim is “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Further, Jesus promises they will face opposition similar to what he has faced when the religious leaders called him Βεελζεβούλ. Thus the close connection between the arrival of God’s kingdom in Christ and cosmic conflict remain at the forefront of Matthew’s narrative.

A turning point. At the close of this discourse we enter into what many have considered the turning point in Matthew 11–12.⁶⁶ After pointing out the greatness of the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus makes a perplexing statement: “But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence and the violent snatch it away” (11:12). The interpretations of this verse are vast, yet the present discussion of the cosmic conflict motif in Matthew sheds light on a likely meaning.⁶⁷ Due to its usage elsewhere, the idea that Jesus intends a positive notion

⁶⁵So Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 77–79; Luz, *Studies in Matthew*, 227.

⁶⁶So Edwards, *Matthew’s Story of Jesus*, 37; Luz, *Studies in Matthew*, 62; Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 57; Schreiner also calls chap. 12 the turning point of the narrative: “Most commentators and scholars concur that although the opposition to Jesus has already surfaced, Chapter 12 represents a decisive moment in the narrative where the hostility becomes heightened.” Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew* (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 62–63. This escalation of hostility is also noted by Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 41; Turner, *Matthew*, 307; Gundry, *Matthew*, 204; Kingsbury, “The Plot of Matthew’s Story,” 551–52.

⁶⁷For interpretive possibilities, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, *Commentary on*

here is unlikely.⁶⁸ Perhaps most notably for the present discussion, in 13:16 Matthew uses the same verb for “snatch away” (ἀπαρῆζω) to refer to Satan’s activity in snatching the seed away from the hearts of people, thus hindering their entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. Both passages refer to the kingdom, violent ones/the Evil One, and snatching away of the kingdom. Therefore, it is likely that in 11:12 Jesus is alluding to the conflict that has raged throughout his ministry, the underlying conflict between the seed and the serpent, who attempts to snatch the kingdom away as Jesus is bringing it into his realm.⁶⁹

Matthew 8–18, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 254–56; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 306–7; Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 338–39. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 140–144. For an extensive treatment, see Peter Scott Cameron, *Violence and the Kingdom: The Interpretation of Matthew 11:12* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984). Also Charles Fleming Taylor, “Violence and Matthew: A Reconsideration of Matthew 11:12” (Th.M. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007).

⁶⁸Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 141; *BDAG*, s.v. “βιάζω,” 175; Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 338; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 256; contra Keener, *Matthew*, 217; Cameron concludes, “The argument that he may here have used *prima facie in malam partem* vocabulary with an *in bonam partem* reference . . . is impossible in the light of the associations of ideas which the vocabulary of the reconstructed original would inevitably have sparked off.” Cameron, *Violence*, 55. However, see Taylor, who attempts to combine the two readings and thus suggests a “dual reference.” Taylor, “Violence and Matthew,” 73, 85–86.

⁶⁹So Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 142n48; Davies and Allison state, “For Jesus and Matthew, as for apocalyptic literature in general, the great redemption must be preceded by a conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 256. Similarly, Luz suggests the phrase could refer to “the eschatological affliction or the eschatological struggle of evil against good.” Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 141. *Pace* Cameron, *Violence*, 246. Cameron, after his exhaustive study, suggests the reference is primarily to John the Baptist and thus the “violent one” is Herod Antipas. However, Cameron himself notes the connection between this text and Matt 12, and thus it is more likely that the “violent one” is Satan himself, who uses tools to inflict violence on the kingdom, one of which is indeed Herod Antipas, as well as the other antagonists described in the present study. Wilkins follows Cameron’s interpretation. Wilkins, *Matthew*, 416–17. Bates also argues that Antipas is the primary referent here, and argues that Matthew is using coded/cryptic language. He states, “Jesus as he is portrayed in both Matt 11:12 and Luke 16:16–18 is intentionally making a cryptic allusion to the violent opposition of Antipas against the emerging kingdom movement.” Bates renders the passage: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is experiencing brutal opposition [**code: by people such as Antipas**], and brutal men [**code: like Antipas**] are laying [violent] hands on it (emphasis original).” Matthew W. Bates, “Cryptic Codes and a Violent King: A New Proposal for Matthew 11:12 and Luke 16:16–18,” *CBQ* 75, no. 1 (2013): 92. Lightfoot, Kellerman and Oden, and Calvin all take the phrase positively, the latter two translating βιάζω as “forcefully advance” and argue that those who respond positively are the one’s “taking hold of it.” Lightfoot, *Matthew*, 192; James A. Kellerman and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew (Opus Imperfectum)*, ACT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 201; John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke*,

Thus, the following condemnation of “this generation” should be read through the lens of the underlying theme of cosmic conflict, and the unbelief of those who reject Christ is a result of the serpent’s war against the seed, as the Evil One “snatches away” the kingdom from the hearts of the people. Yet the truth of Jesus’ sovereign rule over the realm of darkness is reiterated in 11:25–27, where Jesus is said to have the sovereign freedom to reveal the Father to whomever he so chooses, thus bringing about the kingdom despite the attempts of the serpent to thwart its advance. This brings us to a crucial passage for understanding the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan as developed in Matthew’s Gospel.

Chapter 12 begins with controversies over the Sabbath, in which Jesus declares himself “greater than the temple” (12:6) and “Lord of the Sabbath” (12:8). He demonstrates this by healing a man’s withered hand on the Sabbath. Rather than praise God for the miracle, the Pharisees conspire how they might “destroy him.” Again, Jesus is said to be the fulfillment of another Isaianic prophecy, the one who will “cast out judgment unto victory” (12:20; Isa 42:1–4), which he has done through his continual victory over Satan’s realm.⁷⁰ The use of ἐκβάλλω here is strange, and calls for more than simply “bring forth.”⁷¹ It is likely that the use of the term here is intended to connect this passage to the activity of Jesus in casting out Satan in 12:28. First, in 12:18, the prophecy states, “I will put ‘my Spirit’ (τὸ πνεῦμά μου) upon him.” This is closely related to 12:28 in which Jesus states, “If by ‘the Spirit of God’ (πνεύματι θεοῦ) I cast out demons.” So also, ἐκβάλλω in the Isaiah quotation perhaps

trans. William Pringle, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 2:15. Also Ridderbos, who views the story of the Canaanite woman in chapter 15 as an example of the forceful laying hold of the kingdom presented this text. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 290.

⁷⁰Hauerwas, *Matthew*, 122.

⁷¹Calvin, *Harmony*, 2:62; Carson, *Matthew*, 287.

points forward to the same word in 12:28.⁷² Thus, the fulfillment of God's promises are coming to fruition through Christ's victory over Satan's realm, an argument bolstered by this passage's close relationship to the Beelzebub Controversy of 12:22–32.⁷³

The controversy begins with Jesus healing a demonized man (12:22). The crowd again is amazed. However, the Pharisees respond by saying, "He does not cast out the demons except by Βεελζεβοὺλ, the Prince of demons" (cf. 9:34). Jesus first points out their illogical conclusions (v. 26). He argues by *reductio ad absurdum* that kingdoms that war within cannot stand, thus why would Satan cast out Satan?⁷⁴ The comparison between Satan divided against himself and a kingdom divided against itself indicates that Jesus acknowledges Satan's rule over a kingdom, indeed all the kingdoms of the world, which Satan offered Jesus in the wilderness, and which are under his authority.⁷⁵ This kingdom of Satan opposes God's kingdom.⁷⁶ He then

⁷²So Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 60. However, Branden seems to overstate his case in arguing that κρίσις is a "metonymy for the cause of the judgment, i.e., Satan, and that Matthew is referring to "Jesus the Servant casting Satan out to establish the kingdom of God (v. 28)." Even so, the clear parallels indicate that Matthew is connecting the two passages and thus it is likely he is indeed emphasizing "Jesus eschatological triumph over evil" (see Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 60n117).

⁷³Kingsbury correctly asserts that this passage "Underlines . . . that the rule of God affects the destruction of the rule of Satan." Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 141.

⁷⁴So Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 337. As Twelftree notes, "Even if he were exorcising by Satan . . . Jesus' exorcisms would still mark the destruction of Satan and his kingdom." Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 106.

⁷⁵Also Davies and Allison, who state, "Jesus' words . . . take for granted that Satan, like God, has a kingdom, a well-ordered and organized host of powers that heed the back and call of their dark Lord Over against the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Satan." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*. They further note the parallel of this text and the dominion of Belial and his lot found in Qumran literature (e.g., 4Q286 10.2.1–13; 1QM 4:13–14; see discussion in chap. 2). Also note *T. Dan* 6:1–4 (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ ἐχθροῦ).

⁷⁶So Evans, who argues that "[Jesus'] has a great foe as the head of a kingdom that, by further implication, opposes God's kingdom." C.A. Evans, "Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 15, no. 1 (2005): 67. Marulli states, "There is an invitation to ponder the earthly manifestation of two opposing forces which have a cosmic scope: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of iniquity." Luca Marulli, "The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew XVI, 26–30)—a Quest for its Original Formulation and its Role in the Preaching of the Historical Jesus," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 2 (2010): 75.

turns the question to the religious leaders saying in essence that if he casts out demons by Satan, then so do those exorcists of whom the Pharisees would approve (v. 27). The Pharisees would of course deny this, and thus prove the problem of their accusation. The contrastive *δέ* introduces another possible understanding of Jesus' exorcisms. The alternative Jesus provides cuts to the core of not only his conflict with the religious leaders, but also the underlying battle of the seeds. He states: "But if by the Spirit of God I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has overtaken you" (v. 28). This phrase "kingdom of God" (*ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ*) is used only 4 times in Matthew (Matt 6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43), who overwhelmingly prefers "kingdom of Heaven" (*βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*), and thus that Matthew first breaks his pattern in this pivotal passage is significant.⁷⁷ Edwards suggests that the phrase is used simply to parallel the earlier phrase "the Spirit of God" (*πνεύματι θεοῦ*).⁷⁸ However, a better solution understands Matthew's usage here as contrasting two kingdoms. This passage is a turning point in the cosmic conflict motif presented thus far, and Matthew here delineates the opposing forces in this battle: the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God.⁷⁹ The phrase "kingdom of God"

⁷⁷Mowery notes that 3 of the 4 times Matthew uses "kingdom of God" it is in addressing the Jewish leaders and that 32 of the 50 occurrences of God in Matthew are addressing, or on the lips of, Jesus' opponents. Robert L. Mowery, "The Matthean References to the Kingdom: Different Terms for Different Audiences," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 70, no. 4 (1994): 403.

⁷⁸Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 44. Walker states, "It is doubtful whether the idea of a "Kingdom of God" plays any real part in the theology of Matthew . . . it apparently was a part of the pre-Matthean tradition which was simply taken over without change by the Evangelist." William O. Walker, Jr., "Kingdom of the Son of Man and the Kingdom of the Father in Matthew: an Exercise in *Redaktionsgeschichte*," *CBQ* 30, no. 4 (573-79): 578.

⁷⁹After formulating this understanding, I came across several scholars who seem to concur. France states, "The unusual use of Kingdom of God . . . serves not only to echo 'Spirit of God,' but also to point out the contrast with the kingdom of Satan." France, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 209. Also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 343; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 339. Gundry states, "Matthew retains 'of God' for correspondence with the foregoing references to Satan's kingdom." Gundry, *Matthew*, 235. Patte argues that Matthew's "kingdom of God" is the "power of God" over-against that of Satan; while "kingdom of Heaven" has a different referent. Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 177. Patte is certainly correct that here "kingdom of God" is juxtaposed to that of Satan, yet it is likely that kingdom of God and kingdom of Heaven have the same referent, and Matthew's choice of "kingdom of God" here serves the theological purpose of contrasting two kingdoms, God's

therefore emphasizes the sovereign ruler of the kingdom Jesus has brought about in his ministry, and the sovereign King who will crush the head of the ruler of the kingdoms of this world.⁸⁰ The kingdom of Satan must give way to the kingdom of God because of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The point is clear: the only logical conclusion is that Jesus is acting in accord with the power and will of God, rather than by the power of Satan; and if this is indeed the case, then Jesus is *the* warrior for the kingdom of God battling against the kingdom of Satan. In attributing Jesus' actions to Satan, the religious leaders actually demonstrate that they are fighting for the wrong kingdom.⁸¹

Jesus proceeds to illustrate his point with a parable. The parable inquires as to how someone can plunder a strong man's house unless he first "binds" (δέσσει) the strong man. The application is evident: Satan is the strong man whose house is the world, and Jesus is the one seeking to plunder the strong man's house. He is doing this by binding the strong man and inaugurating the kingdom of God in place of the kingdom of Satan. The second Adam is regaining the dominion that was lost in the garden by the first Adam. The Battle of the Seeds that began in Genesis 3:15 reaches its climactic conclusion in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the promised Seed. He is binding the serpent and plundering his realm. Those who do not join with Jesus align themselves with Satan.⁸² By attributing the work of Christ to Satan,

and Satan's (so Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 339). See also discussion in Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 299–310.

⁸⁰This fits with Mowery's study which found "God" to be often associated with power in Matthew. Robert L. Mowery's, "From Lord to Father in Matthew 1–7," *CBQ* 59 (1997): 645–47.

⁸¹Senior correctly asserts, "The leaders now clearly assume their assigned role as implacable foes of Jesus" (cf. John 8:44). Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 122–23.

⁸²The outcome of the battle is not "our responsibility" as Kunkel seems to suggest, but rather our response to Jesus demonstrates the kingdom to which we belong (see Fritz Kunkel, *Creation Continues: A Psychological Interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew* [New York: Paulist Press, 1987], 152–53).

the religious leaders have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and proved that they are allied with the serpent (12:30–32).⁸³

Jesus continues to condemn the Pharisees, and further indicates their alliance with Satan’s kingdom. First, in 12:34 he refers to them as “offspring of snakes.” One can hardly miss the allusion to Genesis 3:15 and the “offspring” of the “serpent.”⁸⁴ Also, in 12:35 he likens them to the “Evil One (ὁ πονηρὸς) out of his evil treasure [who] brings forth evil.” This links the religious leaders to the “Evil One” (ὁ πονηρὸς) of Matthew 6:13 and 13:19, 38, who is Satan.⁸⁵ The ensuing condemnation of “this generation” and Jesus’ statement that those who do his will are his “brother and sister and mothers” further confirms this rift between those who in their unbelief are battling on the side of the serpent, and those who by faith are warring as part of the army of Christ, the promised seed.⁸⁶

Therefore, in this important passage Jesus explicates his mission. First, in him the kingdom of God has decisively overtaken the world. He is the promised seed of Genesis 3:15 who will crush the head of the serpent and bring about God’s will and reign on earth. Second, by denying Jesus’ authority from God, the religious leaders have aligned themselves with Satan’s realm rather than God’s. Finally, Jesus’ authority over the demonic is indicative that the kingdom of Satan is giving way to

⁸³Owen states, “The power of God acted in a especial manner by the Holy Spirit . . . therefore, on the ascription of his mighty works unto Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he lets the Jews know that therein they blasphemed the Holy Spirit, whose works indeed they were, verses 31, 32.” John Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vols. 3 and 4, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1862; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 3:174.

⁸⁴So Wilkins, *Matthew*, 136. However, Davies and Allison deny an allusion to Gen 3. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, *Commentary on Matthew 19–28*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 307.

⁸⁵Powell correctly notes that, “Each of these subplots [i.e., with religious leaders] serves both to advance and to hinder the divine plan of salvation and so can be related and subordinated to . . . the main plot of the Gospel [that between Jesus and Satan].” Powell, “Plot and Subplots,” 200.

⁸⁶So Kingsbury, who states, “Attacking the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus castigates them as an ‘evil and adulterous generation’ (12:39), that is to say, as persons who are ‘like Satan.’” Kingsbury, “The Plot of Matthew’s Story,” 352. Also Legg, *The King and His Kingdom*, 231.

the advancing kingdom of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thus, “*Jesus saw his miracles—and hence at least a large part of his mission—as primarily a battle with the demonic and, concomitantly, an expression of the realization of the kingdom of God in the face of the defeat of Satan*” (italics original).⁸⁷ Jesus’ authority over Satan’s realm is bringing about God’s promise of deliverance (Isa 49:24–25).⁸⁸ Christ is regaining what Adam lost.

Once again, as this narrative portion of Matthew gives way to the third major discourse section, the theme of cosmic conflict informs and is further confirmed by Jesus’ parables concerning the kingdom. In the parable of the sower, it is “the Evil One” (ὁ πονηρὸς) who snatches the seed out of the hearts of men (13:19). In the parable of the wheat and the weeds it is “the devil” who sowed the weeds in the field, and the weeds are “the sons of the Evil One” (ὁ πονηρὸς; 13:38–9), and this interpretation directly follows another statement of the fulfillment of Isaiah (13:35). Thus, Jesus is demonstrated to be the promised one who will deliver a world in bondage to the Evil One by ushering in the kingdom of God.⁸⁹ The “sons of” (οἱ υἱοὶ) language indicates to whom one belongs.⁹⁰ And it is likely that Matthew views the religious leaders as those evil ones “sown by the devil” (cf. Matt 15:13).⁹¹ One either belongs to Christ’s kingdom or that of the Evil One (οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ

⁸⁷Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological Study* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1999), 263. Twelftree, however, does not want to overemphasize this idea in Matthew, and so also notes, “Although this verse (12:28) places exorcism at the center of Jesus’ ministry we should not conclude that in exorcism the whole of Jesus’ ministry was summed up.” Graham H. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now*, Hodder Christian Paperbacks (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1985), 77.

⁸⁸Rikki E. Watts, “Exodus,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

⁸⁹So Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 151.

⁹⁰Blomberg, *Matthew*, 222.

⁹¹So Powell, “Plot and Subplots,” 201; Davies and Allison state, “[Matthew] is still largely concerned with coming to grips with Israel’s response to Jesus.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 429. Bauer states, “In the parable of the Weeds Jesus makes an explicit connection between the evil of the religious leaders and that of Satan.” David R. Bauer, “The Major Characters of Matthew’s Story: Their Function and Significance,” *Interpretation* 46, no. 4 (1992): 365.

πονηροῦ).⁹² These are followed by a parable that highlights the eschatological judgment where the evil ones, those of Satan's kingdom, will be separated from the righteous, those of Christ's kingdom (13:49). Thus, in Christ's ministry he is binding Satan, the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, and those who reject Christ are of Satan's evil kingdom (i.e., the religious leaders)⁹³ and will each meet eternal condemnation at the close of the age.⁹⁴ Those who align with Christ, however, are "sons of the kingdom" who will share in Christ's victory. Matthew thus "relates the dualism of the human Sphere to the cosmic battle which is being fought between Jesus and Satan."⁹⁵ Yet as the conflict reaches its climax, Jesus is handed over to the religious authorities and is crucified, leaving salvation history up for grabs. Every drama, therefore, must have a resolution.

Matthew 28:16–20: The Kingdom Restored

Setting the context. The Great Commission essentially provides the capstone for the present discussion.⁹⁶ Thus, Pennington rightly asserts, "28:16–20 serves as the end not only to 28:1–20 but also to the entire Passion narrative and is a fitting capstone to the entire Gospel."⁹⁷ The context is crucial for a proper understanding. Looming in the background of this magnificent text is the death and

⁹²Cf. 8:12 where Matthew uses "sons of the kingdom" to refer to those who were unexpectedly thrown out of the kingdom. There it refers to Israelites who have rejected Messiah as opposed to Gentiles who unexpectedly receive him.

⁹³So Bauer, "Major Characters," 364–65.

⁹⁴Thus, as "His exorcisms were the first stage of binding Satan (Mark 3:23; Matt. 12:25f; Luke 11:17f; Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:7) but the final defeat would take place in the final judgment. (Matt. 13:30)."

⁹⁵Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 79. Sim also notes the parallel of this idea in 1QS and Revelation. Also, Davies and Allison state, "One is reminded of the two main groups in the Dead Sea Scrolls: the 'sons of light' and the 'sons of darkness.'" Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 428n102.

⁹⁶Ridderbos calls it the "climax" of Matthew's gospel. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 552. Gundry says it offers a "compendium of important Matthean themes." Gundry, *Matthew*, 593. Turner, says "The Great Commission culminates Matthew's Gospel." Turner, *Matthew*, 687. Wilkins says it "climactically concludes the story of Jesus' ministry." Wilkins, *Matthew*, 29.

resurrection of Christ. Working backward, we find the religious leaders paying off the guards to concoct a story in which the disciples stole the body of Jesus (28:12–15). It can be inferred from this that Jesus’ body is no longer in the tomb. Thus, Jesus is raised from the dead! His ministry has been vindicated and his victory over the forces of evil has been decisively demonstrated. The victory blow, however, actually took place in the most unlikely of places, the cross. This is made plain in the events leading up to Jesus’ death. In 16:18, Jesus commends Peter’s confession that he is the Christ, and promises that “upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not conquer it.” While this passage is disputed, the point of the promise is that the serpent and his demons will not conquer the seed and his church.⁹⁸ It points to conflict and victory, the same promise God gave in Genesis 3:15. The keys of the kingdom are given to the church, not only in heaven, but also on earth, the former realm of the serpent (16:19).

However, as Jesus proceeds to predict his death, Peter takes him aside and rebukes him saying such things will never happen. Jesus responds, “Get behind me Satan” (ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ; 16:23).⁹⁹ This statement is strikingly similar to the statement Jesus made to Satan in the temptation account in Matthew 4:10, in which he commanded Satan to “go away” (ὑπάγε σατανᾶ). Thus, Satan at the end of Jesus’ ministry again attempts to overthrow God’s kingdom,¹⁰⁰ this time through one in Jesus’ inner circle.¹⁰¹ It is evident that early copyists recognized this parallel and

⁹⁷Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 130.

⁹⁸Calvin, *Harmony*, 2:291–92; Davies and Allison state, “The promise is that even the full fury of the underworld’s demonic forces will not overcome the church.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 633. Hagner sees the reference as primarily to death, but does not preclude cosmic conflict as an “extended meaning.” Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC, vol. 33b (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 171.

⁹⁹For an in depth discussion of this passage, see chap. 3, pp. 101–6 above.

¹⁰⁰Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 382.

¹⁰¹Keener, *Matthew*, 93; see discussion in Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 2nd ed., Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 63–76.

added *ἀπίσω μου* at 4:10 in order to make the connection clear.¹⁰² The significance of this parallel is that it provides an *inclusio* surrounding Satan’s repeated activity in attempting to thwart the mission of Jesus throughout his entire ministry from the temptation to the cross.¹⁰³ In responding to Jesus one is left with two options: follow him even unto death, or ally with Satan.¹⁰⁴ Further, Peter attempts to “rescue” Jesus from his death when in the garden of Gethsemene he draws his sword to smite the Roman soldier. Jesus words again recall the temptation account: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (26:53). In both instances, Jesus points to Scripture as his deterrent for doing so.¹⁰⁵

Despite Satan’s repeated attempts to keep Jesus from accomplishing his Father’s mission, Matthew proceeds to recount Jesus’ crucifixion. The final temptation of Christ occurs in Matthew 27:40. Again Matthew alludes to the temptation account in the wilderness. Those who pass by the cross cry out, “If you are the Son of God (*εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ*), come down from the cross!”¹⁰⁶ The

¹⁰²It is likely that the words *ἀπίσω μου* did not originally exist. First, while the textual evidence for its inclusion is impressive, it is inconclusive and it is more likely that copyists inserted the phrase due to the parallel found in Matt 16. See discussion in Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 20.

¹⁰³So Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 96.

¹⁰⁴B. A. E. Osborne, “Peter: Stumbling-Block and Satan,” *Novum Testamentum* 15, no. 3 (July 1, 1973): 187–90. Osborne argues effectively of a “two-Spirit anthropology” in the teachings of Jesus in which man can either think the thoughts of God or those of Satan.

¹⁰⁵So Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 420. See discussion of this text at p. 187 above.

¹⁰⁶Also Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 36; Keener, *Matthew*, 92; Senior states, “The mocking tone used by the demon— ‘if you are the Son of God . . .’—has its chilling echo in the mockeries that will be hurled at the dying Messiah on the cross . . . from beginning to end of the Gospel story, the Matthean Jesus remains the faithful Son of God.” Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 95. Similarly, Davies and Allison state, “[this phrase] summons the memory of the temptation narrative.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 618. See discussion in Thomas Söding, “Der Gehorsam des Gottessohnes, 737–40. Söding recognizes the connection between these two texts as well. He states, “Die Passanten greifen das *εἰ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* Satans auf (4, 3.6) und verlangen, Jesus solle vom Kreuz herabsteigen (27, 40).” He discusses further the significance of the second temptation in relationship to the passion narrative.

temptation is again to accomplish his purpose apart from God's will. In the wilderness Satan tempted Jesus with the kingdoms of the world in exchange for his veneration, in Matthew 16 Peter tempted Jesus to avoid suffering and death, and on the cross the mockers tempt Jesus to display his power and avoid further suffering and death.¹⁰⁷ Yet, he would be yielding to Satan and thus ally himself with Satan's kingdom. Jesus resists and thus completes his mission. Indeed,

The 'trials' and the crucifixion were not simply the last great controversy between him and his opponents. Jesus must have perceived them as the climax of that larger battle of which all the controversies were in fact part.¹⁰⁸

That the crucifixion constitutes the culmination of the Battle of the Seeds is demonstrated in the events immediately following Jesus' death (27:51–54). The veil of the temple was torn in two, the earth shook and many saints were raised from the dead. The veil of the temple symbolized the separation between God and his people caused by sin, of which Satan is the father. The shaking of the earth perhaps indicates a cosmic shift in the world, which groans because of sin and is awaiting its redemption. The raised saints indicate Christ's victory over death which will soon culminate in his resurrection. Thus, these cosmic events on earth illustrate the cosmic nature of the victory Christ won.¹⁰⁹ The kingdom of God has come upon the world and overthrown the kingdom of Satan through Jesus Christ. The Seed has crushed the head of the serpent. Perhaps Hilary of Poitiers says it best:

The earth shook . . . Rocks were split, for the Word of God and the power of his

¹⁰⁷Of these connections, Bauer states, "In 4:1-11 Jesus was tempted to manifest his divine Sonship through display of worldly power, and in 16:22 he was tempted to construe his divine Sonship in ways that did not involve suffering and death. These two temptations come together at the cross: Three times Jesus is tempted to manifest his divine Sonship by the spectacular sign of escaping from the cross, thereby saving himself (27:40, 42, 44)." Bauer, "Major Characters," 361.

¹⁰⁸N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 466.

¹⁰⁹For a robust treatment of the eschatological nature of these events, see Raymond Michael Johnson, "I See Dead People: The Function of the Resurrection of the Saints in Matthew 27:21–54" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 141–49.

eternal goodness rushed in, penetrating every stronghold and principality. Graves were opened, for the gates of death had been unlocked. And a number of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose. Dispelling the shadows of death illuminating the darkness of hell, Christ destroyed the spoils of hell at the resurrection of the saints.¹¹⁰

Matthew 28:16–20, therefore, not only constitutes a fitting conclusion to Matthew’s Gospel, but also to the entire Old Testament. So far we have argued that a major underlying theme in Matthew’s Gospel is the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan. Jesus is bringing the kingdom of God into the world and Satan’s realm is warring against him. This began at Jesus’ birth, when Herod attempted to destroy the rightful king, yet God sovereignly intervened. The battle, however, became even more explicit in the wilderness when Satan offered Jesus all the “kingdoms of the world” in exchange for worship. Jesus refused, and this initial victory launched a full-scale war. Jesus’ subsequent exorcisms demonstrated the authority of his kingdom over that of Satan, and this point was made explicit in the Beelzebul controversy in chapter 12. This cosmic conflict came to a climax in Jesus’ death, where the war seemed to hang in the balance, yet Christ was victorious as demonstrated by his resurrection.¹¹¹ Now, in this final passage of Matthew, Jesus declares in no uncertain terms that the victory is won.

This is perhaps most evident in that this passage so closely parallels the third and climactic temptation of Matthew 4:1–11 (see Table 7 below).¹¹² First, both the temptation and the commission take place on a “mountain” (ὄρος; 4:8; 28:16).¹¹³

¹¹⁰Manlio Simonetti, *Matthew 14-28*, ACCS, vol. 1b, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 297.

¹¹¹Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), s.v. “Divine Warrior,” 213.

¹¹²Also Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 616; It is likely that Matthew’s order in the temptation narrative, with the climactic temptation being upon the mountain, is meant to point toward this final mountain scene (so Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 70; Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 95).

¹¹³So Gardner, *Matthew*, 401; Osborne, *Matthew*, 135; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 369.

Second, in 4:9 Satan tempts Jesus to “worship” him, and in 28:17 the disciples fall down and “worship” (προσκυνέω) Jesus. Third, in the temptation Satan offers “to give” (δίδωμι) to Jesus all the “kingdoms of the world” (αἱ βασιλείαι τοῦ κόσμου; 4:8), and in the great commission Jesus says that all authority in heaven and “upon the earth” has been “given” (δίδωμι) to him (28:18).¹¹⁴ Fourth, as a result of Jesus victory in the wilderness, he commands Satan to “go away” (ὑπαγε; 4:10), and as a result of Jesus’ victory at the cross, he commands his disciples to “go” (πορεύομαι) make disciples (28:19). Finally, at the end of the temptation account Satan leaves the presence of Jesus temporarily (4:11; cf. Luke 4:13), while at the end of the great commission Jesus promises his presence with the disciples forever (28:20).

Table 7. Lexical and conceptual links between Matthew 4:1–11 and 28:18–20

	The Great Commission (28:16–20)		The Temptation (4:1–11)
v.16	μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν . . . <u>εἰς τὸ ὄρος</u>	v.8a	Παραλαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος <u>εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν λίαν</u>
v.17	καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν <u>προσεκύνησαν</u>	v.9b	ἐὰν πεσῶν <u>προσκυνήσης</u> μοι.
v.18	<u>ἐδόθη μοι πάντα</u> ἐξουσία	v.9a	ταῦτά <u>σοι πάντα δώσω</u> ...
v.19	<u>πορευθέντες</u> οὖν μαθητεύσατε <u>πάντα τα ἔθνη</u>	v.10; 8b	<u>ὑπαγε</u> , σατανᾶ; <u>πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου</u>
v.20	<u>ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι</u> πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς σθνητελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.	v.11	Τότε <u>ἀφήσιν αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολο</u>

Thus, in this culminating passage Matthew demonstrates that Jesus has gained through obedience what Satan offered through idolatry.¹¹⁵ Satan offered Jesus

¹¹⁴Ridderbos rightly states, "Christ thus received that which the devil had once promised to give Him if He forsook God (4:8–9). Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 554. Also Keener, *Matthew*, 399.

¹¹⁵Contra Nolland, who states, “Matthew fails to provide the vocabulary links which could have made this clear, and nowhere else does he connect any kind of change of status or function with the resurrection (or ascension).” Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*,

authority over all the kingdoms of the world, now Jesus has been given all authority over both heaven and earth.¹¹⁶ Satan attempted to compel Jesus to worship him, and now Jesus receives from his disciples proper worship. Satan had dominion over the kingdoms of the world, and now Jesus has the authority to send his disciples to make disciples of all the nations of the world. As Luz states, “He who, on the mountain, rejected the devil’s offer of world domination (4:8–10) and chose the path of obedience, will for this very reason, again on a mountain, be granted all the power in heaven and on earth at the end of his chosen path of obedience (28:16–20).”¹¹⁷

Such an interpretation leads to an even deeper understanding of the cosmic conflict theme in Matthew. Not only has Jesus gained what Satan in the wilderness offered, but he has also regained what Adam in the garden lost.¹¹⁸ The parallels between the temptation account and the fall of Adam have already been demonstrated, and the loss of dominion in the garden is why Satan was able to offer all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus. We noted the clear portrayal of this loss of dominion as mankind spiraled into rebellion and sin subsequent to the fall, and in the reality that Israel alone was a nation who sought the Lord, yet who too continually rebelled. The Evil One deceived all other nations. This however is reversed in Christ, and the “risen Lord’s universal authority makes possible the universal mission.”¹¹⁹ The authority to deceive the nations no longer belongs to

2005, 167. In light of the evidence presented above this is a puzzling statement, and Nolland’s conclusion should be rejected.

¹¹⁶Hauerwas states in this regard, “The devil had offered Jesus authority over all the kingdoms of the world . . . but Jesus’ whole life was a refusal of that offer.” Hauerwas, *Matthew*, 249.

¹¹⁷Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, 37; Gardner, *Matthew*, 403. Similarly, Painter states, “Having denied himself ‘all the kingdoms of the world,’ he has become the king of kings and lord of lords.” Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ’s Temptation*, 305.

¹¹⁸Turner states, “This universal mission has cosmic implications . . . obedience to the mission mandate turns out to fulfill, as a by-product, the original creation mandate that God gave to humanity’s first parents . . . Adam failed the test, but Jesus successfully resisted the devil . . . the renewal of the world has begun.” Turner, *Matthew*, 691.

¹¹⁹Osborne, *Matthew*, 1079.

Satan.¹²⁰ Just as God gave Adam dominion in the garden, Jesus has now received all authority, and gives authority to his disciples.¹²¹ Thus, Jesus can command with full authority that his disciples spread the good news to all the nations, for the light of Christ has overcome the darkness, and the dominion of the seed has crushed the head of the serpent.¹²²

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that what underlies the plot of Matthew's Gospel is the cosmic conflict between Jesus, the promised seed, and Satan, the serpent of Genesis 3:15. From the beginning, Matthew steeps his Gospel in the narrative of the Old Testament, and emphasizes that Jesus is the coming one who fulfills the promises of God. Then, from beginning to end, Matthew reminds his readers of this underlying battle as his characters form alliances with either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan. In 4:1–11, Satan tempts Jesus to worship him in exchange for all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus, however, resists and succeeds where the first Adam and Israel both failed. Jesus then proceeds to demonstrate his authority over the realm of Satan through his miracles and continual encounters with the demonic. Then, in chapter 12, the conflict reaches a turning point when Jesus draws the line in the sand, and demonstrates that his authority over the demonic indicates that he is bringing the kingdom of God upon

¹²⁰It is thus appropriate here to see an allusion to Dan 7:15 (so Dale C. Allison (*The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q* [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000], 130n36; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 552–54; Osborne, *Matthew*, 1078–79; Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 57; Turner, *Matthew*, 689); contra Gundry, *Matthew*, 595.

¹²¹Luz states that discipleship can now be understood as “participation in this authority and as being secure under the protection of the exalted Lord.” Luz, *Studies in Matthew*, 136.

¹²²Pennington connects the idea of the Gospel going to all nations to God's creative prerogative in Gen 1–2 as well as his redemptive plan as promised to Abraham in Gen 12, calling it “the purpose and zenith of the process begun in Genesis 1–12.” Pennington, “Heaven, Earth, and a New Genesis,” 38.

the hostile realm of Satan. The religious leaders choose to align themselves with Satan's kingdom, and proceed to crucify their Messiah. Though the situation seems dire, the drama culminates with Jesus again on a high mountain declaring his absolute authority both in heaven and on earth, thus the authority of Satan has been crushed. Jesus received from the Father what Satan attempted to give him in chapter 4. Not only this, but Jesus regained the dominion that Adam lost in the garden. Thus, Matthew 28:26–18 provides a fitting conclusion not only for Matthew's gospel, but also for the cosmic battle which began in Genesis 3:15, and which was decided at the cross where the Seed crushed the head of the serpent.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to demonstrate that one foundational aspect of the plot of Matthew's narrative is that of cosmic conflict. While there are many other crucial plot elements, Matthew continually brings his readers back to that conflict on which the story hinges, the conflict between Jesus and Satan. By examining the characters in Matthew and how they relate to Jesus, as well as Satan, a dualistic framework emerged in which one side sought to oppose Christ regarding his Father's mission, while the other side supported him in that mission. As Kingsbury states, "The world Matthew creates in his Gospel is one of cosmic conflict between good and evil. In it, Jesus Son of God as the bearer of the kingdom of Heaven vies with Satan and his kingdom of evil."¹

Chapter 2 explored cosmic conflict in the OT and Jewish literature. It was argued that, while the explicit demonology of later Jewish literature is lacking in the OT, it does contain the seeds which would sprout into what one finds in Matthew. Indeed, although Matthew's language and concept of Satan perhaps most readily draws from the apocalyptic writings of Second Temple Judaism, his narrative more naturally flows from the story line of the OT, beginning with a promise of the battle of the seeds in Genesis 3:15.

Chapters 3–5 then focused on the characters in Matthew and whether they relate as protagonists or antagonists to Jesus, the central figure of the narrative. Matthew's Gospel is steeped in conflict from its inception. In examining the human

¹Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), xii.

antagonists in Matthew's gospel, it becomes evident that each, though opposed to Jesus for their own reasons, ultimately serve the primary antagonist of Matthew's story, namely, Satan. First, Herod's kingship is contrasted with Jesus' kingship, and he seeks to destroy Jesus in a way reminiscent of Pharaoh in Egypt (Matt 2:3, 16). Thus, Herod points back to the archetypal opponent of God's people in the OT Pharaoh—also called the great dragon (Ezek 29:3)—as well as forward to that great opponent who upon the mountain would offer Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (Matt 4:8).

Second, the Jewish leaders are clearly prime antagonists throughout the narrative. From beginning to the end, the Gospel portrays their continuous and ever heightening opposition to Jesus' mission. Further, as the narrative progresses it becomes clear that this conflict is actually secondary to the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan. This is evident through Jesus' description of them as "evil" (*πονηρὰ*) and as "offspring of serpents," which suggests that the Jewish leaders are the children of Satan, the Evil One (9:1; 12:25, 34, 39). Such condemnation finds its climax in Matthew 23, where Jesus pronounces a series of woes upon the scribes and Pharisees, leaving no doubt as to whose side they are on in the cosmic conflict. Indeed, they are none other than "son[s] of hell" (*υἱὸν γεέννης*; 23:15).

Third, the disciples are often crossing the line from friend to foe in Matthew's story of Jesus. This is evidenced by their continued lack of faith and understanding, as well as their being a stumbling block before Jesus on his mission to the cross. Indeed, Jesus in no uncertain terms identifies Peter with Satan when he becomes a tempter in the way of Jesus' suffering (16:23). The parallels between this passage and Satan's temptation of Jesus in chapter 4 demonstrate this fact.

Finally, both Pilate and Judas are portrayed as antagonistic to Jesus. Judas as the betrayer, and Pilate as the one who would condemn him to death. Interestingly, there are clear parallels between Pilate and Judas, and both are also

linked to the Jewish leaders. Thus, in the web of human antagonists who oppose Jesus in Matthew's narrative we find a deeper antagonist at work, the Evil One called Satan, who works not only through human opponents of Jesus, but also non-human antagonists throughout the narrative.

The non-human antagonists in Matthew include demons, disease, and Satan. As has been demonstrated, exorcisms play a major role in Matthew's gospel. Jesus engages the demonic realm at the onset of his ministry (4:24). In his exorcisms, he frees people from bondage, and plunders Satan's realm. Indeed, by the Spirit of God he casts out demons and so brings God's kingdom crashing into the world (12:28). Similarly, Jesus' healing of diseases shows his authority over the cosmos. The link between disease and demonic oppression furthers the cosmic conflict motif, since healing makes up a large part of Jesus' ministry and demonstrates his kingship as God's messiah. Of course, behind both demons and disease lies the prince of demons, Satan, who first tempted Jesus in the wilderness (4:1–11), then again through his closest disciple (16:23), and finally at the cross as the mockers once again cry out "if you are the son of God" (27:42–44)! Thus, although Satan is not mentioned frequently, Matthew highlights Satan's activity at key points in the narrative and in each case underscores Satan's work against God and his people.

But Matthew's Gospel is not only made up of antagonists. Also playing a central role in the narrative are those who support Jesus' mission. God the Father affirms and supports Jesus in his mission (3:17; 11:25; 26:39, 42). Angels also engage in the cosmic conflict. They are used by the Father to protect Jesus as an infant (1:20; 2:13, 19). At the end of the narrative, an angel appears to roll the gravestone away from Jesus' tomb and to tell his followers of his resurrection (28:2). In the midst of Matthew's narrative Jesus speaks of his command over angels so that they would come to his aid at a moment's notice (26:53). Further, the Holy Spirit appears

as a protagonist in Matthew's narrative. It is by the Spirit of God that Jesus wages war against Satan and establishes God's kingdom on earth (12:28). In Matthew, the Magi highlight the kingship of Jesus over all the earth, and so those kingdoms held in darkness by Satan have now seen a great light in the true king, Jesus. Finally, though at times seemingly opposed to Christ's mission, the disciples are ultimately supporters of Jesus in Matthew's narrative. Jesus calls them, teaches them, sends them out to do the same things he is doing, and ultimately commissions the disciples to continue to bring his kingdom to bare throughout the entire earth (28:18–20). Thus, the protagonists of Matthew's Gospel testify to the Christ as the primary protagonist the cosmic battle waged throughout Matthew's gospel.

Finally, chapter 6 provided a narrative reading of Matthew in light of the theme of cosmic conflict, ultimately arguing that what underlies the plot of Matthew's Gospel is the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan. In its initial unfolding, Matthew foreshadows this great conflict. Then, in 4:1–11, Satan suddenly arrives on the scene and tempts Jesus to worship him in exchange for all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus overcomes and proceeds to demonstrate his authority over the realm of Satan through his miracles and continual encounters with the demonic. The conflict reaches his turning point when Jesus indicates that he is indeed plundering Satan's kingdom and bringing in the kingdom of God (12:28). The religious leaders and all other antagonists have aligned themselves with Satan's kingdom. At his crucifixion the situation seems dire, however, the drama culminates with Jesus again on a high mountain declaring his absolute authority both in heaven and on earth, and so demonstrating that Satan's reign is over (28:26–18).

In conclusion, were Jesus' encounters with Satan and the demonic peripheral aspects of Matthew's narrative? Does his conflict with the Jewish leadership and thus move away from Israel constitute the primary thrust of Matthew's plot? On the surface this seems plausible, even likely. The opposition of

the religious leaders to Jesus receives more overt attention than that of Satan in Matthew's narrative. Further, often even the exorcism accounts in Matthew are mentioned in correlation with this conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leadership. However, as many have pointed out, Matthew's narrative is complex, and reading on a deeper level is crucial. What has hopefully become apparent in this study is that woven into Matthew's story one discovers a conflict which is foundational to all opposition to Jesus throughout the narrative. As Boyd rightly notes, "From start to finish, this inspired literary collection is about God restoring his creation through humanity (and by himself becoming a human) and destroying his cosmic opponents in the process."² Satan, the enemy of old, seeks to thwart Jesus at every turn and as Matthew's Gospel reaches its resolution, it is Satan's temptation of Jesus that is turned upon its head as Jesus is granted authority over all the kingdoms of the world and thus sends his disciples into all the nations of the world.

In light of this study, future work on Matthew's gospel would benefit from taking into account the major theme of cosmic conflict in Matthew. This could apply to both narrative and thematic studies. Regarding narrative studies, cosmic conflict as central to Matthew's plot seems critical. While this study has focused on a basic narrative overview of Matthew, the findings contained herein could be applied to more technical narrative analyses, such as studies of setting, points of view, reader-response, narration, and speech act theory. Such would shed more light on Matthew's intention in telling the story of Jesus.

Further, thematic studies could benefit from greater attention to the theme of cosmic conflict. Much has been written regarding Matthew's Christology. What Jesus' defeat over Satan has to say about Matthew's understanding of Jesus as the

²Gregory A Boyd, *God at War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 113.

Christ is another important angle from which to dissect such a topic. Related to this would be the topic of Jesus' Lordship. What does Jesus' defeat over the spiritual powers of evil say about his Lordship in Matthew's gospel. A third important idea in Matthew is Jesus' atonement. Does Matthew's emphasis on cosmic conflict add to the discussion of the atonement as *Christus Victor*? I would suggest that it does and studying Matthew from this angle would be beneficial for that discussion.

Finally, one crucial area of study that this dissertation only briefly touched upon is Matthew's overall structure. As noted above, Matthew's Gospel is the most meticulously structured of all the gospels, and if cosmic conflict is foundation to the plot of his narrative, then the two must be integral to the whole and thus studied together. One specific way to go about this would be to look at each of the discourses in Matthew to discover whether cosmic conflict is part of how Matthew weaves the narratives and the discourses together to form a coherent plot. I am not arguing here for a tunnel vision approach to Matthew so that only cosmic conflict is important, rather I am advocating that scholarship take into account this important theme as one of the many important themes of Matthew's narrative and how this particular conflict helps illuminate Matthew's multifaceted understanding of Jesus and his mission.

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ABSTRACT

DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE: COSMIC CONFLICT IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

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This dissertation asserts that a foundational theme in Matthew's Gospel is the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan, and that not only does Matthew develop a theology of the devil, but that this theme is foundational for the plot of Matthew's drama. Chapter 1 introduces the question at hand, and surveys those works which relate to my thesis.

Chapter 2 analyzes the Jewish literature from the Old Testament and the Second Temple period relevant to the cosmic conflict motif to determine if, and in what way, such has affected Matthew's framework.

Chapter 3 discusses the human antagonists of cosmic conflict. The antagonists are those characters in the Gospel which at any point in time seem to hinder the ultimate goal of the protagonist. The human antagonists include Herod, the Jewish leaders, the disciples, Judas, and Pilate.

Chapter 4 then discusses the non-human antagonists in Matthew. These include demons, disease, and Satan.

Chapter 5, on the other hand, analyzes the protagonists of Matthew's Gospel, including the magi, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, angels, and the disciples.

Chapter 6 examines Matthew's plot in light of cosmic conflict. This chapter demonstrates how a recognition of the pervasiveness of this theme in

Matthew helps one better understand Matthew's narrative plot. I further argue that three texts are essential to Matthew's narrative framework: 4:1–11; 12:22–32; and 28:16–20. This chapter shows how Matthew's narrative weaves in and out of these three texts into a narrative web with cosmic conflict at its center.

Finally, chapter 7 offers a summary of the work as a whole that a robust theology of cosmic conflict is present in Matthew's Gospel.

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