

- [3] so that they may turn from Darkness [*skotos*] to Light [*phos*],
- [4] and from the power [*exousia*] of Satan to God,
- [5] so that they may receive forgiveness of sins,
- [6] and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

(Acts 26.17–18)

This sounds very Pauline. Lines 3 and 4 resemble the two central dualistic dichotomies in Second Corinthians:

What fellowship is there between Light and Darkness?

What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? (2 Cor. 6.14–15)

Darkness in both cases is associated with unbelief. Let's remember that in the case of the unbeliever Elymas he was enveloped in literal *skotos*.

Let us summarize what Luke has told us about Satan. Satan has been put in charge of the kingdoms of the World and of assigning its *exousia* or power (Luke 4). But Jesus has a vision of his seemingly imminent fall, for Jesus has given his Disciples power (*exousia*) over the force (*dunamis*) of the Enemy (Luke 10). But for the present Satan's reign is still intact (Luke 11). Unbelievers need to be rescued from Satan's *exousia* (Acts 26).

One of Satan's main functions is as a "prover," a "tryer of men's souls." He fulfills this function by testing Jesus in the wilderness, with the intention of continuing the process later (Luke 4). As part of his testing regimen, Satan makes use of disease-Spirits (Luke 13, cf. Acts 10). Satan also operates by entering into a person (Judas: Luke 22) or filling a prospective sinner's heart (Ananias: Acts 5). Satan continues to negotiate the scope of his testing function, as when he insists upon more license to test Peter and the other Disciples, but Jesus is in on the negotiations and is able to modify the results of the testing (Luke 22).

The scene conjured up in the last-cited passage has certain similarities to the scene of Zechariah 3 in the Septuagint: the High Priest

Angel of Yahweh intercedes for Jesus. In Luke 22, Satan accuses Peter and the other Disciples, asking for more leeway to make trial of their fidelity, and Jesus himself intercedes for Peter. In the Zechariah scene, the defendant (Jesus) is absolved; in Luke's scenario, concessions are made regarding Peter, with eventual rehabilitation foreseen also for the rest of the Disciples.

But since Jesus himself is scheduled to undergo more *peiras-moi*, we can doubtless regard Jesus's agonized prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane as further negotiation with God and Satan. This time we can picture the Septuagint scenes of the Book of Job. When DEVIL appears for the first time and proposes tests for Job, the Lord agrees, but with a condition: "Very well, I give all that he has into your hands, but do not touch him" (Job 1.12). The second time, when DEVIL insists on harsher tests, the Lord again agrees, with another restriction: "Very well, I deliver him over to you. But preserve his soul" (Job 2.6).

4.4 SATAN ACCORDING TO JOHN: HOMICIDAL LIAR AND ARCHON OF THIS COSMOS

In contrast to Luke's frequent references to Satan and DEVIL, the Gospel of John refers to Satan by name only three times: first with regard to his Judean or Jewish enemies, and the other two times with regard to Judas.

In the first passage, Jesus's hostile Jewish audience claim Abraham as their father. Jesus has admitted their physical descent from Abraham, but since they do not act like Abraham, specifically in their desire to kill him and not to listen to the truth that he tells, he says that they must have a different father. They respond that their father is God. Jesus says no, their father is DEVIL:

DEVIL is the father you are from, and it is the desires of your father that you wish to do. He was a man-killer from the beginning and did not stand in the truth, because Truth is not in him. When he speaks falsely, he speaks of what is his own, for he is a liar and the

It has been common to take Jesus's designation of DEVIL as "a man-killer from the beginning" to refer to the identification of Satan with the Serpent of Eden. The steps in this "logic" are as follows: (1) Because Satan-as-Serpent persuaded Eve to disobey God's command, and (2) she in turn persuaded Adam, (3) bringing on the eventual penalty of death, (4) Satan can himself be seen as a man-killer. But we have seen that the identification of Satan with the Serpent is not yet attested at this early stage. It may have happened already, in some circles, but we cannot be sure.

Moreover, the charge of man-killing in this extended sense can be laid against all of the characters who actually appear in the Eden story, namely (1) the Serpent, (2) Adam, (3) Eve, and (4) God Himself. We saw this in discussing the Book of Wisdom and the envious *diabolos* who introduced Death into the World (**chap. 3.4**). We learned there that Clement of Rome, who was writing about the same time as "John," the author of our Fourth Gospel, identified the *diabolos* with the envious Cain. Cain not only committed the first murder, but also lied about it to God.

And in fact many exegetes nowadays lean to the idea that Jesus in John 8.44 is likening "the Jews" to Cain, the son of DEVIL, for wanting to kill Jesus, just as Cain killed his brother Abel. We know that rabbinic interpreters would eventually identify Satan as Cain's father by substituting "Satan" for "Yahweh" in the passage in Genesis where Eve says, "I have produced a man with Yahweh" (Gen. 4.1). It may be that this tradition had already been established and lies behind the discussion in John 8.44.⁵ We will see that in the First Epistle of John, Cain and all sinners are identified as children of DEVIL (1 John 3.8–12).

An alternative explanation of John 8.44 is that Jesus is referring to the first appearance of DEVIL in Scripture, namely in the Septuagint version of the Book of Job. In DEVIL's interview with the Lord, it is

obvious that "the truth is not in him" when he doubts Job's fidelity. And he commits man-killing with a vengeance when he wipes out Job's family.

The other two references in this Gospel to DEVIL/Satan concern Judas. The setting is the Last Supper. John starts his account of Jesus's actions with a series of participial clauses:

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus,

(1) knowing that his hour had come for him to depart out of this

World and go to the Father,

(2) having loved his own, those in the World, he loved them to the end;

(3) and with supper taking place,

(4) with DEVIL having now put into the heart that Judas [son] of

Simon Iscariot should betray him,

(5) knowing that God gave all things into the [his] hands, and that

he came forth from God and goes to God, he rises from the

supper and puts aside the [his] garments, and taking a towel he

girded himself. (John 13.1–4)

I have translated this passage very literally not only to show that the genitive-absolute clause (the Greek version of the Latin "ablative absolute") about DEVIL – "with DEVIL now having put into the heart," etc. – seems out of context. It also raises the question, "Whose heart is being spoken of?"

The usual English translation has DEVIL putting the idea into Judas's heart. But the normal way of reading a Greek construction like this would be to take it as "reflexive," referring to DEVIL's own heart. Notice the lines following: Jesus knows that God put all in "the" hands, and he takes off "the" clothes, referring in both cases to himself. That is, "the" means "his own" here. If so, that is, if the phrase does have a reflexive meaning, the verse would be saying that Satan by now had decided – had put it into his own heart – that Judas should betray Jesus.

⁵ For Cain and "the Jews" as sons of Satan in John 8.44, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, AB, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1966–70), 1:358.

Later in the same chapter, Jesus identifies Judas as his betrayer by giving him a morsel of food, and at that moment, John says, "Satan entered into him" (John 13.27). Are we to think that John's first reference ("Devil put it into his heart") is to Satan's plan, and the second reference ("Satan entered into Judas") is to the execution of his plan? There are other possible explanations, of course: for instance, the two passages could be a "doublet," a doubled transmission of the same tradition.

But if Satan had only recently hit upon the idea of organizing Judas to implement his final testing of Jesus, Jesus himself knew about it early on. John tells us, "Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him" (John 6.64). This is just after Jesus spoke of the need of eating his flesh, and many of those who had hitherto been his Disciples gave up on him, because of this "hard saying." He asks the Twelve if they too would go away, and Peter answers for all. Jesus responds, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a *diabolos*." John explains: "He was speaking of Judas of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the Twelve, was going to betray him" (John 6.70-71).

This is the first and last time that anyone is called a *diabolos* in the Gospels. We must ask whether it is simply the common noun for "adversary," like the envious *diabolos* of the Book of Wisdom, or whether Jesus is connecting Judas with Devil, "the" *Diabolos*. The latter is a distinct possibility, obviously, because of the clear association of Satan and Judas at the Last Supper.

But it may also be a reference to the "testing" attitude of the audience in Chapters 6 and 7 of John's Gospel. These chapters can be seen as constituting an eerie parallel to the three wilderness tests of Matthew and Luke.

1. After Jesus miraculously multiplies the loaves of bread to feed the people, the people want to force kingship upon him (John 6.1-15). This corresponds to Satan's invitation to Jesus to take over from him the rule of the Kingdoms of the World.

2. When the people come to Jesus the next day, wanting him to make more bread for them, he tells them, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the good that endures for eternal life" (John 6.26-27). This, of course, parallels Satan's suggestion that Jesus turn a stone into bread, and Jesus's response, that man does not live by bread alone.

3. The brothers of Jesus, who do not really believe in him, urge him to publicize his miracles in Jerusalem. Jesus has no wish to go there yet, because he knows that the Judeans are plotting to kill him (John 7.1-9). This corresponds to Satan's third temptation, of endangering his life by leaping off the Temple in Jerusalem.

John may have deliberately created these parallels to illustrate the sort of tests that Jesus actually experienced in his life, in contrast to the figurative and "literary" tableau presented by Matthew and Luke. Or it may be that these Johannine episodes antedated Matthew and Luke and contributed to the ideas for the debate-tableau in the wilderness, like the triple Agony in the Garden, Peter's triple denial, and the multiple trials in Jerusalem.

Two other aspects of John's Gospel need to be dealt with: the Light-Dark imagery and the references to the Ruler of this World.

At the very beginning of the Gospel, John echoes the opening of Genesis:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and godly was the Word. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things came to be through him, and without him came to be nothing that has come to be. In him was life, and the life was the Light of men, and the Light shines in the Darkness, and the Darkness did not envelop it.

(John 1.1-5)

In being co-creator, the Word resembles Wisdom, who in the Book of Wisdom is also compared to Light that does not give way to Dark (Wis. 7.29-30). The Word of God also appears there, as we saw, but as the Destroyer (Wis. 18.15-25).

The contrast of Light and Dark comes up again notably at the beginning of his confrontation with the Pharisees and other hostile

listeners in Chapter 8. Jesus says, "I am the Light of the Cosmos. Whoever follows me will not walk in the dark but will have the light of life" (John 8.12). The next time comes in the scene in Jerusalem just before the Last Supper, in close conjunction with the first of Jesus's references to the Ruler of this Cosmos (as opposed to himself, the Light of the Cosmos).

Jesus says that his soul is troubled and he prays to his Father, accepting his coming suffering, and receiving the Father's comforting response. Then he tells the crowd,

Now is the judgment of this Cosmos. Now will the Ruler [*Archon*] of this Cosmos be cast down [or: driven out]. And, when I am lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all men to me.

(*John* 12.31–32)

John explains that Jesus is referring to his crucifixion, but the crowd takes him to mean some sort of ascension and departure. Jesus admits that he will depart, by resorting to Light imagery: "The Light is among you only a little while longer. Walk while you have the Light, or the Darkness will envelop you" (John 12.35). This verb, "envelop," is the same used in the Prologue: "the Darkness did not envelop it" (John 1.5). When speaking of "this World" (*ho Kosmos toutos*), Jesus indicates that because the World has been judged (and found faulty? guilty? defective? finished?), the Ruler will lose his power. And the Ruler's being cast down or out is contrasted or connected with Jesus's elevation in death.

Later, after Judas has left, Jesus says that the time is short, "for the Ruler of the World is coming." Jesus adds that the Ruler "has nothing on me," but Jesus does what he does "so that the World may know that I love the Father and do what the Father has commanded me" (John 14.30–31). A duplicate of this passage occurs two chapters later, with slightly different emphases: Jesus says that when he goes away, he will send the Advocate (Paraclete), the Holy Spirit, "who will accuse [*elenchein*] the World concerning sin, justice, and judgment" (John 16.7–8). That sounds like the activity of a prosecuting

attorney, like "Justice the Accuser" (*Elenchousa he Dike*) in the Book of Wisdom (Wis. 1.8–10). This is one of Satan's traditional functions, but here the tables are turned on him, because the "judgment" aspect of the Advocate's accusation against the World has already been exercised, and it refers to him: "Concerning judgment, because the Ruler of this World has been judged" (John 16.11).

Has the Ruler been judged guilty of sin? Jesus certainly attributed sinfulness to him before: DEVIL was a man-killer and liar from the beginning (John 8.44). But in the present instance, the Advocate's accusation against the World concerning sin refers not to the Ruler of the World but to the people of the World who do not believe in Jesus (John 16.9).

So it may be that Satan as Ruler of this World has simply been judged as no longer required to fulfill his past obligations, once the "regime change" initiated by Jesus's accomplishment of his Father's will has taken place. In other words, he has been given notice that he will be "terminated" from his position of authority. This seems to be the message of Luke's Gospel as well, as we have seen, and we shall see a similar idea in the Book of Revelation.

There is one last glance at Satan before the account of the Passion takes over (when we hear no more about him). At the end of his address at the Last Supper, Jesus prays for all whom the Father has given to him. He asks the Father not to take them out of the World, but to protect them from "harm" – or "Harm" (John 17.15). This is the same ambiguous phrase that occurs at the end of Matthew's Our Father: "Deliver us from harm/Harm." Quite clearly, the Ruler still rules, or at least still has power.